

ROMANIAN JOURNAL OF  
ENGLISH STUDIES

**Editura Universității de Vest Timișoara**

**2010**

A journal of *The Romanian Society of English and American Studies*

This journal is published with the support of  
**Universitatea de Vest, Timișoara**

Cover Design:

© **Romanian Journal of English Studies, no.7, 2010**  
**ISSN 1584-3734**

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## CONTENTS

### I CULTURAL STUDIES

- ADINA BAYA *THE SCREEN AS MIRROR OF SELF-PERCEPTION  
IN DON DELILLO  
+WHO ARE WE?*
- MARIANNE BEAUVILAIN  
MIRONICĂ CORICI *TEEN PERCEPTION OF CULTURAL EXPERIENCES  
AND MASS MEDIA INFLUENCE IN SHAPING  
CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR*
- ECATERINA HANTIU *CYBERPUNK AND A ROMANIAN ABROAD :  
MESSI@H BY ANDREI CODRESCU*
- ANNAMARIA KILYENI *MIRROR, MIRROR ON THE WALL...  
REGULATED BEAUTY IN PRINT ADS TARGETED  
AT WOMEN*
- BARBARA NELSON *"CELLULOID SOLDIERS" IN ROMANIA*

### II AMERICAN LITERATURE

- ÁGNES ZSÓFIA KOVÁCS *HENRY JAMES ON THE MANNERS OF AMERICAN  
WOMEN*
- GEORGIANA LOLEA *SOLACE IN BLOOD. THE DANCE OF VIOLENCE IN  
BLOOD MERIDIAN BY CORMAC MCCARTHY*
- NOORBAKHSH HOOTI *SENSE OF ISOLATION IN ARTHUR MILLER'S  
DEATH OF A SALESMAN*
- DANIELA ROGOBETE *GHETTO NERD IN THE LAND OF THE LOST  
REPRESENTATIONS OF THE 'HOOD' IN JUNOR  
DIAZ'S THE BRIEF WONDROUS LIFE OF OSCAR  
WAO*
- SVITLANA SHURMA *SYMBOLISM OF AMERICAN GOTHIC SHORT  
STORIES: A COGNITIVE APPROACH*
- GABRIELA TUCAN *A CAT IN THE RAIN AND IN THE READER'S MIND*
- DAGMARA ZAJAÇ *CHARLES BROCKDEN BROWN AND LITERARY  
THEORY: SOME CONSEQUENCES OF AMERICAN  
GOTHIC REVIVAL*

### III BRITISH AND COMMONWEALTH LITERATURE

- FLORENTINA ANGHEL  
CRISTINA BĂNICERU  
YAVUZ ÇELİK *REALITY THROUGH YEATS' POEMS  
MARLOW – THE INTROVERTED STORYTELLER  
EDWARD BOND'S "THE WAR PLAYS"  
PROJECTING THE DOOMED FUTURE OF  
MANKIND*
- CLAUDIA DOROHOLSCHI *NARRATIVE PERSPECTIVE AND THE*

	<i>CONSTRUCTION OF SPACE IN A CLOCKWORK ORANGE</i>
ELIZA FILIMON	<i>DESIRED OTHERS IN ANGELA CARTER'S THE INFERNAL DESIRE MACHINES OF DOCTOR HOFFMAN</i>
NATAŠA KARANFILOVIĆ	<i>THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE COLONIAL/COLONISED SUBJECT: A POSTCOLONIAL READING OF HENRY LAWSON'S „A DAUGHTER OF MAORILAND“</i>
BRANISLAVA LIČEN	<i>FORMAL AND AESTHETIC ASPECTS OF NADINE GORDIMER'S SHORT STORY</i>
NINA MUŽDEKA	<i>“WHAT HAPPENED TO THE TRUTH IS NOT RECORDED”: NARRATION AND FOCALIZATION IN JULIAN BARNES'S</i>
DAN NEGRUȚ	<i>BYRON'S DON JUAN: VICTIM OR VICTIMIZER?</i>
ABA-CARINA PÂRLOG	<i>TURNING THE TRADITIONAL ENGLISH BUTLER INTO A ZEN-BUDDHIST ADEPT</i>
DANA PERCEC, ANDREEA SERBAN	<i>POSTMODERN MYTHOLOGIES. PENELOPE AND GERTRUDE TALK BACK</i>
MARTIN POTTER	<i>EAST VERSUS WEST: LATIN AND BYZANTINE CIVILISATION CONTRASTED IN EVELYN WAUGH'S HELENA</i>
<b>IV LANGUAGE STUDIES</b>	
OCTAVIAN COSTE	<i>LEXICAL GAPS AND TROPONYMY: HUMAN LOCOMOTION VERBS IN ENGLISH AND ROMANIAN</i>
DANIEL DEJICA	<i>APPROACHING THE INFORMATION UNIVERSE FOR TRANSLATION PURPOSES: THE ATOMISTIC PERSPECTIVE</i>
GORDANA DIMKOVIĆ - TELEBAKOVIĆ	<i>SEMANTIC RELATIONS</i>
CODRUȚA GOȘA, LUMINIȚA FRENȚIU	<i>AM I A 'FEMEIE IOANA' OR A 'COSMO GIRL'? A CASE STUDY OF TWO WOMEN MAGAZINES IN ROMANIA</i>
AGNES HERCEG DELI	<i>DECLARATIVE ELICITATIONS IN A COGNITIVE PERSPECTIVE</i>
KATARINA KÖHLER	<i>ADDRESSING DISCRIMINATION ON THE GROUNDS OF "RACE" AND ETHNIC ORIGIN IN EU LAW</i>

<b>AGNIESZKA NOWICKA</b>	<i>FRAMES IN AMERICAN TV DISCUSSIONS</i>
<b>ANCA MARIANA PEGULESCU</b>	<i>ARE THERE CONSTRAINTS ON VERB MEANING AND VP STRUCTURE IN PROVERBS?</i>
<b>ANCA STOIAN</b>	<i>HEART METAPHORS IN ENGLISH AND ROMANIAN</i>
<b>RODICA SUPERCEANU</b>	<i>TRANSLATING ENGLISH OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS: THE SOCIO-CULTURAL CONTENT OF GENRES AND SUB-GENRES</i>
<b>CRISTINA MIHAELA ZAMFIR</b>	<i>NLP AND LINGUISTIC ASPECTS OF REFRAMING IN BUSINESS NEGOTIATIONS</i>
<b>V ELT STUDIES</b>	
<b>MIHAELA COZMA</b>	<i>TRANSLATING OR NOT TRANSLATING IN THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASS?</i>
<b>GAŠPER ILC</b>	<i>ENGLISH GRAMMAR REVIS(IT)ED</i>
<b>AMALIA MĂRĂȘESCU</b>	<i>PROJECT WORK FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE</i>
<b>MONICA OPRESCU</b>	<i>THE ROLE OF TEACHING PRACTICE IN INITIAL TEACHER TRAINING</i>
<b>VESNA PILIPOVIĆ, ISIDORA WATTLES</b>	<i>THE SEQUENCE OF ACQUISITION OF PASSIVE VERB FORMS</i>
<b>FLORENTINA TAYLOR</b>	<i>SURREPTITIOUS TEACHER DEVELOPMENT: PROMOTING CHANGE FROM WITHIN</i>
<b>ALAN WEBER</b>	<i>LITERATURE AND MEDICINE COURSES FOR ARABIC LANGUAGE SPEAKERS</i>
<b>ÖZGE GÜL ZEREY</b>	<i>VOICES FROM STUDENTS: A STUDY ON SOME POSSIBLE SOURCES OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE SPEAKING ANXIETY</i>

SECTION ONE:  
**CULTURAL STUDIES**



## THE SCREEN AS MIRROR OF SELF-PERCEPTION IN DON DELILLO

ADINA BAYA

University of Timișoara

*Abstract:* Don DeLillo's prose has often been described as a keen exploration of identity-shaping in the media-saturated society, marked by the collateral anomalies of unbridled consumerism, from hypochondria to amnesia and several other invisible epidemics of our times. The current paper aims to observe the role of televised media in functioning as a mirror of reality in several novels by Don DeLillo, using the analytical tools provided by the critical theorist Jean Baudrillard.

*Keywords:* Don DeLillo, hyperreality, Jean Baudrillard, mass media.

### 1. Introduction

While touching upon the theme of “television and U.S. fiction” in his collection of essays ironically entitled *A Supposedly Fun Thing I'll Never Do Again* writer David Foster Wallace (1997) describes in some detail the contemporary writer's relation to visual media. He portrays television as “a mirror,” whose role is to reflect “what American normality is — i.e. what Americans want to regard as normal.” However, it is not “the Stendhalian mirror” in which the reflection of reality is controlled by a constant search for accuracy, but “more like the overlit bathroom mirror before which the teenager monitors his biceps and determines his better profile.” In other words, “a window on nervous American self-perception,” which can be an “invaluable” source of inspiration for fiction writers (Wallace 1997: 22).

A similar view upon what is “the most potent mirror our culture provides” is put forth by Eugene Goodheart (1991) who ascribes this role not to the television screen, but to cinema. The movie screen, he says, is where “we learn to transform ourselves, to play a variety of roles at will” and hence “our lives become the lives of cinematic representation” (Goodheart 1991: 118-119). Though Wallace (1997) shows more interest in the extrafictional connection between media and contemporary fiction, in how the former can serve as a source of inspiration for the latter, and Goodheart (1991) seems more absorbed by the intrafictional role played by the movie screen, the observations of both are of particular relevance when discussing the prose of Don DeLillo. Often described as one of the keenest explorers of identity-shaping in the media-saturated society, marked by the collateral anomalies of its unbridled

consumerism, from hypochondria to amnesia and several other invisible epidemics of our times, Don DeLillo represents a particularly revealing subject of analysis in discussing the connection between media and contemporary fiction.

## **2. Televised Media: Mirroring Reality and Constructing Hyperreality**

From the early published *Americana*, following the creation of a self-referential road-movie by the main character, to *Falling Man*, focusing on the post-9/11 American society and the ungraspable void left behind by the disappearance of the Twin Towers, DeLillo's prose is permeated by the presence of the media in all its ubiquitous forms. His characters are built and developed through their connection to mass media, with which they often have a contradictory relationship. The television screen in particular is frequently used as an instinctive means of self-reflection, a mirror that mediates self-analysis.

While discussing DeLillo's novel *Players*, Goodheart (1991) cites a scene in which one of the main characters, Pammy, is watching a film whose script follows the formulaic rules of what she acknowledges as being "an inept and boring, fifties vintage," but that, nevertheless, succeeds in keeping her glued to the screen: "The cheapness was magnetic. She experienced a new obliteration of self-awareness." Finally, once the film reaches its tedious and predictable ending, Pammy is "awash with emotion." Though aware of "the artificiality" and "plain awfulness" of the movie, she still helplessly experiences a deep emotional strife, feels the onrush of a "sobbing release" and ends up sitting with "hands curled at her temples, for fifteen minutes, crying." Pammy's complete identification with the on-screen characters serves as evidence for the fact that "the real and the cinematic have become indistinguishable" (Goodheart 1991: 120).

The media screen's capacity to function as a mirror of reality, as well as the effects of this reflection on the audiences represent a topic approached by several cultural critics. One of its high-profile theoreticians is Jean Baudrillard. In his treatise on *Simulacra and Simulations* (2001), the French philosopher explains how reality is replaced by symbols and signs in contemporary society, and experience has become a simulation of reality substituting reality itself. The symbols and signs that he is referring to are mostly created by the media, who thus is responsible for constructing a perceived reality, which no longer has anything to do with the actual reality. Baudrillard marks the distinction between

four successive phases of the image or “simulacra,” (2001: 173). The most relevant for the topic of this paper is the fourth stage, in which the image no longer bears any relation to reality, but “it is its own pure simulacrum.” It thus leads to the creation of a model that is equivalent with the real, labeled by Baudrillard as “hyperreality,” a simulation of reality. Both this and the previous stage are typical for the postmodern age, marking the surfacing of a split between a model and its referent, i.e. between a representation and the reality it is based upon. All the rational apparatus of Cartesian rationality—truth, reference and objectivism—disappears in favor of an “operational” apparatus, in which the sign is equivalent with the real. Simulation is defined as “a strategy of the real, neo-real and hyperreal,” whose purpose is that of deterrence.

The French critic’s theory is of particular relevance in situating the equivalence observed by Goodheart (1991: 120) between “the real and the cinematic.” The scene from the novel *Players* no longer brings questions of the imitation and reduplication of reality performed by the media, but of the complete substitution that takes place between “signs of the real”—represented by the media—and “the real itself” in the eyes of character Pammy, between symbols and meaning (2001: 171). In her case, interaction with the media leads to a complete identification with the characters on screen, and empathizing in such a degree that a complete emotional transfer takes place between the characters that are featured inside the narrative frame mediated by the screen and life outside the medium. The dramas suffered by characters on screen become the misfortunes suffered by Pammy and the transfer is facilitated by the confusion between reality and its imitation. Pammy’s powerfully emotional response is a clear indicator of her impossibility to distinguish any longer between real drama and simulated drama. The ambiguity is increased by what Baudrillard calls “the precession of the model,” i.e. its primacy in front of reality: “the models come first, and their orbital [...] circulation constitutes the [...] field of events” (2001: 178).

The media’s prevalent role in shaping reality through simulation, as well as the complete divide between reality as such and reality as coded by the media, is also one of the themes in DeLillo’s early novel *Great Jones Street*. Centered on the life of fictitious rock star Bucky Wunderlick, the novel follows the character as he decides to leave his band in the midst of a tour and retreat in his girlfriend’s small studio apartment in Manhattan, New York. Said to have been inspired by several episodes from the life of Bob Dylan – not only due to

the similarities with Dylan's public figure, but also because of the "Mountain Tapes" released by Wunderlick in his period of seclusion, which are a clear reference to Dylan's "Basement Tapes", recorded by the artist during his own period away from the public eye following a motorcycle accident in the mid-1960s –, the novel takes place almost entirely in the small apartment on Great Jones Street, in the sordid industrial area that still existed in the early 1970s in the NoHo district of Manhattan. Although retreated from any type of public appearance, not touring or holding concerts, barely talking to his manager and refusing any interviews, Bucky Wunderlick attracts a paradoxical amount of attention from the media. His absence from public life triggers an increase in the number of media interventions about him. In Baudrillard's (2001) terms, this is precisely what media does in the third phase of the simulacra, presented above: it fills the gap created by the absence of a certain character from reality, it simulates that particular reality.

Media headlines about Bucky Wunderlick are scattered throughout the novel, although he constantly refuses to talk with journalists, and hence the information is entirely fake. In a scene in which he is approached for an interview, he says to one journalist: "Make it all up. Go home and write whatever you want and then send it out on the wires. Make it up. Whatever you write will be true." (DeLillo 1973: 21). Clearly directing the irony towards news production, especially when it comes to tabloid media, DeLillo also acknowledges the powerful effects obtained through ritual repetition by the media, its unmatched capacity to create what will be perceived by the audiences as truthful. Many characters in the novel not only end up believing all the headlines they see or hear in the media, but they do so even when those headlines are about themselves. For example, one member of Wunderlick's band is only entirely certain that the band has broken up when he hears the announcement on the radio, even though the news may very well have been invented. The character's complete reliance on media as an indicator of what reality is reflects Baudrillard's larger conclusion regarding how the audiences "allow themselves the luxury of enjoying day by day, as in a home cinema, the fluctuations of their own opinion in the daily reading of the opinion polls." In other words, media consumption becomes the audience's "continual voyeurism [...] in relation to itself" (Baudrillard 1999: 101).

Therefore, Baudrillard's total equivalence between reality and its simulation – even when it is created arbitrarily, with no connection to facts, like in this case – finds here an extreme materialization, obviously meant to attain

an ironical effect. As the stance provided to the reader by the narrative frame allows a look at both the “real” reality and its “simulation” or “hyperreality” created by the media, what happens in the end to Bucky Wunderlick could be regarded as a symbolic silencing of the former in favor of the latter. Once a songwriter and composer, Wunderlick is forced by the chief of a quasi-terrorist organization involved in drug production and dealing, cynically named the Happy Valley Commune Farm, to ingest a drug that leads to an eerie form of brain numbing. Not only does Wunderlick become unable to utter any coherent word, apart from random mumblings and unintelligible noises, but words stop forming in his mind “the way they normally do and the way we all take for granted they will” (DeLillo 1973: 268). Although the effect proves to be temporary, the symbolic end of the character’s ability to speak represents a hands-on enactment of Baudrillard’s predicted death of “reality” and raise of its media-facilitated simulation.

Similar to Bucky Wunderlick from *Great Jones Street*, character Bill Gray in Don DeLillo’s novel *Mao II* (1991) is a famous writer who draws an increasing attention from the media the more he refuses to make public appearances or allow journalists to interview him. Just as Wunderlick seeks absolute privacy in his small apartment in Manhattan, Gray lives a secluded life in a house whose whereabouts away from civilization are well concealed. However, at the moment when the novel begins he accepts to have his picture taken by New York photographer Brita Nilsson. During the photo shoot, the two have a conversation about the meaning of the pictures, bringing about Baudrillard’s concept of the image’s role in creating hyperreality. “Are you making me up as you go along? Am I mimicking myself?” (1991: 19), Bill asks ironically, referring to what Baudrillard sees as the image’s power to recreate and simulate reality, and eventually to replace it. The media’s utter power to offer legitimacy to certain events and allow them to become reality seems to be acknowledged by Gray who nevertheless chooses to mock it: “I’ve become someone’s material. Yours, Brita. There’s the life and there’s the consumer event. Everything around us tends to channel our lives toward some final reality in print or on film. [...] Here I am in your lens. Already I see myself differently” (DeLillo 1991: 19).

The fact that Bill Gray acknowledges - albeit ironically - that he sees himself differently once his image is captured by Brita’s camera is yet another case of the contemporary audiences’ constant need to find a confirmation of reality in the media, their “continual voyeurism” in relation to themselves. As

stated in Baudrillard's interpretation of the phenomenon, this search for the reflection of the self inside the media should be read as a quest for personal identity. However, the result is far from a clear definition of the self, but rather develops into "a radical uncertainty" regarding one's own desire, choice, opinion and even one's own will. Swamped with an excessive amount of information, the receiver of the media message goes into a deep state of confusion. DeLillo's observed exception from the vast ambiguity generated by the media appears to be the irrational violence of the terrorist, as revealed in a conversation between George Haddad and Bill Gray in *Mao II*. The former says: "There's too much everything, more things and messages and meanings than we can use in ten thousand lifetimes. Inertia-hysteria. Is history possible? Is anyone serious? Who do we take seriously? Only the lethal believer, the person who kills and dies for faith. [...] Only the terrorist stands outside. The culture hasn't figured out how to assimilate him" (DeLillo 1991: 72).

In the era of overabundant media, in which – as Adorno (1999) and other critical theorists observed – the only drive behind the existence of "cultural industries" and their perpetuation through the media is economical efficiency and financial profit, the information delivered through communication channels is at the same time excessive and scanty. It is delivered in enormous amounts, but it is "vacuous, banal or worse." The promotion of insignificant events and characters, and the constant drive to use infotainment as a prevalent way of reporting is what confuses audiences to such an extent that they only become receptive towards events that go beyond the "formulas" and conformist frames that characterize the media discourse, according to Adorno. Terrorism represents precisely such a departure from the norms governing the production of "cultural commodities." The excessive violence provoked by "the person who kills and dies for faith," i.e. by someone whose life is not defined through a relationship with objects and consumption, but through religious beliefs and convictions, stands outside of the dominant media discourse. It shocks due to its motivations and means and cannot be assimilated inside the consumerist frame of the culture industries.

The shocking images disrupting the mainstream discourse have a seductive effect on audiences, amplified through ritual repetition. Seduction becomes the main strategy of grabbing attention in the midst of the confusion created by the equivalence between sign and meaning, in Baudrillard's terms. As Pammy who remains glued to the screen and continues to watch the film and identify with the characters even though she acknowledges the script as being

extremely formulaic, predictable and artificial, many other characters in DeLillo's fiction experience a similar "enchantment" when exposed to the commodified emotions delivered through media. In *Underworld*, the tape of a shooting committed by a serial murderer called the Texas Highway Killer is shown relentlessly during news bulletins and the son of the main character, Nick Shay, chooses to record it and watch it even more, mesmerized by the power of pure and aimless violence: "It shows something awful and unaccompanied. You want your wife to see it because it is real this time, not fancy movie violence [...]. Hurry up, Janet, here it comes. He dies so fast. [...]. You want to tell her it is realer than real but then she will ask what that means" (DeLillo 1997: 158). The unexpected death and the fact that it was captured on tape represents a strategy of seduction in itself: "Seeing someone at the moment he dies, dying unexpectedly. This is reason alone to stay fixed to the screen. It is instructional, watching a man shot dead as he drives along on a sunny day" (1997: 160).

The constructive nature of the media discourse in shaping reality, or rather what Baudrillard would call a simulation of reality or "hyperreality," can be traced in how the continual replay of the recorded murder confirms and legitimizes the event's "reality" and significance. The crime seems "designed for random taping and immediate playing". Moreover, "taping-and-playing intensifies and compresses the event" and "it dangles a need to do it again" (DeLillo 1997: 159).

By being reproduced and replayed in the media persistently, the killing seems to gain its substance and meaning. It becomes a famous murder because of its horrifying nature, but also because it is on tape and it was filmed accidentally by a child. In other words, the medium by which it is presented and the information about how the tape was recorded intervene in how it is received and perceived by the audiences. The inherent connection between the event and its presence on the screen makes DeLillo's character wonder whether such a crime would be possible in case there was no access to the means of disseminating duplications of the tape. The case for the strong effects of media consumption on the viewer and the increase in violent behavior as a result of exposure to violence in the media has been supported by several media analysts in the past (see the works on media influence of, among others, Th. Adorno, N. Chomsky and R. Hoggart). However, in *Underworld*, the result of repeated exposure to a brutal incident captured on film is not the viewer's tendency to emulate what happens on the screen, but seemingly leads to what Baudrillard calls an "anesthetization" of reactions:

The more you watch the tape, the deader and colder and more relentless it becomes. The tape sucks the air out of your chest but you watch it every time (1997: 159)

A similar effect in *Underworld* is performed by another film that produced a shock to American viewers and was played recurrently on TV in the early 1960s: the footage recorded by Abraham Zapruder with an amateur camera at John F. Kennedy's parade in Dallas, Texas, in November 1963, and which unexpectedly caught on film the assassination of the President. The Zapruder Film is part of the central plot in *Libra* and also mentioned in *Underworld* as being part of an art exhibition attended by character Klara Sax in the mid-1970s in New York, where the twenty-second climax of Zapruder's footage is projected continuously on the wall of an art gallery. Extracted from its initial context and reproduced for hundreds of times in an irritating sequence, the film is stripped from meaning and becomes nothing more than an aesthetic experience with an anesthetic effect on its audience. Its viewers watch it "in an acquired sort of awe", ceaselessly fascinated by the foreseeable sequence: "here comes the car, here comes the shot" (DeLillo 1997: 495).

The clip's ritual repetition transforms it into a genuine cultural product created for the purpose of entertainment, creating the induced suspense of a thriller movie. Hence, the context in which the Zapruder tape appears in DeLillo's novel serves as evidence for how entertainment becomes the natural form of presenting politics. As the main tool in constructing political discourse, media transforms political news into entertaining events for the audiences. Insights into the form and extent of this phenomenon are offered in the work of Neil Postman (1985). One of the first studies to proclaim that television "has made entertainment [...] the natural form of representation of all experience" (1985: 87), Postman's book drew a worryingly set of conclusions on how the discourse of televised politics is damaging the quality of public debate. He argued that the whole exhibition of political agendas and of campaign plans that was related to the electoral period is, under the requirements of the new media discourse, transformed into a confrontation of "impressions" rather than facts. Under the increased time-pressure and superficial scenarios of political talk shows, that do not explain extensively political matters but rather take a selective overview of them, candidates have now a higher chance of being successful by practicing their charisma instead of building a consistent electoral program. The idea of credibility no longer refers to "the past record of the teller for making statements that have survived the rigors of reality-testing," but to



the “impression of sincerity” and attractiveness that the performance of a politician manages to convey (1985: 102). In fact, Kennedy himself was a political character largely popular in the media. His success in his 1960 electoral campaign, and especially in the televised confrontation with Nixon on live television (first of this kind in American history), is a textbook example of image-based politics and the prevalence of infotainment.

While Postman’s (1985) contribution might be regarded as radical and somewhat speculative, because it makes little use of statistical research of media effects to base their judgments, Putnam’s (2000) is often regarded as landmark-evidence of the negative consequences of media consumption on how audiences engage in society. Using a set of quantitative research data, Putnam observes the correlations that exist between television watching and civic behavior in the United States. He considers a number of factors related to social participation (from education, gender and demographic features to income, religion, professional profile and many others), and concludes that audiences who show an increased dependence on TV are more likely to be civically disengaged, and televised entertainment is “the single most consistent predictor” in the process (2000: 231). The reasons behind this relate primarily to the individualization of entertainment consumption, facilitated by technology. The decreasing cost of media carriers, from television sets to mp3 players, has transformed entertainment into an experience that can be enjoyed completely alone.

In the first scene from DeLillo’s novel *The Body Artist* (2001) the alienating effect of media consumption is mirrored in the fragmentary conversation that Rey Robles and his wife Lauren Hartke have while they simultaneously share breakfast and listen to or read the news. Just partly paying attention to what her husband is saying, Lauren tends to “place herself, insert herself in certain stories in the newspaper” and experience “some kind of daydream variation” (2001: 14). The narcotic effect of reading news stories is acknowledged and yet repeated:

She did it and then became aware she was doing it and then sometimes did it again a few minutes later with the same or a different story and then became aware again.

As in the case of *White Noise* and other works by DeLillo, dialogue is permanently disrupted by the voice of a media device and characters seem to be hopelessly addicted to being involved simultaneously in several discourses. Lauren listens to the radio and hears about “a missile exploding mysteriously

underground in Montana” and does not catch “if it was armed or not”, reads an article and has a conversation “with a doctor in a news story” (2001: 23), while at the same time being engaged in a fragmentary conversation with Rey, frequently asking him to repeat what he said. The collage of nonsensical fragments of text coming from three different sources suggests the excessive amount of information with which contemporary audiences are flooded continuously and which, according to Baudrillard, induce a state of ambiguity and confusion, increased by the blurring boundaries between reality and its simulated version from the media.

Almost like an additional member of the couple, the media affects in an irreversible manner the husband and wife’s capacity to pay attention to each other. It attracts all of their ability to empathize with each other and sends them each in their own private daydream: “She drank her tea and read. Nearly everything she read sent her into reverie. She turned on the radio and tracked slowly along the dial, reading the paper, trying to find the weather on the radio. [...] She looked past the bowl into a space inside her head that was also in front of her” (2001: 23). The silence and obvious alienation of the two is confirmed by the subsequent development of the plot: just a few hours after leaving the kitchen where they had breakfast, Rey commits suicide, and Lauren realizes she has no clue about what could have determined him to do this.

### **3. Conclusion**

A pervasive presence in most of DeLillo’s novels, televised media facilitates self-reflection, functioning as a mirror in which characters are discovering themselves and the reality around them. However, as both Baudrillard and DeLillo seem to suggest, this “reflected reality” is nothing more than a simulation conceived solely for the purpose of mediation, with no connection to any true referent. Defined by Baudrillard as “hyperreality”, this media-created perception of the self and of the world nevertheless ends up replacing the characters’ own experiences and functions as a self-referential indicator of what is “real.” As revealed through the exploration of relevant fragments from several novels by Don DeLillo, the media-saturated society pictured in various fictional frames represents nothing more than a hands-on enactment of Baudrillard’s theories regarding the disappearance of the real in favor of the sign or the hyperreal.

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## WHO ARE WE?

MARIANNE BEAUVILAIN  
Mount Royal College of Calgary

*Abstract: The symbols we use to represent national or racial allegiances are often laden with an emotional significance that we are not always conscious of, and when our culture comes into contact with another one, we are often dismissive or even hostile to their use. Learning about their subtle, hidden meanings can lead to a deeper understanding of both cultures.*

*Keywords: castor canadensis, flags, Gallic Rooster, national identity, official vs popular culture, symbols, weddings.*

### 1. Introduction

Who are we? One of the ways we define who we are in terms of the country or nation we belong to often involves a common but often unconscious understanding of what shared national symbols represent and how they are used. During our socialization, we learn in a variety of informal ways to ascribe meaning to certain symbolic objects.

In his book *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*, Anderson (1991) explores people's intense and deep personal attachments to 'their' nation, a feeling which he attributes to their reactions to the insecurities of modernity, in a world where vertical forms of social organization have been replaced by new communities where "regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship" (1991: 7).

In this paper, I have analyzed differences between the ways French people and Canadians react to national cultural symbols. I have juxtaposed symbols from both cultures and analyzed differences in the way they are perceived by people raised in the two countries.

You might ask why I chose Canada and France. As a Canadian married to a Frenchman, I have found it intriguing during the course of our 37-year marriage to discover how our reactions differ. I was also intrigued to read an article written by a Stanford professor, Gregory Jusdanis, in which he explains how, right from the outset, the histories of the two countries have led to completely different concepts of the nation-state. He describes how France (and England) have evolved 'the nationalization of ethnicity':

England and France, products of long political traditions, have continuous histories of state-formation; they existed as continuous polities for centuries and developed into their modern form from their monarchial precursors.

Canada, on the other hand, is a country created through

common economic interests rather than by a common culture, its unification being a means to promote industrialization, catch up with Great Britain and the United States, and overcome perceived economic backwardness (Jusdanis, 1998: 5).

Jusdanis describes how the notion of national identity arising from a sense of shared culture is a relatively modern construct. He locates the emergence of culture based on national consciousness arising around the beginning of the industrial revolution, and cites Weber's (1968) affirmation that the concept of nationalism occurred towards the end of the nineteenth century. According to Jusdanis, post-Revolution France was considered 'the centralized state par excellence, which served as a model for nation-building elsewhere in Europe' (Jusdanis 1998: 7). On the other hand, it is significant to note that, unlike the French model of superimposed nationhood, Canada's symbols arise from popular sentiment; it is also significant that Canadians regularly volunteer 'multiculturalism' as a symbol or metaphor of the country.

## 2. National Symbols of France and Canada

Symbols of the French Republic	Symbols of Canada
Gallic Rooster	maple leaf - Canadian flag – maple syrup
Tricolor Flag	Rocky Mountains
Marseillaise	RCMP
Marianne	moose
Bastille Day: July 14 <sup>th</sup>	beaver
Official Seal of the Republic	multiculturalism
Motto: Liberty, Equality, Fraternity	beer ("I am Canadian" campaign)
	Roots
	the Queen
	hockey
	lacrosse
	Canada goose
	loon
	O Canada
	Joe Canada
	..., eh?
	Motto: a Mari usque ad Mare

(as displayed on the web site of the President of the French Republic, 2001)	(as volunteered by students in a civilization class at Mount Royal College, Calgary)
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The above chart lists national symbols of France and Canada. The French symbols on the left-hand side were found on the official web site of the French Prime Minister in 2001. There are no symbols associated with people holding elected office in Canada; the symbols on the right-hand side of the chart represent a mixture of official and popular symbols which were volunteered by a group of students, and which are also listed on popular sites like Wikipedia. (The Canadian government heritage sites contain various heraldic symbols linked to the monarchy and the Great Seal, with a representation of the Queen, but these are virtually unknown to most Canadians, and therefore do not serve as metaphors of “Canadianness” the way the official French symbols do for French citizens). I should point out that my discussion of Canadian symbols is limited to those proposed by students in a class from Western Canada; there would certainly be entirely different symbols had I done the same exercise with a class from Quebec.

The fact that the French list contains official symbols of the French Republic, and the Canadian one contains a mixture of both official and popular symbols, (if they can even be considered symbols at all), is a part of this discussion. The mixing of “apples and oranges” is deliberate.

**3. Who owns these symbols?**

Citizens of France have been taught to expect their elected officials to perform their duties in a circumscribed way, and the ceremonial aspect of what they do is understood by everyone. For one’s marriage to be recognized by the government, for example, a prescribed ceremony must be performed by the mayor of the district where one is registered, in a certain room of the appropriate City Hall, with a representation of the Marianne on display. It is one of the officially prescribed duties of the mayor to perform wedding ceremonies, and he/she follows a prescribed text, and wears the official red, white and blue cockard while performing the ceremony. French citizens can also celebrate their marriages in another ceremony whenever and however they choose, but the official secular ceremony is the only one which is officially recognized by the state. There is no equivalent to this in Canada, where people can ask a wide variety of people, secular or religious, to perform the wedding ceremony, and it is up to individuals to pay for the service, since it is not part of the job description of public servants.

Another difference between the two cultures is illustrated by the ways French and Canadian flags are flown. For the French, the Tricolor flag is flown only over government buildings, and not by private citizens, (the exception being on the National Holiday on July 14<sup>th</sup>). In Canada, on the other hand, people display flags however they see fit; some people fly flags in front of their homes, and many individuals have flag pins or small flags sown on their clothing or their bags. Flying a flag is not seen only as an official function of the state, but also as a way for citizens to express their love of the country, and everyone recognizes and appreciates the sentiment when the biggest flags of all are flown by PetroCanada gas stations along the Transcanada highway.

#### **4. The Gallic Rooster and the Castor Canadensis**

Within the confines of this presentation, there is only time to explore one symbol at length, and I have selected the Gallic Rooster and its four Canadian equivalents, namely the moose, the beaver, the Canada Goose and the loon.

The rooster is a domesticated bird which lives with people, either on farms or in small agglomerations. The crowing of a rooster is a part of the rhythm of rural French daily lives, and the rooster is personified in expressions like ‘to strut like a rooster’ or ‘to rooster tail it out of here’. There are even more expressions in French about the ‘coq’, the bird itself can even be transformed into the most famous of all French dishes, a ‘coq au vin’.

The Gallic Rooster has been used symbolically in France for a very long time. Some of the earliest coins of Gaul bore the image of a rooster. Coincidentally, the Latin word ‘gallus’ can refer to at least two things: a rooster, or the inhabitants of the old territory of Gaul. It is also etymologically related to the word ‘Gaelic’ in English.

During the Middle Ages, the Gallic Rooster was widely used as a religious symbol associated with the Catholic Church. According to all four gospels, for example, Jesus correctly predicted that Peter would deny him three times before the rooster crowed. From the time of Clovis’ conversion to Christianity in 496 A.D., French kings derived their divine authority to rule from their association with the church, and used the rooster as one of their symbols. It was the prerogative of the king to display the rooster, and it would have been unthinkable for a commoner to do so.

After the French Revolution, the rooster was adopted as an official symbol of the new French Republic. It was featured on the *écu* coin sporting the

Phrygian bonnet, on the seal of the First Consul, and surmounted atop the staff carried by the allegorical figure Fraternity.

The famous wrought-iron 'Rooster Gate' in front of the French Presidential Élysée Palace was created during the Third Republic, and the 20F gold piece struck in 1899 also bears a rooster. During the First World War, rising patriotic feeling made the Gallic rooster the symbol of France's resistance and bravery in the face of the Prussian eagle.

Roosters can today be seen on weather vanes, church steeples, and war memorials, and, most importantly for the purposes of this paper, on sports jerseys of *official* French teams. When the French national rugby team plays, fans actually bring live roosters to the game. French people automatically recognize the rooster on official sports uniforms, and, of course, feel proud when one of their own mounts the podium, but, on the other hand, when people become overly chauvinistic, others will be quick to criticize them as being too "Cocorico!"

Which of the symbols put forward by the Canadian students might be equivalent to the Gallic Rooster? The four, found both on Wikipedia and on the list drawn up by students, include the moose, the Canada Goose, the loon and the beaver. Unlike the Gallic Rooster, these are birds and animals whose natural habitat is the wilderness. Canadians' eyes will, as often as not, glaze over, as they recall a special, almost magical moment, often at dawn or at dusk, when they were privileged to see one of these animals. For the most part, they exist in the unexplored wilderness regions of the country, where, most Canadians would agree, their natural habitat ought not to be invaded. Unlike a powerful lion or a soaring eagle, the moose, the Canada Goose, the loon and the beaver neither attack nor defend anyone, nor do they have the same historical relevance for the relatively new peoples who have settled in this land and who now consider themselves Canadians. They are, however, part of the mythology and the spirituality which are a part of our native people's world view.

The moose is commonly recognized by Canadians as a national symbol. Souvenir shops contain all sorts of dolls and pictures of Canadian moose, including many plush animals in the form of moose Mounties. If you were to ask the Canadian students who contributed to the list to tell what the moose symbolizes, (and I did), they might laughingly refer to Moosehead beer, a brand invented in 1867 by an independent family brewing company in Nova Scotia which has always refused to sell out to American and European interests. The students might also know about a fund-raising event held in 2000 as a part



of an event called "Moose in the City": 326 moose statues were created in Toronto by over 500 local artists, and were subsequently auctioned off, generating proceeds for the Canadian Olympics. Some of those moose statues are still on display in all sorts of public and private venues all over the city. There is also a hockey club called the Toronto Canada Moose Junior 'A' Hockey Club. Canadians are not shocked to think of these popular versions of national culture, nor are they surprised to consider the Canada Goose and the loon in the same category. Like Canadians, the Canada Goose has migrated from afar, and it likes to spend its summer in remote wilderness places. The loon has a haunting, yodeling cry which sends a shiver of delight up the spine of campers in the wilderness. It has been recognized as a Canadian symbol ever since the government first introduced the first one-dollar coin featuring a loon in 1987. It quickly earned the nickname "loonie", and on March 15, 2006, the Royal Canadian Mint secured the rights to that name. In recent years, the loonie has become associated with winning hockey and curling teams. It would seem that during international competitions, whenever a loonie is hidden under the ice surface, the Canadian team wins. Or so the legend goes. Unfortunately, other teams are now on it, and have been known to sneak in and remove it. (Watch out world: The Royal Canadian Mint has just issued a specially-designed "Lucky Loonie" for the 2010 Winter Olympics!)

In terms of official symbolic representation, the only animal which has been recognized on government documents and images is the beaver. Beaver pelts, used to make elegant top hats for men and ceremonial hats for palace guards, were one of the highly prized resources that first lured European explorers to Canada. Both the French and English competed in the fur trade; one of the most successful companies to be established at the time was the Hudson's Bay Company, whose Coat of Arms had a shield with two moose and four beavers separated by a red St. George's Cross. A coin was created at that time to equal the value of one beaver pelt, and today our five-cent coin, called a nickel, still bears the image of a beaver. The French also honored the beaver, and in 1678, the Governor of New France, Louis de Buade de Frontenac, proposed that the beaver be adopted as an emblem for the Colony and included in the Coat of Arms of Quebec City. In 1690, the "Kebeca Liberata Medal" was struck to commemorate France's successful defense of Quebec. The reverse depicts a seated woman, representing France, with a beaver at her feet, representing Canada. (How symbolic is that!) The beaver was included in the Coat of Arms of the City of Montréal when it was incorporated in 1833, and it

was featured on Canada's first Canadian postage stamp, the "Three Penny Beaver" of 1851. It was also one of the emblems of the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste for a time, and is still found on the crest of the Canadian Pacific Railway Company. Thus, although the beaver did not become an official emblem of Canada until it received Royal assent on March 24, 1975, it can be considered to have represented the country in various official ways even before the Gallic Rooster was chosen to officially represent the French Republic.

How, then, do Canadians and French citizens react to their national symbol, be it the Gallic Rooster or the *Castor Canadensis*?

As a symbolic bird, the rooster has a very clearly defined role in terms of what it represents for French citizens. It means: "this is the steeple of a church" or "this is a war monument" or "this is an official member of a national sports team". The pictorial image of a rooster features prominently on official French documents, and everyone recognizes the official aspect of it.

As mentioned earlier, the beaver figures as well as an official symbol, but much less. On the other hand, souvenir shops in Canada are full of cute little plush toy moose or beavers dressed up in the uniform of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, or decorated with little maple leaf flags. In spite of the fact that they are mass produced, they have a kind of down home popular appeal. Canadians buy them to offer as souvenirs as a gesture of friendship. You would never find cute little plush toy roosters in French souvenir shops, not because there are not a lot of tacky souvenirs in France, but rather because the rooster is an aesthetic representation of the official French government, and also because it would be inappropriate and somewhat presumptuous for private citizens to pretend to officially represent the country.

## **5. Conclusion**

In my introduction, I discussed the fact that people create and use symbols to distinguish who they are as a people. Referring to Jusdanis' article, I pointed out the difference between the ways national cultural symbols arose in France and in Canada. These differences highlight different attitudes towards the government, the private individual, and the meaning of citizenship for French and Canadian citizens.

Is France able to adapt to changing political and economic realities by embracing changes in the metaphorical significance of its official symbols? What do these symbols represent for the increasingly numerous citizens of Maghreb descent? What does the 'plain Jane' Marianne who arose in 1972

wearing her Phrygian bonnet represent to women who wear hijabs? Moreover, what does it mean for feminists when Brigitte Bardot and Laetitia Casta become her models? As regards evolving official symbolism, one change which has already occurred in France is the removal of official symbols from the site of the President of the French Republic. Since he was elected, Nicolas Sarkozy has transformed it from an official site of 'the President' to his own personal site. Many French people feel that Sarkozy has moved to embrace American attitudes and values, and this would seem to bear them out. Is this a good thing?

In Canada, our national symbols are often related to recent political and social realities such as the Olympics and even commercial ventures associated with Canada. When Canadians see a huge maple leaf flag flying over a Husky service station on the open highway, for example, or companies like Roots, which designed the official Canadian uniforms for the 1998 Winter Olympics, or Tim Horton's, whose coffee shops have become a sort of cultural icon, Canadians respond in much the same way Americans respond to MacDonald's Arches and Coca-Cola. What does this blending of commercial and official symbols say about the Canadian psyche? More importantly, how do the native peoples of Canada relate to the colonizer's appropriation of symbols of the wilderness which already play an important symbolic role in native culture?

Jusdanis asks at the beginning of his article, "Is national culture over? Is the mortar of sentiment, beliefs, and customs that once cemented nations now crumbling before our eyes?" (1998: 17) In the end, he speaks of a post-industrial, post-modern society where culture itself is returned to the social realm. Will this happen, or will new forms of cultural nationalism emerge? Whatever the case, I have found it personally enriching to observe how two cultures represent themselves to each other and to the world.

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# TEEN PERCEPTION OF CULTURAL EXPERIENCES AND MASS MEDIA INFLUENCE IN SHAPING CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR (A SOCIOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION)

**CORICI MIRONICĂ**  
University of Timișoara

***Abstract:** The purpose of this paper is to analyze the opinion of teenagers, regarded as a linguistic community, towards cultural experiences and the influence of mass-media in shaping consumer behaviour, through specifically structured messages. In order to better understand mass media mechanisms, we need a strategy aiming at standardising the concepts that influence behaviour in the context of globalization.*

***Keywords:** behaviour, communication, culture, mass-media, message.*

## **1. Introduction**

The analysis and evaluation scope of communicational environments, regarded in the overlapping area between social and linguistic boundaries, implies sharing a certain language and a better circulation of values from one culture to another. This can be achieved by offering a wider range of possibilities to access the cultural environment. The members of a community can see the importance of media education beyond direct observation. Because the axiological structures of a particular culture are deeply rooted in the conscience of society, they are frequently being used in evaluations without the subjects' awareness.

Governed by the commercial aspects of globalization, ubiquitous nowadays, the massive increase of people and idea migration casts doubts upon the relationship between identity and alterity. Identities are being developed around difference-similarity relationships, and, if regarded from a wider perspective:

the values promoted by the instruments of mass-media communication are many times tributary to commerciality working against authentic cultural values, and thus making the level of culture drop and become more fragmentary (Sava 2007: 46).

Our social orientation highly depends on understanding the elements underlying the production process of published material, as this makes us less vulnerable to manipulation.

Every reality depends upon (1) ceaseless reflexive use of (2) a body of knowledge in (3) interaction. Every reality is also fragile. Suppression of the activities that the first three features describe disrupts reality. Every reality is equally capable of dissolution. The presence of these fragility features of reality has been demonstrated by studies called incongruity procedures or breaching experiments (Holstein 2003: 44).

Commercialism, prejudice and many other distorted perceptions of different types of manipulation are caused by differences in the value structures of individuals interacting in the social environment and belonging to different cultures. A common feature of all cultures is the existence of values. The structures of these values are abstract constructions, distributed in the social environment, that influence the cultural systems and are used by individuals to construe social behaviour.

The aim of our research was to examine teens' perception of cultural experiences and the media influence in targeting consumer behaviour. This will be emphasized through a questionnaire-based survey.

## **2. Methodological aspects**

### **2.1. Setting the objectives**

*General objective:*

To describe mass media use in teenagers (television, mobile phones, computers, Internet and video games) and to analyze its influence on teenagers' health and development.

*Specific objectives:*

- Identifying teen leisure habits.
- Identifying the frequency of mass-media consumption.
- Identifying the different types of literature read by teenagers.
- Identifying the motivation beyond mass-media consumption.
- Identifying the resources allocated to mass-media consumption.

### **2.2. Choosing the appropriate methods**

The undertaken study employs two different research methods: quantitative and qualitative. The quantitative method aims at classifying features, count them, and build statistical models in an attempt to explain what is observed, whereas the qualitative method consists of using content analysis in order to gather in-depth understanding of the researched subject.

Steps in conducting the research:

- documentation – document analysis (literature, magazines, etc) ;
- collecting data – face-to-face questionnaire administration;
- analysing data – MS Office and SPSS.

### **2.3. Questionnaire construction**

The questionnaire consists of the following question types:

- opinion questions (opinions, motivations, values, etc.);
- knowledge questions;
- factual questions (socio-economic aspects).

### **2.4. Establishing the hypothesis**

- Teens spend most of their leisure time reading magazines.
- The most common leisure activity is watching television.
- Being trendy is an important motivation for teens to read magazines.

### **2.5. Choosing the focus group**

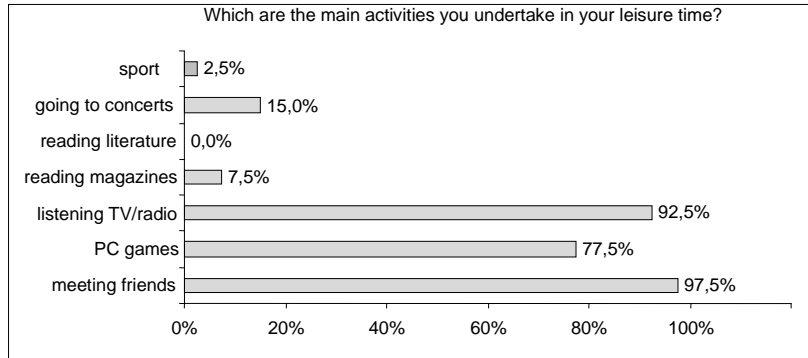
We established as a basic focus group the high-school population, aged between 14 and 18, in Timișoara, Romania. We have chosen four representative high-schools: *Colegiul Național “Constantin Diaconovici Loga”*, *Liceul Teoretic Nikolaus Lenau*, *Liceul Pedagogic Carmen Silva* and *Liceul Teoretic William Shakespeare*, where we applied the questionnaire to 384 subjects. Considering specific criteria such as age, sex and reading behaviour, our research resulted in obtaining a group of 40 respondents.

### **2.6. Analysing and interpreting data**

The hypothesis was tested using statistical analysis. The analysed database comprised the answers obtained from the representative respondents.

## **3. Frequency analysis**

The purpose of this question was to identify the preferred leisure activities of teenagers. The percentage distribution indicates that 97,5% usually choose to meet with friends, 92,5% choose mass-media, while PC games are chosen by 77.5% of the respondents. This indicator shows that, because none of the subjects chooses to read books as a pass-time, the risk of undeveloped critical thinking and language skills can become a reality.



Concerning the frequency of magazine reading, 55% of the interviewed subjects said they were reading one per week. This indicator shows that the reading activity is monopolized by reading magazines.

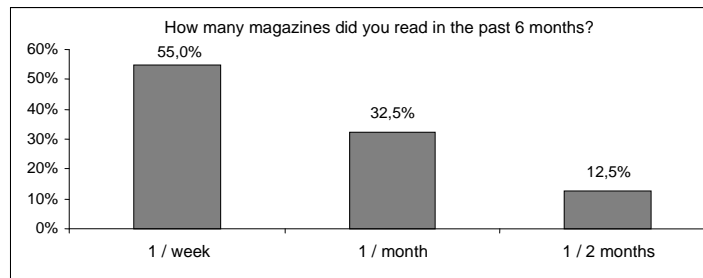


Fig. 2.

The purpose of the was to identify if teenagers consult alternative resources. 47,5% confirmed this fact, but more than half risk being contaminated and manipulated by mass-media.

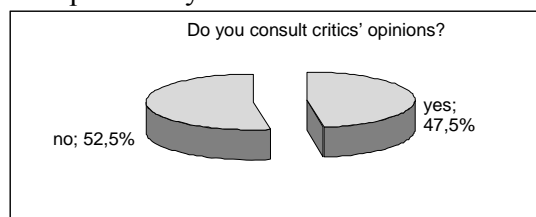


Fig. 3.

The purpose of this question was to discover how teens build their social perception/opinion through reading magazines. The three possible answers were almost evenly distributed amongst the respondents. Thus, 37.5% engage in the activity from a social/ moral perspective, 32.5% from the

perspective of other teens and 30% from the authors' perspective. This connection between teen readers and reading is fundamental in developing personal values; hence, teens tend to judge readings from social and moral perspectives.

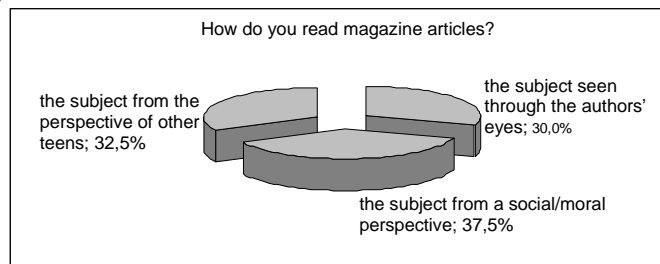


Fig 4.

The answers to the question “How interested are you in movies, news, entertainment?” show that teens are mostly interested in movies (65%) and entertainment (52.5%).

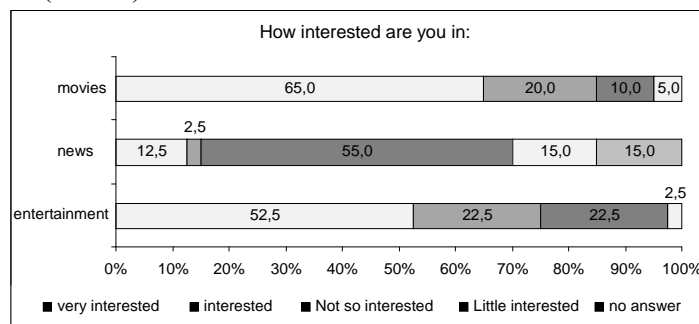


Fig 5.

The purpose of this question was also to identify teens' reading preferences. The most common are entertainment (47.5%) and teen magazines (42.5%).

The purpose of the question below was to learn about the amount of time spent by teens for mass-media consumption. The percentage distribution shows that 60% are watching TV more than 5 hours a day, 52.5% listen to the radio between one to five hours a day, and 50% read magazines for one to five hours a day.



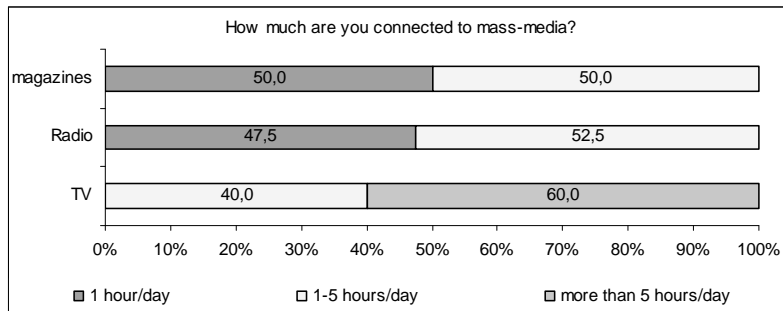


Fig 6.

Statistics show that lyric, chosen by 37.5% of the respondents, is the most important literature genre, closely followed by epic with 35% and dramatic with 27.5% as far as the interviewed teenagers' preferences for types of literary readings are concerned.

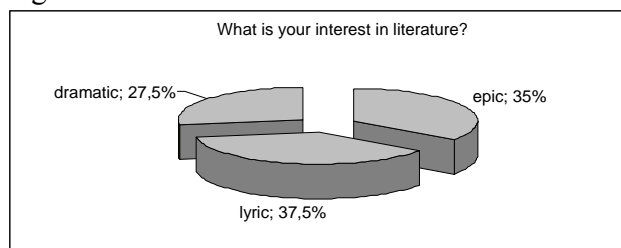


Fig 7.

The purpose of the next question was to determine the preferred types of literature amongst teens. On a scale from 1 (very often) to 5 (never), science fiction turned out to be the most appreciated genre, followed by journals and novels.

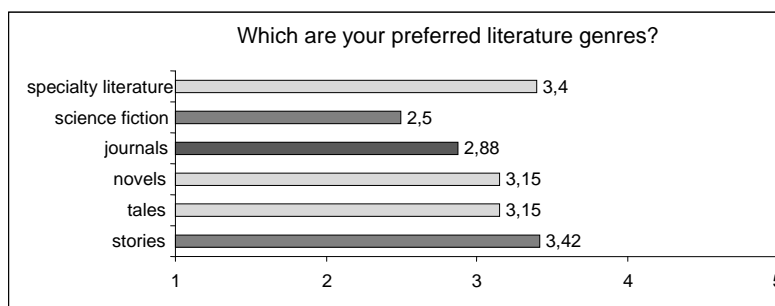


Fig 8.

The purpose of the next question was to identify which of the three external factors (friends, educational level, family) influences the mass-media

and literature consumption the most. The same scale 1 (very often) to 5 (never) was used.

The answers show that friends are the most influencing factor in mass-media and literature consumption, while family is the least important.

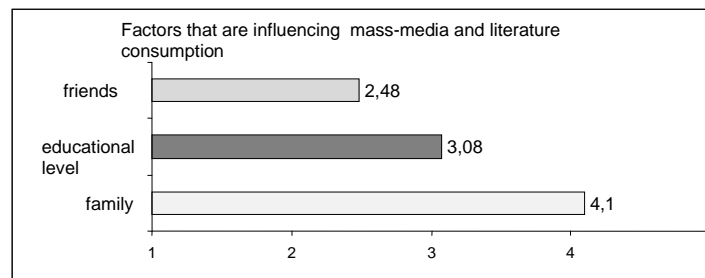


Fig 9.

Looking at the teenagers' motivation behind reading literature, we found that their main arguments are: inspiration (35%), leisure (30%) and learning new things (30%).

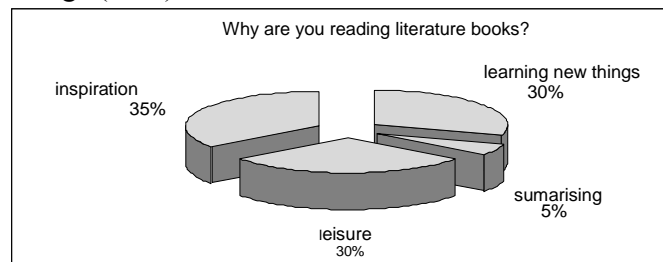


Fig 10.

Looking at the teens' motivation for reading magazines meant for the public of their age, we found that learning new things and being trendy are the most influencing factors. The opinion that group values are of great importance for teens is thus justified.

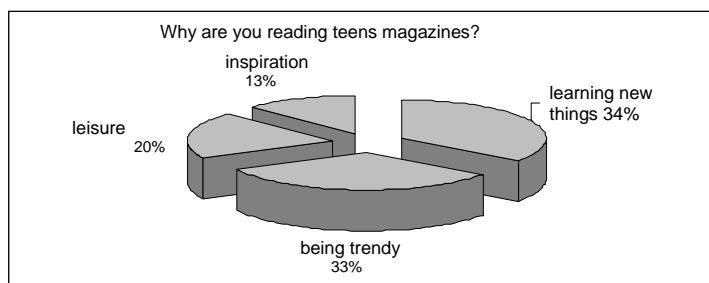


Fig 11.

Financial aspects are not of great importance as far as buying magazines is concerned.

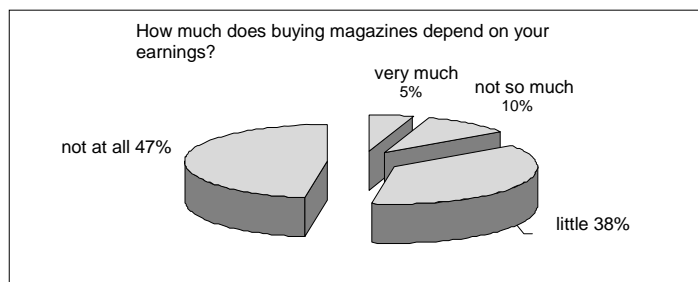


Fig 12.

When trying to identify the amount of money spent on buying books and magazines, our research indicated that teens spent quite substantially on buying entertainment magazines (39.5%) and almost nothing on literature books.

#### 4. Sample characteristics

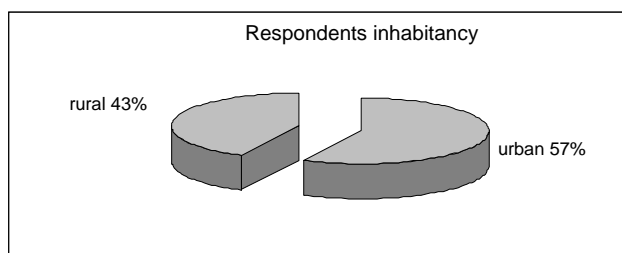


Fig 13.

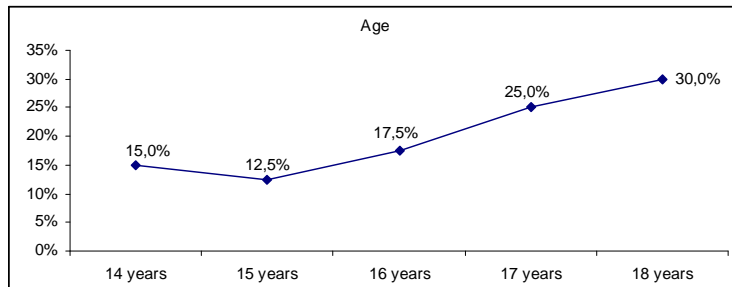


Fig 14.

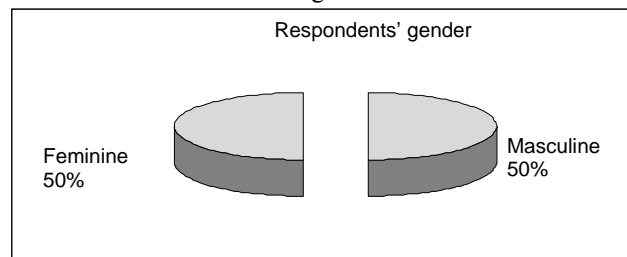


Fig 15.

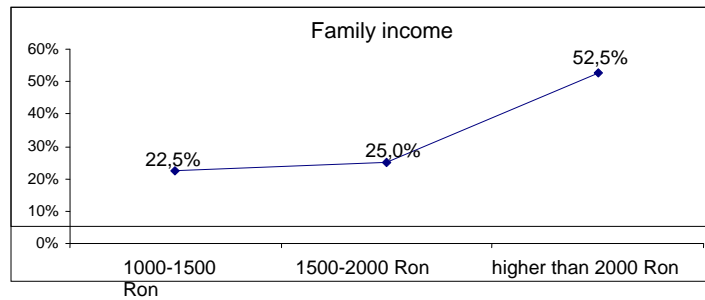


Fig 18.

## 5. Cross tabulations and correlations

We correlated the “meeting friends” activity to gender to show that both girls and boys prefer the same types of leisure activities.

		Sex		Total
		Male	Female	
Leisure activities - meeting friends	Yes	50,0%	47,5%	97,5%
	No	0%	2,5%	2,5%
Total		50,0%	50,0%	100,0%

We also correlated the “meeting friends” activity with the urban/rural distribution of the respondents to show that location does not change the teens’ choice of leisure activities.

		Inhabitancy		Total
		urban	rural	
Leisure activities - meeting friends	Yes	55,0%	42,5%	97,5%
	No	2,5%	0%	2,5%
Total		57,5%	42,5%	100,0%

By correlating the answers to the question “Do you consult the critics’ opinions?” with gender, we discovered that girls were more active in this sense than boys were. The Chi-Square test confirms our hypothesis because of its significance level (0.00) for a 12.13 value. This means that the difference between genders can be statistically explained.

		Sex		Total
		Male	Female	
Do you consult critics’ opinions?	yes	10,0%	37,5%	47,5%
	no	40,0%	12,5%	52,5%
Total		50,0%	50,0%	100,0%

#### Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	12,130	1	,000		
Continuity Correction(a)	10,025	1	,002		
Likelihood Ratio	12,842	1	,000		
Fisher's Exact Test				,001	,001
No. of Valid Cases	40				

We correlated the same question with the location factor and discovered no statistical differences between answers.

		Inhabitancy		Total
		urban	rural	
Do you consult the critics’ opinions?	yes	32,5%	15,0%	47,5%
	no	25,0%	27,5%	52,5%
Total		57,5%	42,5%	100,0%

#### Chi-Square Tests

We correlated the readers' gender with their interest rate in entertainment. The percentage distribution shows that girls tend to be slightly more interested in TV entertainment than boys.

		Gender		Total
		M	F	
How interested are you in TV entertainment?	very interested	22,5%	30,0%	52,5%
	Interested	17,5%	5,0%	22,5%
	not so interested	7,5%	15,0%	22,5%
	little interested	2,5%	0%	2,5%
Total		50,0%	50,0%	100,0%

## 6. Conclusion

To sum up the results of our research, we may indicate that:

- There is a real risk of underdeveloped critical thinking and language proficiency in the case of teenagers because of their choice not to read books as a way of passing their free time;
- Meeting with friends is the most important leisure activity irrespective of gender and location;
- Magazines are the most popular type of printed media read by teens with a frequency of at least one per week;
- Even if it is important to consult the critics' opinions, more than half of the respondents do not do it on a regular basis; this can lead to the possibility of their being manipulated and contaminated by the views expressed by the mass-media;
- Girls consult the critics' opinions more often than boys do;
- The connection between teen readers and reading is fundamental in developing personal values. We can say that teens tend to judge readings from a social and moral perspective;
- Percentage distribution shows that teens are mostly interested in movies and entertainment;
- 60% of the respondents watch TV more than five hours a day, which means that television represents a threat to personal development;
- The preferred literature genre is the lyric;

- Friends are the main influencing factor in mass-media and literature consumption. This means that they have a stronger socialization impact than family has at this age;
- The most important motivation for teens when reading magazines is learning new things followed by their desire to be trendy;
- The percentage distribution shows that girls tend to be slightly more interested in entertainment than boys.

Commercial communication may influence an individual who does not possess the ability to understand mass-media mechanisms. The commercial message as propaganda may become a specific form of mass-media manipulation through specific messages. The capacity of the receptor needs to be stimulated in order to understand these mechanisms and strategies.

The development of a strategy that encourages the media to promote critical thinking is crucial for the personal development of teenagers. Considering that the most popular leisure activities amongst teenagers relate to media consumption, such a strategy would facilitate the assimilation of higher values through media influences, because:

the specialized assistance at the community level is presented as a main method, through which the individuals, groups and organizations are engaging in planned activities to react to certain social problems (Pop 2002: 432).

Education, as a social action, in the context of media decoding, should be consumer behaviour oriented. It must concentrate its energy towards shaping the media consumer into a trained individual, with abilities and competences in the area of critical analysis of the media language.

Society, as a concept, in the context of scientific research, should always be regarded as a global unit because

globalization is the main phenomenon that influences the contemporary security environment, creating opportunities, but also new risks and threats (Onişor 2009: 9).

Maintaining the current high-level frequency consumption of media products will only cause youngsters' cognitive and epistemic system to be negatively influenced. This is augmented by the fact that most teenagers do not consider the critics' opinion concerning media content. Only a small number of the magazines read by teenagers enclose specialised columns dedicated to critical analysis of various issues, thus contributing little to developing

youngsters' knowledge of important matters. Teaching the consumers not to be misled by magazines saturated with commercial materials and to filter the educational content can contribute to a positive attitude orientation. Society as a whole and especially health professionals should increase health education on mass media consumption, by stimulating reasonable use of mass media and teaching teenagers to be critical.

Our research emphasizes the need to promote a strategy, in a wider social context, for developing competency in mass-media and, thus, for facilitating the assimilation of knowledge through media influences and integrating such a strategy in the educational system. Hence, the demand for a new form of education with broader intercultural availability.

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**CYBERPUNK AND A ROMANIAN ABROAD:  
MESSI@H BY ANDREI CODRESCU**

**ECATERINA HANȚIU**  
University of Oradea

*Abstract:* Codrescu's "Messi@h" is a fantastic journey through the universe of imagination, a brilliantly conceived tale of messianic longing, set as Armageddon rages across the globe at the turn of the millennium. Most of this cyber-cosmic story relating incredible events is placed in New Orleans, a multicultural city, a modern Babel and a new Sodom in the same time, in which detective Felicity Lejeune is trying to save the desolate contemporary world.

*Keywords:* Armageddon, carnival, cybermythology, identity, multiculturalism.

*Do Androids dream of Electric Sheep?*  
Philip Kindred Dick (1968)

## **1. Introduction**

Speculations on current or future science and technology have always seemed attractive to a large number of readers. Including a wide range of subgenres and themes, Science Fiction literature is difficult to define.

Cyberpunk, a phenomenon that stays out of the mainstream is basically a sign of revolt, of anarchy, even in the context of Sci-Fi literature. The first impact the genre generates is the need of creating a space where human spirit and brain can adapt to the technological shock in an era of extreme digitalization. (Digitalization – although many would reject the term as non-existent - is, in our opinion, the socio-cultural phenomenon wrought from the mass scale digitization of everything digitizable). The space covered by technology is now not one of a single country, but that of the entire world, and sometimes (but not necessarily) humans can travel to other planets too. This *worldness*, as Brian McHale calls it, inaugurates a new logic - that of the hyperreality, of the inability of consciousness to distinguish reality from fantasy (McHale 1987).

The literature included in the SF category is presented by Darko Suvin (1995: 37) as:

a literary genre or verbal construct whose necessary and sufficient conditions are the presence and interaction of estrangement and cognition, and whose main device is an imaginative framework alternative to the author's empirical environment

Although belonging to the period of the PoMo trend, cyberpunk literature has little to do with fragmentation and deconstruction, but has a lot to do with re-telling stories, especially stories about some kind of entity or non-entity ruling the universe. Cyberpunk literature as a special branch of SF literature is, according to Brian McHale (1987: 59) "the ontological genre par excellence" focusing on both high-tech and low life. In the concluding essay of his *Constructing Postmodernism, Towards a Poetics of Cyberpunk*, McHale (1992) shows how the main motifs that he identifies as postmodernist concern with *worldness*, with the centrifugal self, and with individual and collective death appear in cyberpunk actualized and literalized, "translate[d] or transcode[d]... from the level of form (the verbal continuum, narrative strategies) to the level of content or world" (McHale 1992: 246).

The genre's vision is that of a troubled future in which direct communication between the human brain and computer systems is possible, making the border between actual and virtual reality get blurred.

The portmanteau word *cyberpunk*, derived from *cybernetics* and *punk* tries to define both advanced science and a breakdown or radical change in society. Near-future Earth rather than far-future galactic spaces (such as those in Asimov's or Frank Herbert's works) is the place where hackers, artificial intelligences and giant multinational corporations fight for power or facilities on a post-industrial generally dystopic background (like in William Gibson's *Neuromancer* or *Johnny Mnemonic*). The main characters of such works are generally marginalized misfits, antiheroes playing the detective or even dealing in private investigation; these cyber-Robin Hoods are fighting injustice, but they are often manipulated and placed in situations where they have little or no choice. Still, they might see things through performing additional tasks or solving additional puzzles, just as in the computer games in which reaching the next level requires extra-effort.

According to William Gibson, the father of cyberpunk, the cyberworld is situated between two major dimensions: "The body is our interface" (that is the abstraction that an entity provides of itself to the outside) and "There is no there there" (Gibson 1989). A quote from Gertrude Stein's book *Everybody's Autobiography*, "There is no there there", refers to her homecoming after thirty years in Paris: she came back to find her house was no longer there, her school

was no longer there, her park was no longer there, so for her, there was no longer a *there* there. Used by William Gibson (1989) to describe cyberspace, the meaning of this phrase was that space itself is not a spatial referent; cyberspace represents *data* and not *place*. To humans there must be a *there there* as a rule - for they are occupying a space, as unreal as that space may be; but in the cyberspace there are only code objects, created and in some cases controlled by the users. On the other hand, it sounds like a defiant answer to the well-known: "The truth is out there" promoted by the *X-files*.

## 2. Andrei Codrescu's Cyberpunk

Among the various writers who adopted cyberpunk to some extent there is the Romanian-American Andrei Codrescu, one of the postmodern novelists with a special zest for (re)telling stories. Belonging through his Jewish-Romanian roots both to a noble family of space and time travellers and a nation of skilful story-tellers, Andrei Codrescu was born in Sibiu, Romania in 1946 and then he settled down to the United States of America. For Codrescu, the traveller who has left behind his Romanian culture, based in turn on the foundation of his Jewish origins, in order to join the American multiculturalism, especially the one specific to New Orleans, the importance of myths and rituals as symbolic solutions for the conditions in which we live is evident. Re-writing history and legend was successfully accomplished by Codrescu in such novels as *The Blood Countess* (1995), *Casanova in Bohemia* (2002) or *Wakefield* (2004). In the first two, historical reality is changed into a possible option, facts are non-compulsory, while legends become credible truths: Countess Elizabeth Báthory and Giacomo Casanova are but victims of a society that later on they will victimize, Wakefield signs his pact with a devil that is too old and bored to take the whole affair seriously.

The way in which Andrei Codrescu reappeared in the European – and meanwhile the Romanian - literary space is surprising: he returned with an eschatological novel summing up, besides many other issues, various themes connected with the general view on the fatal year 2000. *Messi@h* brings over the impressive and meanwhile desolate spectacle of the contemporary world, in which space was substantially diminished, becoming so small that privacy is but rarely possible to obtain, and in which seclusion in the classic sense of the word had simply disappeared. The magic of words dominates *Messi@h*, the cyberpunk novel published by Andrei Codrescu in 1999, starting with the names of the numerous characters that populate it and ending with the symbolic

Language Crystal, representing a mystery as powerful as that of the Holy Grail. It is not by chance that most of this cyber-cosmic story relating incredible events is placed in New Orleans, a multicultural city, a modern Babel and a new Sodom in the same time, where synesthesia rules. The description of the city, as provided by the author, suggests a strange mixture, both dubious and attractive, full of various flavours, resembling the *gumbo*, a specific local shellfish soup:

New Orleans is a *gumbo*, a mix like America itself, only more so. Black and white, hot and sour, ochre and pink, male and female - shiftingly and vaguely so - catholic and sweaty, pagan and nude, empty and masked, drunk and ascetic, squat, loquacious, and generous, sentimental, fat, visionary, hallucinatory - it is a window into the soul of a mix that heaven itself will soon become (Codrescu 1999: 173).

The time when the events happen is chosen on purpose too. It is the end of the year 1999; it is the time when the new millennium is striving to be born, the Apocalypse is to rush down in disaster upon a confused and perplexed world, in a city whose future is compared by some of the scientists to that of the ancient Atlantis. Codrescu seems to feel, like a true visionary, the catastrophe that was to come upon New Orleans some years later, in 2005, when hurricane Katrina destroyed the city.

The feeling of an imminent disaster is in the air from the very beginning of the novel, when Felicity LeJeune, a young Creole detective, is watching her grandmother die on a hospital bed, meanwhile turning in her mind innumerable frustrating thoughts. The young woman starts a personal crusade against televangelist Mullin, who pretends to be God's man, but who actually is the pervert crook who had robbed Felicity's senile grandmother of a winning lottery ticket. Felicity's war is supported by Major Notz, an old friend of her family and a paternal figure for her.

Actually Major Notz turns out to be the main programmer of the whole game. No wonder he is given a suggestive name, implying both multiple negations and the possibility of tying and untying *knots*; no wonder he has a high military rank, as he is the one to plan the strategy of the game. He creates the profiles of his heroes: Felicity LeJeune, the nonconformist private eye, or *girl dick* as she calls herself and Mullin (a hybrid between Elvis Presley and a Baptist preacher). Jeremy „Elvis” Mullin means a threat not only for the parishers whose devotion he wins with his elaborate speeches, but also with bizarre methods based on hypnosis and neuro-linguistic programming. Under

his mask of kindness and Christian tolerance there is serious danger and a menace for the whole world. Major Notz himself - who, as the stupefied readers learn, had „created” this malefic spirit and had encouraged his evolution in the hope that he might offer mankind a savior - turns now against him.

The meaningful words that Andrei Codrescu ceaselessly juggles with in his novel are nothing but tiny shards of the broken Language Crystal that Major Notz mentions when he tries to explain Felicity the possible meaning of her name.

We speak words that contain divine sounds, we write words within which lie hidden meanings. You can puzzle out the true nature of your life by simply hearing or seeing common words. Take your name, ‘Felicity.’ It means ‘happiness’ [...] But within it [...] there is also a ‘city’ and ‘fel’. You might say that ‘a city fell’ to bring about the ‘happiness’ you embody. What city? When? You see, the simple act of breaking your name into syllables has already yielded a mystery. This is only a bit of light from the Language Crystal. Now imagine the brilliant power of the crystal brought to bear on our sacred texts, on our officials’ speeches, as well as on our daily talk (Codrescu 1999: 28).

The aim of Major Notz’s game is to put the Language Crystal together (a symbol of world’s unity and harmony) and thus save the world. A new Messiah is needed to get this mission to its final level successfully. Mullin proves to be a failure, but in a way so is Felicity: they cannot function as singular saviours, they need help and they both create new games within the main *Save the World* game. Both Mullin and Felicity develop their personal virtual worlds within their basic common world. While Mullin creates an illusory world of harmony, peace, song and prayer, brainwashing his parishioners with hypnosis and NLP methods, Felicity discovers the equally illusory and brainwashing world of computer games. Loss of true identity is the result for both, if they have ever had one. Once more the reader is confronted with the specific loss of identity in the massive routine of consumerist society. Felicity’s friends, the homeless *Shades* or *The Shadow People* form a kind of army having a uniform made up of tattoos and piercings, drugs and confusion, just as Felicity herself, wearing her everyday punk attire.

They were tattooed all over, except for the face, with body parts that coincided in all respects with their own. They had feet tattooed on feet, hands on hands, and so forth, but since the drawings were of necessity smaller, the shades looked as if they were cradling a body that had somehow adhered to their own. It reminded Felicity of a

Robert Johnson lyric: "I'm closer to you, baby, than Jesus to the cross." They were very much like herself (Codrescu 1999: 87).

Nevertheless, Felicity is different from the crowd, her imagination is alertly working, although she is not exactly aware of the mission that she has to accomplish.

Playing games on her computer, Felicity, the androgynous Creole detective, comes quite accidentally upon a strange program which offers the would-be players the possibility of making love to historical personalities. Thinking that this new sort of *Mardi Gras*, this cybernetic fancy dress ball might be funny, Felicity picks up as possible partners various „masks”, such as Jeanne d’Arc, Virgin Mary, Amelia Earhart, Mata Hari, Saint Theresa of Avila, Alexander Hamilton, Mark Twain, Jules Verne. The Internet offers her a series of diverse identities and relationships.

She could pass for white and fuck cyber John Wayne. She could pretend to be a man and Amelia Earhart would be hers. She could be anything she wanted to be in the brave new world of cyberidentity. New Orleans had taught her that much; life was a masquerade, and disguise was essential to the enjoyment of the flesh. Carnival - carne vale, the farewell to the flesh - was the essence of her city... (Codrescu 1999: 86).

Quite familiar with chatting online, although not necessarily completely addicted to this virtual narcotic, Felicity chooses Messi@h as her nickname for the game and as an avatar she devises a funny but not in the least messianic image,

a creature with large breasts and a crooked nimbus over her head. She chose for her avatar a repertoire of expressions that included giving the finger, giving blessings, scratching her nimbus, slapping her hand over her mouth, frowning, and laughing with a hand between her legs. It was a pretty jolly avatar, and hardly messianic (Codrescu 1999: 54).

One might say that it sounds blasphemous, like a new sign announcing the end of the world, a new end, entirely different from that imagined by the people of old. As Cosmin Ciotloş observed:

Everything must be perceived merely as some kind of uprooting and not as the true end of our world. It's about matter being replaced by information. We do not need the tortures of hell, all we need is an Internet connected computer to place each undeserving body between brackets, Codrescu seems to suggest. Our minds – either

clear or not – leave their bodies behind and start their dialogues. Actually, the way in which the title is spelt means not only playing with the signs on the keyboard but it also reveals the mark of something incomplete. The IT specialists know better: it is an indication without an address, a false title of virtual property. A sophisticated design in the carpet to hide the absence of a real floor. Maybe an author beyond theories (Ciotloş 2006).

Technology used for destructive purposes, carnivalesque attitudes and exhibitionism do not manage to completely suffocate the typical ideals of the American dream: the courage to fight back when life attacks, the thirst for justice, the strong conviction that by means of hard work one can reach the power of transforming reality. As Felicity is a typical cyberpunk anti-hero, incapable of saving the world all by herself, the author suggests a liberating trio made up of Felicity and two more persons, Andrea and Ben – three characters that restore the universal balance; they represent (in the form of the Mount Golgotha trio) a very human unholy trinity.

Andrea Isbik from Bosnia represents the astral mate of the American punk-detective Felicity, different from her, as she is the embodiment of seduction, a transfiguring power capable of generating all-comprising emotion. The third element of the triad is Ben, Yehuda ben Yehuda, a young Jew from New Orleans, studying as a rabbi in Tel Aviv, who had had an affair with Felicity some time ago, but who now meets Andrea in Jerusalem and decides to take her with him to New Orleans. Felicity represents the new spirit of technology while Andrea, the mysterious psychic endowed with an ability to perceive information hidden from the normal senses through extrasensory perception, works on a very distant spiritual level. The girls have lots in common, their mission is identical, but they are light years away from each other. The interface they need in order to communicate is provided by Ben, who is linked to both women by both material and spiritual bonds and who is fully charged with the ancient wisdom of the world.

In the presence of these benefic elements, the novelist imagines a possibility of escape, of safely avoiding the Apocalypse with the contribution of everything that is alive on Earth and the most illuminated spirits of old.

Here the cyberpunk style of the novel begins to dissolve into a more elaborate form that critics might even call *postcyberpunk*. The Great Minds of mankind return to earth too to save it and they need human bodies. The interesting and meanwhile ironic element in this exchange of identities is that while the humans can choose their games, identities and avatars, the Great

Spirits of the past get them at random, surprising and irritating Angel Zack, in charge with keeping the action in check. Among the first to come is Nikola Tesla, whose painfully difficult conquest of the body of a drunken tramp is for Zack the Angel the most obvious sign of an unusual, unsuspected and unconventional Apocalypse.

Zack had not been informed as to exactly by what means the Great Minds were going to arrive in New Orleans - another egregious bureaucratic oversight! - but he was still surprised that the heavens had chosen this crude, common way. For a long time incarnation had been practiced only by monitors. The job of the monitor spirits was to insure the orderly traffic of souls into the spirit world after their mass dispatch from the planet, should a conventional apocalypse occur. (...) Zack shuddered. Such clumsiness! He scanned the city quickly and found that he was right. Perched on a stoop on Bourbon Street, in front of an adult video store, was Albert Einstein in the muscled body of a male prostitute. (...) The seer Nostradamus, with a towel around his arm, was taking a drink order at the Napoleon House. Napoleon himself was tapping for tourists on Royal Street, uncomfortably situated in the body of a fifteen-year-old black boy. Dante was inside a policeman. (...) It was shameful. The heavens hadn't even matched the Minds to compatible bodies (Codrescu 1999: 212-213).

The journey into the virtual space, or into the eternity supervised by avant-garde spirits respectively, offer the readers of Codrescu's novel a good opportunity to meditate on the changes that occur in the world they are living in and the solutions for saving whatever is still human on planet Earth. One of the solutions, the ecological method of reviving nature, is cleverly discussed by the novelist, who attributes the great scientist Tesla (reincarnated as urban anchorite) a lofty breakthrough: that of a chlorophyll propulsion machine, a chlorophyll magnet devised to purify not only air and water, but souls as well.

Andrei Codrescu, who is fond of life in general and the life of words in particular, managed to create a surprising novel, a book over-boiling with energy, a postmodern work deprived of the ostentation one can feel in many other postmodern creations. The Internet is part of man's life in our contemporary world, the cyberspace has generated a new world and a new mythology and Codrescu is one of the first authors to tackle the motif of mankind's future as dominated by new passions and beliefs. The contemporary Babylonian spirit couldn't have found a better place in which to be illustrated than this novel in which two symbolic topoi (the convent and the brothel) are amalgamated on extreme backgrounds such as New Orleans, Jerusalem or virtual reality to form a most revealing palimpsest.



The novel ends in carnivalesque uproar and chaos: they celebrate Mardi Gras in New Orleans. At the Internet Cafe where Andrea and Felicity work as hostesses, apocalyptic farces and queer moments of entertainment are organized so that one wonders whether the final disaster has already taken place and everything is over. Quite paradoxically, the most confused of all is the great prophet Nostradamus, who keeps on asking in amazement:

Is this the End of the World, or not? Is it over? I don't get it (Codrescu 1999: 354).

Down in a corner, the devil and Zack, the angel, are picnicking together. The picnic scene underlines not so much the making up of good and evil, but the necessity of their coexistence. The explanations given by the devil to Ben's questions follow the same logical track:

"The upcoming fight between good and evil," Ben wanted to know, "is there going to be a winner?" "I hope not," said the devil. "If goodness wins, everyone will be filled with ennui. If evil prevails, it will be the same. Have to keep people on edge" (Codrescu 1999: 324-325).

Indeed, what would become of the Earth if all its inhabitants were half-human or half-robots? That would be a world resembling Huxley's *Brave New World*, a horrible place highly technologized but deprived of feelings and of fun.

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# MIRROR, MIRROR ON THE WALL... REGULATED BEAUTY IN PRINT ADS TARGETED AT WOMEN

ANNAMARIA KILYENI  
Polytechnic University of Timișoara

***Abstract:** Following Foucault, this paper centres on the idea that advertising functions as a paramount means of exerting disciplinary power over women and of producing docile bodies by promoting the image of an ideal feminine body. More specifically, we shall outline the main disciplinary practices which, according to the discourse of print advertisements, ensure the achievement of this ideal feminine body.*

***Keywords:** advertising, body, disciplinary power, disciplinary practice, femininity, ideology.*

## 1. Introduction

There is no doubt that from an economic perspective the main function of advertising is to introduce a wide range of goods to the public and thus support the free market economy. However, from a social perspective, advertising has an equally important role, functioning as a highly influential institution that contributes to the preservation of the existing order in society. In particular, as we shall explain in the following section, this contribution becomes most obvious when it comes to gender identity.

Following two of Foucault's (2005) ideas, namely that nowadays power is dispersed mainly through social institutions and that the body has always been the locus of power through which docility is accomplished and subjectivity constructed, we shall argue that advertising has undoubtedly become one of the most (if not the most) powerful apparatuses for the discipline and the control of the female body, whose ultimate goal is to turn the female body into a feminine one. Browsing through a vast array of British glossy magazines, we have concluded that this feminine body can be outlined as slim and highly polished. In section three we shall discuss the disciplinary practices which, according to the discourse of advertising, ensure the construction of the ideal feminine body.

## 2. Disciplinary Power in Advertising

In order to show how advertising functions as a regulatory social institution deeply involved in the construction of gender identity we shall start

from Foucault's (2005) observation that the existing state of society is no longer maintained by force, and that nowadays power in modern societies is dispersed mainly through social institutions and exists in subtle ways in everyday practices. Despite its gloss and friendly tone with which it ubiquitously accompanies us, advertising is, above all, such a highly influential institution contributing to the preservation of the existing order, and that is why it is important to perceive it as part of an economic and social process firmly linked with ideology.

Bignell (2002: 24) defines ideology as "a way of perceiving reality and society which assumes that some ideas are self-evidently true, while others are self-evidently biased or untrue". This is exactly how advertising fulfils its ideological function: it eliminates oppositional and alternative ways of thinking, thus making the current system of beliefs about society seem not only natural and common sense, but also necessary. Furthermore, given the fact that sex and gender constitute two different realities, the former being a biological category while the latter a cultural one, it is obvious that all societies engage in the construction of gender, each epoch moulding a unique version of masculinity and femininity. Consequently, advertising as one of the most important social institutions of our times actively involved in supporting dominant ideologies has been instrumental in shaping the concept of feminine identity as we know it. Femininity is thus a cultural construct and the image of femininity depicted in advertisements as natural is, in fact, an ideological standard (Kilyeni 2008: 147). However, compared to past centuries, we note that advertising as an essential component of popular culture has nowadays made this gendered canon of femininity more visible and more accessible than ever.

Many scholars acknowledge the fact that there has been a change in the dominant image of femininity in contemporary advertising from the domestic woman preoccupied with the house and the family to the glamorous woman haunted by the way she looks, i.e. her body-image. The following ad from *Cosmopolitan* magazine is a case in point: "Don't let motherhood spoil your bustline... Thousands of women have used Aqua-maiden to keep their bustlines firm and youthful – why don't you join them?" (in Vestergaard and Schroeder 1985: 81). This transition can be easily noticed in the overwhelming number of advertisements aggressively promoting the idea of a standard body whose achievement is a woman's ultimate duty, a body without which women cannot achieve any social position or respect, a body without which women are simply worthless. As Jean Kilbourne (1990: 3) notes, even the housewife in ads,

pathologically obsessed with cleanliness, feels guilt for not being more beautiful. Undoubtedly, the contemporary definition of femininity aggressively promoted by advertisements involves, above all, the construction of an appropriate surface presentation, i.e. of the body.

As any promoter of ideologies, advertising has acquired tremendous disciplinary power over women's identities, which is most obviously exerted on their bodies. We shall use Foucault's (2005: 255-285) concept of panopticism in order to demonstrate how disciplinary power works in our society and, in particular, how advertisements function as mass-disciplining instruments. We have already mentioned that modern power is no longer coercive. Power is exerted in a much subtler way by producing and disseminating specific knowledge in order to shape our way of thinking and our behaviour in society, and advertising has become one of the most powerful "educational" forces in our culture, one that greatly affects our self-image (among many other things) and disciplines our bodies. Jeremy Bentham's design for the Panopticon, a model prison where a central guard tower looks out on a circular set of prison cells, metaphorically stands for the way in which disciplinary power operates nowadays. The central tower, irrespective of whether there are guards in it or not, acts as the "big brother" whose watchful gaze regulates behaviour and ensures discipline. The mere idea of constant surveillance, and thus permanent visibility, gets hold of both body and mind, and makes discipline function automatically.

Besides panopticism, we should briefly turn our attention to gendered dichotomies. It is known that along with the masculine/feminine opposition comes the active/passive one. As already noted by Simone de Beauvoir in her book *The Second Sex* (1998), women's passivity resides, among other things, in the fact that women are constituted as objects to be looked at, while men are the active possessors of the look. John Berger's words best illustrate this idea:

Man act and women appear. Man look at women. Women watch themselves being looked at. This determines not only most relations between men and women but also the relation of women to themselves. The surveyor of woman in herself is male: the surveyed female. Thus she turns herself into an object – and most particularly an object of vision: a sight (1972: 47).

It now becomes obvious how disciplinary power operates for women in our contemporary patriarchal culture: they live in the realm of the panoptical male eye. As Sandra Bartky (1988: 72) explains, "a panoptical male connoisseur resides within the consciousness of most women". Knowing that

somebody else is constantly gazing upon them, women become acutely aware of their own bodies: “Woman lives her body as seen by another, by an anonymous patriarchal Other” (Bartky 1988: 72). This means that women have actually become their own panoptical wardens. Although Bartky (1988) acknowledges the huge importance of Foucault’s account of contemporary disciplinary power and of the disciplinary practices it entails for the production of “docile bodies”, she nevertheless criticizes him for treating the body without any regard to gender relations and for overlooking those practices that engender women’s docile bodies, and for this reason, she even accuses him of promoting sexism - an accusation which, in our opinion, is a little far-fetched and unjust considering his already revolutionary ideas.

Advertising is thus paramount as a means of exerting disciplinary power over women and of producing what Foucault calls “docile bodies” by constructing and constantly promoting the image of the feminine body-as-spectacle for this “patriarchal Other”.

### **3. Regulated Beauty in Print Ads: The Guidelines**

The body has become increasingly central to a woman’s sense of self-identity. Appearance, as manifested in one’s body-image, becomes the measure of a woman’s worth. As we have stated earlier, advertising clearly has an instrumental role in defining and imposing the ideal feminine body, which we have characterized as slim and highly polished. Following Lacan’s psychoanalytic theory, we argue that both visual and textual representations of this feminine body in print ads provide female readers/viewers with a point of identification with the ideal them. They function as the mirror reflection of the perfect self women are continuously longing for.

However, this theoretical observation is not sufficient to encompass the complexity of the phenomenon. That is why the examination of the guidelines, i.e. the disciplinary practices that accompany the definition of the ideal body, becomes equally important. In other words, which are, according to the discourse of advertising, the “rules and regulations” that women should observe in order to attain this body? In what follows, based on an analysis of print ads in *Cosmopolitan*, we shall discuss the disciplinary practices that promote the slim body and the manicured body, respectively.

### 3.1. The Slim Body

The ideal feminine body “has come a long way” (just as the advertising slogan "You've come a long way, baby!" for Virginia Slims cigarettes says) since Rubens's “generously-fleshed” women. Liberated from the restrictions of domestic, reproductive womanhood, women are now urged by most advertisements (in the guise of feminism) to enjoy a new, empowered, free body: the slim body (cf. Vestergaard and Schroeder 1985, Bordo 1988, Bartky 1988, Bordo 1990, Warde 1997, Sturken and Cartwright 2001). All it takes to verify the truthfulness of this statement is to browse through a glossy (or any other) women's magazine: nearly all the women depicted in advertisements (with insignificant exceptions) proudly display their slim bodies. This is actually the most visible manifestation of disciplinary power over women's bodies, as it is in these women-characters shown in ads that real women look for identification. One does not even have to read the ads to notice them; endless reproductions of almost the same slim body are shouting from the pages of the magazine, as if the body came naturally in one universal S-size. All other differences, from stature, hair and eyes to class and race, seem to fade before the slimness of the body. This is the “tyranny of slenderness” Susan Bordo (1988: 83) writes about.

“You exercise, you diet, and you can do anything you want” says actress Heather Locklear in an ad promoting a fitness centre. And she says it all: indeed, the two main disciplinary practices involved in the construction of the slim body that advertisements commonly preach are dieting and exercising. However, there is one more on the list, one which is less visible (usually promoted somewhere on the last pages of magazines) as it is the most invasive, but which promises to provide “the easy way out”: aesthetic surgery.

Advertisements that promote diet products abound in women's magazines, especially around holidays, when women are allowed the indulgence of crossing the limit (both figuratively and literally). *Diet, light, no-sugar, no-calorie, low on calories, less than x calories* or even *healthy* are just some of the words in print ads that promise to help women deal with weight and get closer to the ideal body. Although all these words have to do primarily with keeping the body healthy (as the following definition says: “calorie reduction aims to improve health and slow the aging process by limiting dietary energy intake”, [www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org)), healthy in advertising is only synonymous with slim. Being healthy equals having a slim body. As Warde (1997: 92) points out, “the meanings of health are social and not physical, the meanings of

beauty are political and not aesthetic; health and beauty are equally socio-political and therefore discourses for the exercise of social power". By the same token, Vestergaard and Schroeder (1985: 140-146) write about the phenomenon of "problem reduction": under the guise of health, advertisements often promote products which help people to compensate for the undesirable side-effects of using other products, making the solution to the problem lie not in the abolition of the cause but in the use of yet another commodity and thus increasing people's dependence of products.

Exercise is another discipline imposed on the female body. However, this disciplinary practice is "preached" much more often in magazine articles than in print advertisements, probably because the equipment needed is much more expensive than diet food. The machines and gadgets that ads promote range from belt massagers and trampolines to rowing machines and treadmills. Compared to dieting, which most women admit it is to lose weight and improve their social life (cf. Warde 1997: 80-88), with exercising it is rather difficult to draw a line between the extent to which women use this equipment for the sake of physical fitness and the extent to which they use it to comply with the standard slim body (cf. Bartky 1988: 65). However, giving the widespread women's obsession with weight, we would argue that they mostly exercise in order to look good, just like the women depicted in ads.

When it comes to aesthetic surgery, it is not products that ads promote, but aesthetic surgery centres. We have noticed that although these aesthetic surgery centres offer a wide range of surgical procedures, advertisers often highlight only the names of certain types of surgery, namely mastopexy (breast lift), breast augmentation and liposuction. Similarly, the accompanying images often focus only on particular body parts, namely breasts and buttocks, usually arranged in "before and after" pictures which clearly illustrate what women's body (with its most intimate, less visible parts) should look like.

Both Susan Bordo (1990: 90) and Sandra Bartky (1988: 65) notice that there has been a shift in advertisements from concern for excess weight to concern for fat. Apparently, having a slim body is no longer enough. The latest ideal is of a body that is both slim and firm. While dieting is primarily focused on losing weight, the other two disciplinary practices, exercising and aesthetic surgery, mainly focus on resculpturing various "problematic" parts of the body or the whole body. Breast lifting, liposuction, belt massagers, they all aim to eliminate excess fat in the quest for firm body margins. In addition, many ads promise that applying various firming or anti-cellulite products also guarantees

success (e.g. “skin with restored elasticity”, “advanced firming”, “skin feels firmer, looks smoother”). “To be slim is simply not enough as long as the flesh jiggles” argues Bordo (1990: 90), who also notes that compared to earlier times, when muscularity was associated with working class labour, nowadays exercising and its result, a woman’s well-muscled body, have become cultural icons: “the firm, developed body has become a symbol of correct *attitude*; it means that one ‘cares’ about oneself and how one appears to others”. Advertisements, in their obsessive preoccupation with this slim, firm body, often promote the complete eradication of certain body parts, as expressed by words like *no tummy* or *no buttocks*, thus imposing spatial constraints on women’s bodies. The only body part which is allowed to literally stand out is breasts, but only as long as they are firm.

### **3.2. The Manicured Body**

Apart from the disciplinary practices outlined above, ads promote another set of practices with a different focus. Metaphorically speaking, their purpose is to manicure the whole body by trimming, cleaning, polishing and applying nail polish. Women’s bodies in ads appear as highly polished and ornamented. Due to the sophisticated imaging techniques of airbrushing, all women-characters in ads are smooth-skinned, body hair free, made-up, manicured and neat-haired. Ads create the false impression that this, and only this, is the natural look of every woman, and then offer suggestions about the kind of disciplinary practices women must master in order to attain this “natural” look. Such practices mainly involve applying make-up and using a vast array of gadgets and “health” care products to smoothen certain body parts, from feet, legs, and toe-nails to hands, finger-nails, face and hair.

It is not our intention to give a detailed presentation of the huge amount and variety of products a woman should use (according to print advertisements) in her never-ending pursuit of the perfect self (again, as it is portrayed in ads). However, we must admit that we were amazed to discover the tremendous complexity of this “manicuring” phenomenon. That is why we believe at least some of these products are worth mentioning so that we can offer a glimpse of the aggressiveness of these disciplinary practices.

We shall start with the disciplinary practices involved in the myth that a woman’s body should be as smooth as possible. To ensure “smooth, silky and utterly gorgeous” skin, two distinct practices stand out: the use of cosmetic products, on the one hand, and the removal of body-hair, on the other hand. Let



us list only some of the products ads promote as strictly necessary for ensuring what they call “good skincare”: cleansing lotions, wash-off cleansers, toners, makeup removers, nourishing creams, eye creams, moisturizers, skin balancers, body lotions, hand creams, foot creams, hand, foot, body and facial scrubs, lip pomades, face masks, suntan lotions and sunscreens (which abound in ads particularly during summertime) and the list could easily go on. However, this is not the end; each of the above mentioned cosmetic products are made of various ingredients, come in different fragrances and are designed for different purposes (not to say “problems”), for example: for dry skin, for greasy skin, even for “normal” skin, for pimples, for (early) wrinkles, etc. Not to mention the variety of devices that help in the process, such as sponges, brushes and loofahs, all for the imperative need for smooth skin. Moreover, there are day, night, daily, weekly, summer, winter, windy-weather, sunny-weather, stormy-weather products, which indicate that in the contemporary regime of power the body’s time is as rigidly controlled as its space (cf. Bartky 1988: 66-68). If someone ever doubts the credibility of such practices, ads often make use of scientific proof to drive away any questions. As Sturken and Cartwright (2001: 300) note, “advertisers often use the discourse of science to attach to their products not only the meaning of scientific authority but also the allure of scientific mystery”. The women-characters in ads are often depicted in white lab coats to resemble authority figures such as doctors and pharmacists. The use of scientific language has the same effect. The more sophisticated the terminology, the higher the credibility. *Glycosphingolipids*, *collagen*, *procollagen*, *pro-Xylane*, *coenzymes* are just a few examples of scientific terms which promise “smooth, even skin instantly”, as one ad goes. Other ads emphasize the fact that the product has been researched in a laboratory and thus endowed with transformative properties, for example *dermatologist developed*, *using advanced techniques*, *clinically tested*, etc.

As stated above, the other disciplinary practice which guarantees soft skin is the removal of body hair. An ad for Gillet Women razors clearly illustrates this: “Now in just one stroke your skin stays smoother, longer.” Although body hair is a sign of sexual maturity for both women and men, femininity is associated with a lack of body hair (Tiggermann and Kenyon 1998). Therefore, hair must be removed from large surfaces of the body (if not all). Women are supposed to master yet another set of gadgets, such as razors, epilators, depilatories and epilating wax, which ads promote to this purpose.

Aside from these disciplinary practices that concern trimming and polishing the body, there are those which metaphorically correspond to the application of nail polish in the manicuring process. Less metaphorically, these practices involve everything that has to do with ornamenting the body. Such practices usually concern the ornamentation of a woman's hair, face and nails. Here again, ads promote a large number of cosmetics that a woman should know how to apply: for hair "care" (since a woman's hair is, according to an ad, a "fashion item, seduction tool, security blanket and disguise") all sorts of hair dyes, hair rinses, conditioners, shampoos, styling gels, mousses, relaxing, anti-frizz creams, etc.; for the face: foundations, mascaras (for "naturally" curved, full and "telescopic" lashes), covering sticks, lipsticks, lip glosses, blushers, eye shadows, etc.; for the nails: nail polishes, nail conditioners, nail moisturizers, cuticle removers, etc.). Also, women should know how to manipulate various devices; for example, for hair "care" - this time even more ironically - the hair dryer, the styling brush, the flat iron, the curling iron, etc.

This urge to smoothen and ornament the body in general and the skin in particular, by all possible means, is also closely related to another feminine myth: youthfulness. Many ads for cosmetic products place special emphasis on the ability of these products to erase lines and wrinkles. Advertisements make it clear that a woman's body and especially her face should not betray any sign of age, wear, too much experience or deep thought. Even more, as Bartky (1988: 66) notes, "the very expressions of her face can subvert the disciplinary project of bodily perfection". We think that the following lines from the copy of an ad for Olay cosmetics say it all: "Why just make up your face when you can make up the years. It actually helps fight seven signs of aging. A youthful effect today, even more so tomorrow. [...] Together, making the appearance of fine lines and wrinkles a thing of the past. Proven to be the makeup for younger-looking skin".

#### **4. Conclusion**

Far from being exhaustive, this paper has only outlined the main disciplinary practices that print advertisements promote as the key to accessing the ideal feminine body. The discourse of advertising tries to impose these disciplinary practices on women in the pursuit of turning female bodies into feminine ones. Ads promise women that if they are disciplined enough to engage in the practices they preach, i.e. to buy and use the advertised products,

they can successfully reconstruct their bodies into better ones, needless to say, in the mould of the advertised feminine ideal.

The universality of the feminine body-beautiful as presented in 3.1. and 3.2. greatly contributes to the idea that women's bodies are unacceptable as they are. The way in which ads represent women and urge women to undergo various transformations suggests that women's "real" bodies are incomplete or deficient. We have avoided the word "natural" on purpose in the previous sentence, since "natural" has undergone semantic change due to advertising (cf. Kilyeni 2008: 149). The adjective "natural" has nothing to do with the natural world as we know it; "natural" has become as cultural as it can be.

All the ads targeted at women emphasize the idea that no woman can attain this ideal body without applying a smaller or larger number cosmetics ("health care" products). "Even a perfect skin needs constant and regular beauty care" and "No body is perfect" are just two advertising slogans from *Cosmopolitan*, among the many, which make the point. As Featherstone notes (1991: 175): "Advertising thus helped to create a world in which individuals are made to become emotionally vulnerable, constantly monitoring themselves for bodily imperfections which could no longer be regarded as natural". We do agree with this statement; however, we would replace the word "individual" with "women", since "while the feminine ideal rejects the natural features of women's bodies - hair, eyes, skin, teeth, nails, lips, etc. - the beautification products offered to men are merely meant to enhance the natural features of men's bodies, not to transform them" (Vestergaard and Schroeder 1985: 75).

Due to advertising, dissatisfaction with one's body has become normalized, with the threat of exclusion of those who do not conform to the norm. In the light of Western binary oppositions, it soon becomes obvious that if the advertised feminine body-beautiful is slim, firm, smooth, hairless, young and highly ornamented, the body-ugly is fat, flabby, rough, hairy, old and paradoxically natural. This body is marked and therefore excluded from both advertising and society: while ads treat it as if non-existent, society fears and avoids it. The key to maintaining a socially acceptable body is rigorously regulated self-discipline: "the body becomes a personal achievement, something for which one becomes responsible and which therefore entails self-governance" (Warde 1997: 174).

Yet again, women's bodies are still not their own. Women are still controlled by a patriarchal discourse, this time delivered through advertising. Gillian Dyer (1999: 2) is perfectly right when she states that advertising has

replaced religion in its power to discipline bodies. Taking this idea further, we could assert that advertising has become our new postmodern religion: just as God once said “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness”, advertising now says “let us make woman in our image, according to our (the same masculine, almighty “our”) likeness”.

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## “CELLULOID SOLDIERS” IN ROMANIA (1938-1945)

**BARBARA A. NELSON**

University of Bucharest

***Abstract:** Hollywood movies and stars were pervasive in Romanian cinemas and film journals of the 1930s. The following paper investigates this presence in *Curierul Filmului* and *Cinema*, two well-known Romanian film publications, and how it was managed as Romania aligned itself closer to Germany. Warner Bros., whose CEO was born in Poland, is particularly highlighted.*

***Key Words:** Cinema, WWII Resistance, Fan Magazines in Romania, Hollywood*

Romania's young film directors have attracted the Western gaze. Following upon the heels of the discovery of recent Romanian cinema, is a secondary one, spotlighting the long and rich cinematic tradition Romania has enjoyed. As early as 1912 a full-length feature film, *The Independence of Romania* by Grigore Brezeanu, was screened at Peles Castle, the royal residence of King Carol I. King Carol II was a film aficionado who was well aware of the political potential of cinema, but also enjoyed it as an intimate part of his courtship with Ioana Valentino Lambrino.

By 1933, Bucharest already had 50 cinemas which were attended daily by 150,000 people (Parvulescu 2003: 135). Romanian's major film successes of the 30s and 40s existed alongside those from Germany, Italia, Russia, France, and America. Among the Hollywood studios present in Romania were Warner Bros., Fox (Criterion), MGM, Columbia, Paramount and RKO. In homage to the American film industry, Elizabeta Street, one of the major avenues in Bucharest, was referred to as the Romanian Hollywood (Parvulescu 2003:132). The numerous American actresses and actors which graced the Romanian screens could also be found in the pages of *Curierul Filmului* and *Cinema*, two well-known Romanian film publications. Although both of these began as trade journals, the second evolved into a savvy fan magazine.

The following paper examines the American film presence and its management as reflected in the Romanian film publications *Cinema* and *Curierul Filmului* just prior to Ion Antonescu's assumption of power on Sept. 6, 1940, to just after Romania turned to the Allies on August 23, 1944. The secondary emphasis of this investigation, which grows out of the first, involves

the important role Warner Bros. played in Romania's resistance during these shifts in power.

In the late 1930s American film stars predominated the pages of *Cinema* and *Curierul Filmului*. That Romanian audiences were interested in or recognized many of them seems confirmed by two different double-page articles displaying caricatures of Hollywood stars from various studios which appeared in *Cinema*'s October 6th and New Year Eve issues of 1939 (10-11 and 4-5, respectively). Among the caricatures were Errol Flynn, Edward G. Robinson, William Powell, Cary Grant, James Cagney, Joe E. Brown, Ann Sheridan, Mae West, Jean Harlow, Clark Gable, Fred Astaire, Johnny Weissmuller, Boris Karloff, the Marx Brothers, Popeye, Katherine Hepburn, Wallace Beery, Claudette Colbert, Carole Lombard, Shirley Temple, Laurel and Hardy and many others. Fan clubs were also marketed to and enjoyed by readers of *Cinema* and/or their children. Two of the most important were the ones for Shirley Temple, which offered tie-ins such as look alike dolls, and the clubs for Stan and Bran—Laurel and Hardy. In covering the first festival of the latter, which was held at the grand Savoy hotel in Bucharest, *Cinema* punctuated its article with a photo of a large group of children wearing Stan and Bran masks, replicating pictures of a Paris event used to launch the Romanian club a month earlier.

Another two-page article of 1939 "Hollywood Creates Queens of Sex Appeal" discussed the spectrum of American female film types from various epochs and the stars that made those roles famous. These included American's Sweetheart (Mary Pickford), The Vamp (Theda Bara), the Ecstasy Girl (Hedy Lamarr), the Sarong Girl (Dorothy Lamour), the It Girl (Clara Bow), the Oomph Girl (Ann Sheridan), the Platinum Blonde (Jeane Harlow), and the Orchid Lady (Corinne Griffith). Romanian audiences, differed from American ones, *Cinema* informed readers, only when it came to the Biograph Girl, the earliest female type: to Romanians she was known as Steaua Paniei, to the Americans, Florence Lawrence. (*Cinema* 3 Sept. 1939 :9)

The dominance of American studios in Romania was not welcomed by all. *Curierul Filmului*'s December 25, 1938 issue presented a front-page article announcing "finally there is a representative in Romania which will reinstate the valor of the German studios." Ufa, Bavaria, Tobis, and DEF (Deutsche Film Export) were advertised with much fanfare under the name of the "Official Cinematografic Romanesc" (OCR) (*Cinema* 6 Oct. 1939:19). *Curierul Filmului* favored such an offering as healthy competition. The same

issue announced a new governmental position of Under Secretary of State of Propaganda created by King Carol II. D.I. Suchianu, Romanian's respected film critic, was appointed to the post.

Film culture in Romania took a decided turn at the end of 1939 as the cinema from Germany gained a higher profile and its trade and cultural agreements with Romania increased in number. In spite of the active presence of many Hollywood studios in the Romanian market throughout the thirties, only one of them renewed its contract for 1940, Warner Bros. This studio's decision to stay in a country in which Nazi sentiment had gained a strong foothold contrasted with earlier ones. Soon after Goebbels's acceptance of the position of Minister of National Enlightenment and Propaganda in March 1933, and the subsequent announcement issued one month later that American film companies were required to dismiss all Jewish representatives, Warner Bros. left (*Birdwell* 1999:17). Other studios conceded to new restrictions, at least initially. Being the fourth largest market in the world at that time, German business was important for studios who had gone into receivership during the Depression (Bach 2007:106). The author of *Leni, The life and Work of Leni Riefenstahl*, like many before him, argued that Warner Bros.'s withdrawal was influenced by the death of a representative in Berlin, Joe Kauffmann. However, detailed documentation shows the withdrawal to be more likely a form of resistance against the Nazis and the Kauffmann episode a confused account of the event initiated by Jack Warner (*Birdwell* 1999: 17). Warner Bros. also withdrew from Austria immediately after the country was taken over by Germany in March 3, 1938.

However, Warner Bros.'s resistance took a different form in Romania: the Studio decided to stay in the country. Both *Cinema* and *Curierul Filmului*, carried the story entitled "Warner Bros. Saves Cinematography in Romania" (*Cinema* 22 Dec. 1939:39-31 and *Curierul Filmului* 25 Dec. 1939:2-3). These articles made clear that more than Romanian cinematography was being rescued. References to Warner Bros. as the "saving pillar" indicated that the studio's decision preserved hope as well as "distractions"; it, in effect, offered a lifeline. The roster of films projected for the new season offered only one which was a war film, per se, *Wings of the Navy* (1939), a film about the training of fighter pilots. However, other types of genres which expressed American values could also be effective combatants. Additional Warner Bros. films for 1940 included *Dark Victory*; *Yes, My Darling Daughter*; *Going*

*Places; Dodge City; The Old Maid; They Made Me a Criminal; Heart of the North Brigade; Call it a Day; Hard to Get.*

The importance of Warner Bros.'s campaign against the Nazis has been discussed by many critics. Harry Warner's determination to make a film exposing Hitler's discriminatory policies came to early fruition in the form of an animated parody, *Bosko's Picture Show* (September 18, 1933), the first film on the Fuhrer. Although a series of neutrality laws enacted by the U.S. government to keep America out of war thwarted most of this Studio's early efforts, Warner Brother continued its fight through historical allegories which centered on themes of racial discrimination (Birdwell 1999:67-76). Among such well-known films were *The Life of Emile Zola* (1937), *Juarez* (1939) and *Confessions of a Nazi Spy* (1939). These were not mentioned in the list which "saved cinematography in Romania" and yet, circumstantial evidence suggests all, particularly the last, may have had an enormous impact on Warner Bros.'s rise and fall in Romania.

*Confessions of a Nazi Spy* made its debut in the States in 1939. It was able to pass the censors only due to its basis in fact. According to Jack Warner's accounts, the film was also screened at Berchtesgaden by Ribbentrop, Hitler and Goebbels--the latter's obsession for film is well known. Jack claimed that as a result, Warner Bros. was on Hitler's "extermination list" (J. Warner with Jennings 1962: 265). Threats via the German Consulate in L.A. ensued, as did bitter complaints from the German charge d'affaires in Washington D.C. (Birdwell 1999:58 and 76). *Confessions*, no doubt, added to the case against Hollywood made by Hitler in his Reichstag's speech of January 1939 in which the industry was cited as a dangerous force which was destroying relationships between the U.S. and Germany (Tolliscus 31 Jan. 1939:1).

When *Confessions of a Nazi Spy* was shown in Poland, Harry Warner's "homeland," the film had serious repercussions: the life of the Warner Bros.'s representative in Warsaw became endangered and later an exhibitor was jailed (*Variety* 4 Oct 1939:10). Polish exhibitors showed this film as late as mid April of 1940, for on April 24, *Variety* reported, "Exhibits of 'Nazi Spy' in Poland Hanged by Nazis" (3). By staying in Romania, one of the few remaining free bases of resistance in Europe, the Warners could better support the brave efforts of their Polish brothers who continued to screen films such as *Confession* at great personal risk.



One week following the hangings mentioned above, Warner Bros. suffered an attack at the hands of *Curierul Filmului* (28 April 1940:6). Whether the violence directed toward Warner Bros.'s *Confessions* in Poland had anything to do with the attack leveled upon the studio a week later in Romania is interesting to consider. S. Mateescu, the author of the *Curierul Filmului* article which presaged Warner Bros.'s demise, stated the problem centered on the misdeeds of a Mr. Pauker (Armand), the Jewish director of this American Studio in Romania.

This attack was indicative of the beginning of a crack down: four months later General Ion Antonescu forced King Carol II to hand over power to his son Michael on September 6, 1940. Coinciding with Antonescu's takeover and the negative publicity surrounding Hollywood was *Cinema*'s changing affiliation. (It published its last issue under the *Adevarul* name on 6 September 1940.) From September 13<sup>th</sup> until October 11<sup>th</sup> of 1940 it was aligned with "First Press" and on October 18<sup>th</sup> "Cuvantul-SAR Bucuresti" appeared as the printing house. *Curierul Filmului*, the former Cuvantul publication, ceased to exist.

Two weeks before the handover in government, the back cover of *Cinema* presented Marina von Dittmar with a caption indicating that European actresses were posing competition for Hollywood who was now becoming jealous (23 August 1940). In the article "Between Hollywood and Berlin" ("Intre Hollywood si Berlin,"), in the same issue, American stars were said to be wanting when contrasted with the new faces in Berlin (8-9). Hollywood continued on its downward trajectory as comparisons favored German stars. The actress Hertha Feiler was no "hot house flower," no star groomed in a nursery, like Hollywood celebrities, a 15 November 1940, *Cinema* article stated, rather she was a person who mingled comfortably with common people (11). The indulgent, aloof Hollywood starlet who was increasingly linked to an unnatural, manufactured product, would be an important theme in the pages of *Cinema*. "Sex Appeal-European, American" once again emphasized the difference between the "fabricated" style of Hollywood which consisted of beauties of the "laboratory," versus the natural charm of European stars which allowed for individuality (*Cinema* 18 April 1941:10-11).

The decline of Hollywood and Warner Bros. was increasingly inferred in the pages of *Cinema* as Hollywood was shown to have few originals. The German ancestry of its stars was particularly noted. Betty Davis was reported to be married to a German and Heddy Lamarr, whose real name was Neddy

Kiester, was Viennese (*Cinema* 19 April 1940:3 and 24 Jan. 1941:6, 8). Ilse Werner, one of the actresses featured on the back cover of *Cinema* (30 Aug. 1940) was shown to have German roots, as had Eleanor Powell (24 Jan. 1941: 8). German equivalents existed for traditional Hollywood stars, who often did not come from America either: for example, Ilse Werner was the new Deanna Durbin, who was from Argentina (29 Nov. 1940 front and back covers). A new stage in Hollywood's deconstruction occurred on 24 January 1941 in a *Cinema* article which consisted almost entirely of the names of Hollywood stars from other countries (3).

The U.S. film industry was presented as profiting from a talent pool which was anything but American. In hindsight, it seems as if a conscious publicity strategy to deal with Warner Bros. and Hollywood was already in place by the end of 1940, one that became blatantly clear a year later, i.e., Hollywood as an entity "cashing in" or living off of its imported talent and its external audiences which, in turn, was linked to a key feature assigned to Jews, financial exploitation. For, indeed, Hollywood and Jews were inseparable.

The changing climate could also be noted by comparing Hollywood caricatures which appeared inside the cover of the April 4, 1941 issue of *Cinema* with those of 1939. The ones from 1941 were organized around a theme, the theme of death, albeit in jest. The masquerade ball in progress presents the cause and occasion for pandemonium. Two centers attract one's attention, the first revolves around Mickey Mouse who "dies of fear" as a result of the chaotic spectacle of this masked ball which includes Katherine Hepburn in the process of decapitating Boris Karloff. And the second, the visual center of focus, revolves around a patient lying/dying in bed, which turns out to be Wallace Beery in the disguise of the grandmother/wolf of Little Red Riding Hood, represented by Shirley Temple. Rising above the mayhem are two angels, one of whom is Marlene Dietrich. This is an obvious reference to her famous *The Blue Angel* but also perhaps to the prowess of UFA which produced it. Replacing the famed illustrator of the 1939 caricatures was Vineman Vichy. More importantly, the writer of the article in which the earlier pictures were embedded, an extremely popular figure known as "Popeye," had disappeared--only to resurface after Romania's turn to the Allies in 1944. "Popeye" had also written a weekly article called "Stam de Vorba" (Let's Talk") which was replaced a few weeks earlier on 14 February 1941 with "Ask me and I'll Respond" ("Intreaba-ma, sa-ti respund") by Professor Grampy.

The death of Hollywood would be more directly proclaimed in an article entitled “The City of Film No Longer Exists; It Is a City which is Dying” (“Orasul Filmlui nu mai este un oras care moare”) (*Cinema* 20 Feb. 1942:6-9). The Hollywood life which Romanian audiences read about in 1941 was permeated by gloom. They heard about stars--Joan Crawford, Ann Sheridan, Katherine Hepburn, Dorothy Lamour, Loretta Young, and Kay Francis—but the emphasis was not on glamour but on loneliness as a result of failed marriages (*Cinema* 2 May 1941:8-9). “Love is killed by the studios” a 1941 article declares, resulting in the fact that some of the most lovely young starlets were “old maids” or “old” beyond their years (*Cinema* 11 July 1941:8-9). Hollywood not only destroyed individual beauty, youth, and love, it also created an atmosphere conducive to suicides (*Cinema* 25 April 1941: 8-9). Readers learned about Jackie Coogan and Freddy Bartholomew and the family scandals of children suing parents and Hollywood parents destroying children (*Cinema* 10 Jan. 1942:8-9). Certainly a contrast to the German Heimat as traditionally envisioned.

Prejudice in Hollywood was another key focus of the Romanian film magazine *Cinema* during the period under investigation. Highlighting U.S. prejudice had been a counter-strategy used by the Nazis in the U.S domestic market to combat America’s criticism of its persecution of the Jews (Birdwell: 77). *Cinema* announced that several American films featuring “The Negro,” were appearing in the States, movies like *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, *Showboat*, and *Halleluyah*. But rather than signaling an interest in the plight of this minority, the low attendance was offered as proof of the prejudice of the general U.S. population (*Cinema* 14 Feb. 1941, 8-9).

A 1942 article in *Cinema* deals with the Polish film star Pola Negri. Although this black actress was given roles in several American films in the twenties, it was only the Germans, we are told, who brought her talents into full bloom when the famous German director, Willy Forst, gave her a starring role in *Mazurka* ( 21 Sept. 1942:13). The article then reverts to an incident four years prior in order to foreground the slanderous propaganda issued against the Reich by its enemies, in this case the French, who were accused of publishing a malicious article attacking the Germans for allegedly incarcerating Pola in a concentration camp because Leni Riefelstahl was jealous of her. According to the 1942 article, Pola allegedly sued the French magazine and won her case. What this article fails to mention is that the accusation also appeared in *Cinema* in November 19, 1938. “Internata la Dachau?” suggests

that Pola was imprisoned in Dachau for espionage. It identified her two enemies, not only Leni but also Princess Stefanie of Hohenlohe von Wildenburg Schillingfurst. Apparently no action was taken against *Cinema*.

The theme of discrimination is picked up by *Cinema* once again in its discussion of stereotypical roles Hollywood moguls and directors assigned to foreigners. The example was Heddy Lamarr (an Austrian) who was cast as a femme fatale in Hollywood's *I Take This Woman*. According to this article, Hollywood, condemned it for negative stereotyping and formulaic production by the well-known Brazilian director Erico Verissimo. (1 Feb. 1943:4-5). Starlet Ann Sheridan also was reported to have described Hollywood as a cold town which takes full advantage of stereotypes (*Cinema* 1 Jan. 1943:4-5).

The hypocrisy of American democracy was raised in terms of class tensions as well. Charlie Chaplin, the little tramp who thumbed his nose at Hitler and money was married to Paulette Goddard, a woman shown to come from a family of wealth and privilege, one of the Long Island party set, a la the *Great Gatsby* (*Cinema* 11 Nov. 1942:10). The Hollywood rich in general were exposed for their frivolity and extravagance (*Cinema* 1 Jan. 1943:9-10), on the one hand, and their pettiness, on the other (*Cinema* 3 Jan. 1941:9). Coming at a time when Romanians were suffering dire conditions, this could not have played well.

War and war films were, not surprisingly, another popular topic of film journals during this period. The shift in perspective in these articles from 1940 to 1943 is a type of barometer of change. On 26<sup>th</sup> of January 1940 *Cinema* featured an article on American neutrality. It begins with the statement that although U.S. is not involved in the war, that doesn't mean it is against us or anti-sympathetic (11). The article notes the irony of Roosevelt's comments about his stance which was neutral, but showed sympathy toward the Allies. The writer, J de V., mentions, in apparent admiration, that Roosevelt also blocked anti-fascist films. A year later, *Cinema* presents a satirical look at the probable incompetence of American stars, if called upon to defend their country (*Cinema* 17 Jan 1941:13). The most unhappy person in this cast of characters was said to be the Hollywood agent who could not extract his 10%.

"Comrades in Arms," emphasized the intimate connection between the Germans and Romanians. Fighting, side by side, required having the best interest of the other at heart the article explains (*Cinema* 3 April 1942:10). Because the superiority of Germany is a proven reality, a 1942 article announces, those who opposed it shoulder the responsibility for the casualties;

they needlessly sacrifice troops as a result of a blind refusal to face the facts (*Cinema* 11 Jan. 1943:3). German skill in battle was only matched by its skill in detailing war both in print and film media. In fact, “journal of sound” was the term used for the new type of film the Germans were said to prefer and at which they excelled. Readers were informed that German prowess in the realm of journalism resulted from a difference in training: German journalists were trained to be soldiers and enter combat on the front lines, consequently, getting better and more realistic stories. The writer of the “Jurnalele de Razboi Germane” uses the alleged words of a British journalist to prove German superiority when he likens the journalism of Germany to an excellent whiskey and that of Britain to water.

In announcing this new sound journal Germans noted that no detail of Romanian or German life would be neglected. Hollywood, by contrast, seemed incapable of making films which reflected the reality of war; it employed tragedy and melodrama. Films such as Warner Bros.’s *Heroes without Uniforms* and Frank Lloyd’s *Invisible Agent*, which closed after two days, offered support for this argument (*Cinema* 1 Oct. 1942:4). The portrayal of the general in *White Angel* was denounced as ludicrous and *Wings of the Vulture* with Ronald Reagan and Ann Sheridan was criticized for its heavy-handed propaganda.

Apparently German sound journals preceded those of the Romanians at each cinema viewing and the Germans were advocating the consolidation of the two, which would leave more time for the feature film. This gesture served as yet another analogy for the relationship of “brothers” or “comrades” in arms. And, indeed, in the December 21, 1942 issue of *Cinema*, appeared an article proclaiming “Finally, we [Romanians] have a film industry” (“Insfarsit, avem o industrie de filme!”). The two films mentioned were *Tempestuous Night* (*O noapte furtunoasa*) and *The Red Handcuffs* (*Catuse rosii*) (12-13). The article explains these as the products of an Axis (Italian) collaboration.

If the Germans were brothers in arms, supporting Romania’s film industry,

Hollywood, by contrast, was shown to be parasitic, making money off Romanians, thinking only of its own profit. This image of exploitation was central to the German “documentary” *Wandering Jew* (“Jidovul ratacitor”) reviewed in *Cinema* in 17 May 1942 (14). Focusing as it did on the Polish ghettos, the so-called “dirty nests” (“cuiburile mizere”) out of which the Jews conquered the world, the film would no doubt have been a call to battle for

Harry Warner. The general idea of the film was that Jews are a people without peasants and can therefore only be parasites. They appear where there is a wound in an organism and they feed themselves at the expense of hosts or those who offer them hospitality. The film, which was said to be based on the research of one Dr. Zaubert, showed how the Jewish influence spurred the British to misguidedly attack Germany in the name of preserving civilization. Such an argument echoes Hitler's Reichstag speech of 1939, which attacked Hollywood Jews for destroying relationships between the Allies and Germany, as mentioned before. *The Wandering Jew* was modeled after an earlier film, *Everes Suss* which had been ominously announced in a small obscure lower left corner of the April 21, 1940, issue of *Cinema*, an issue overwhelmingly dominated by Hollywood, the issue a week before the announcement of Warner Bros.'s decline (*Cinema* 12 April 1940:12).

By early 1941 Hollywood actors and actresses who occupied almost every cover of *Cinema* front and back in 1939 and 1940 had been replaced by Germans. No new American movies were projected for 1942. In 1943 all American films were forbidden.

Then suddenly German dictatorship came to an end on August 23, 1944 and in less than two weeks, American stars and films resurfaced. Reviews of Hollywood were once again discussed in positive terms in the pages of *Cinema* and "Popeye," the writer of the articles linked to the Hollywood caricatures of 1939 and the weekly "Let's talk" ("Stam de Vorba") was reintroduced with fanfare (15 Sept. 1944:2).

Among the films discovered to have been "hidden" in Romania were a number of Warner Bros.'s Celluloid Soldiers. Both *The Life of Emile Zola* and *Juarez* appeared. According to *Cinema*, *The Life* became Warner Bros.'s "carte de visitez," the signature film that had been instrumental in Romania's reevaluation of the Studio, garnering it the utmost respect (15-30 Sept. 1944: 5 and 15 December: 7). Warner Bros. became known as a studio which spoke to Romanian audiences in a time of need, no longer a B production company limited to gangster pictures. Warner Bros.'s *Sergeant York* (1941) arrived on the Romanian market soon after the political shift occurred (*Cinema* 1-15 Oct. 1945: 23). This work was based on the life of Alvin York, one of America's most famous WWI heroes who, turned from pacifist to interventionist in WWII. This film, together with *The Life of Emile Zola*, *Juarez* and others earned for Warner Bros. the Medal of Honor awarded by the U.S. Ministry of War. *Cinema* covered this story on February 16, 1947.

The major Hollywood studios announced a new offensive in Romania in 1947 (*Cinema* 4 Feb. 1947:46). As American stars regained their former positions on the covers of *Cinema*, the magazine resumed its former cheerful and artistic appearance. However, suggestions of future political conflicts were only pages away, for each issue concluded with the dark, foreboding mise en scene of Soviet films. For Romania, located at the crossroads of East and West and North and South, politics, in a very dramatic sense, proved crucial to its cinematic story.

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SECTION TWO:  
**AMERICAN LITERATURE**



## HENRY JAMES ON THE MANNERS OF AMERICAN WOMEN

ÁGNES ZSÓFIA KOVÁCS

University of Szeged

*Abstract:* Henry James' biting articles on the speech and manners of American women and the question of American speech in general are usually connected to the cultural criticism he performed in his "The American Scene". Instead, I investigate James' essay "Is There a Life After Death?" (1910) as a context for his articles on American speech. The reason why the question of speech and manners are so vital for James lies in their relation to his concept of 'imaginative life' attaining which is a moral question for him.

*Keywords:* American women, criticism of America, cultural criticism, Henry James, manners.

### 1. Introduction

Henry James is known as a novelist of manners rather than a theorist of manners. Still, in this article I wish to show James the theoretician of manners in his little known, so called fourth phase. This is the time, after 1905, when he had already written his major novels. Usually, this period of his work, till his death, is considered to be on the margin of critical interest. Yet, I have selected four essays of his output in order to show in what way his criticism of American manners is in line with his general theory about the responsibility of the man of imagination, a notion that comes up in these essays, and, of course, in his former novelistic production. The argumentation consists of three parts: the first in a lead-on about the fourth phase, then the second provides an analysis of his criticism of American manners, and thirdly, his idea of manners is compared to his idea of the life of the imagination in his only speculative essay from the fourth phase. My project is to show the similar structure of manners and the life of the mind in these texts.

### 2. James' Fourth Phase

The name of the phase refers to William James' comment on Henry's *The Golden Bowl* in 1905. William disliked the style of *The Bowl*, Henry's third manner and expressed a need for a fourth, possibly more straightforward manner (Caramello 1993: 464). Henry's fourth manner, however, is wide off the mark William set: it can be seen as a modification of the third in two major

respects: real material is handled and the genres relied on demand the use of the first person Henry had previously tried to avoid. Ross Posnock and Beverly Haviland called this part of James' work his second major phase, one of autobiography, cultural criticism, and aesthetics (Posnock 1995: 23-24, Haviland 1997: xv). The pieces that constitute the phase are first and foremost *The American Scene* about James' travels in the U.S.; two and a half volumes of autobiography; articles and lectures; the Prefaces to *The New York Edition*, two novels; several tales.

The critical reception of these pieces is a fascinating story to me as it represents trends in the James industry and critical theory simultaneously. James' contemporaries did not consider the writings of the phase to be pieces of cultural criticism at all. Critical orthodoxy in the 1930s, exemplified by Van Wyck Brooks, read them as degenerate productions of the expatriate (Brooks 1925: 27). Formally oriented criticism, heralded by F. O. Matthiessen (1944), tended to read them as footnotes to a work already unified, focused on artistic qualities, and used them for background or biographical information. Avant-garde criticism stressed the freedom of signification and the ambiguity of the writing (Schloss 1992: 39-40, Caramello 1993: 465). However, the contemporary interest in multiculturalism and cultural studies, finds this phase of James doubly interesting: he is writing about culture and society explicitly and is also expressing his personal view of the problems encountered.

The works have achieved their 'cultural' receptions individually as different genres used for the construction of James' personal narrative. Among them *The American Scene* is the hottest text to date (Buelens 1997: 166).

Interestingly, the articles written around the time *The American Scene* was conceived, *The Question of our Speech* (1905), *The Speech of American Women* (1906-7), and *The Manners of American Women* (1907), project the fate of manners and taste in American culture as opposed to European civilization. Against the absence and nostalgia presented in the articles, the fourth text, the metaphysical essay entitled *Is there a Life after Death?* represents ideals: the purpose of one's reliance on the imagination. There is a strong conviction manifested in this essay of the ability of imaginative constructs to counter physical death. (Henceforward, the essays will be referred to as *QS*, *SA*, *MA*, and *LD*, respectively.) There appears a contrast between the Jamesian criticism of manners and his celebration of the life of the mind.

### 3. The Question of American Manners

The three articles on the speech of Americans in general and manners and speech of American women in particular constitute a desperate criticism of the state of American culture and civilization on James' part. The way James stresses the importance of civilized speech and habits indicates his belief in a framework of speech, manners, and civilization wherein 'everything is related.' Let us survey first James' vision of the case, then explicate the model of relations.

The situation of manners in America is deplorable. Both common people and allegedly cultured ones seem to get along without having learned basic rules of behavior and expectations of decency. In *The Question of Our Speech* James demonstrates how one's inability to communicate decently (beginning, middle, and end) comes down to an absence of manners (QS 42-43). He is soon to realize that although his problem is with the state of manners in American society as such, he can discuss the case of American women only. As far as he is concerned, the manners of American men - due to the traditional division of gender roles in the U.S. - are possibly even more deficient than those of women. The sphere of American men is business, Wall Street, and the football field, whereas women use authority and the whole social field is abandoned to them. So considering the case of American women one encounters a paradox: preoccupied by cultural and social activity they do not take the trouble to care about the way they speak (SA 67).

The lack of manners is demonstrated not only by the way American women speak but also by how they eat and read. The reason for this is simple: the ability of speech is not simply a manifestation of manners or culture. In James' view talk, speech, manners, morals, and civilization are dependent on each other. His discussion of the question of speech attests to the hierarchy of social abilities or skills he is concerned with. His first distinction is between talk and speech, the site where everything begins: talk equals simple chatter. Speech is more: knowledge of different tones of voice, syllables, forms, shades of articulation. (SA 76, 78; QS, 44) The interest of speech is the chief joy of and addition (*agrément*) to intercourse (SA, 76), an opportunity for taste: intercourse and taste depend on our keeping up a sense of life by the quality of our speech and sounds (SA, 77).

Intercourse or conversation means an ability to communicate, to be able to address and respond. An example James often comes back to is the proper way to ask for a favor, its three part structure: the introductory part, the

asking, and the closing acknowledgement. When one talks, it is only the middle or content part that is paid attention to. As an addition, speech represents an attention to civilities and forms of conveying content. At the same time, speech is not solely repetition but an active use of possible forms and tones, a living organism (*QS*, 55) that needs the active involvement of its user. In conversation, even the expression of unimportant content becomes an enjoyable activity between speakers. So there is a strict pattern in which talk, speech, and conversation presuppose each other. The prime importance of speech for James lies in his idea that the educative process cannot begin without the knowledge of speech. If American/s (women) cannot use speech, they cannot study to converse, they *cannot* be educated.

At stake in studying is the ability to achieve manners and taste that have the highest status in James' system. Speech results in conversation; conversation is the matter of coherent culture. Knowledge of handling social situations is manners: a great help in being with others. Speech is at the forefront of manners, and when the good yell is used as the only tone, a chaos of manners follows. Thus the question of manners is raised simultaneously with the question of speech. Selection and comparison needed for speech are really abilities necessary for taste, too. Good breeding is the use of secure good manners. The locus reached through an ability to converse is the realm of manners.

The aim of good speech, manners, and taste is to achieve civilization, a coherent culture. For James civilization as such exists in Europe only where all the terms above constitute a coherent culture. In America taste has not yet been achieved, therefore one cannot talk about American civilization but the fact that America did not follow the example of European culture. A reason for this might be that Americans are unaware of the overall connections among things:

For everything hangs together, and there are certain perceptions and sensibilities that are *key* – a key to the inner treasury of the consciousness, where all sorts of priceless things abide. Access to these is through those perceptions; so don't hope that you can just rudely and crudely force the lock. Everything hangs together, I say, and there is no isolated question of speech, no isolated application of taste, no isolated damnation of delicacy. The interest of tone is the interest of manners, and the interest of manners is the interest of morals, and the interest of morals is the interest of civilization (*SA* 78).

James fortifies this claim in *QS*, where one can find a similar passage about relations among people:

All life therefore comes back to the question of our speech the medium through which we communicate with each other, for all life comes back to our relations to each other. These relations [...] are verily constituted, by our speech. [...] The more it suggests and expresses the more we live by it [...] (QS 44).

So in the background of James' harsh criticism of American manners we can find his idea of the value of speech. Life as an area of our interpersonal relations is constituted by speech, but speech in turn provides perceptions and sensibilities that may become issues of manners, morals, and eventually of civilization. Consciousness is the container of our perceived relations with each other, of our life. Our perceptions together make up our civilization. Therefore what on a personal level is the question of life and living, is on the societal level the question of civilization.

#### **4. *Is There a Life After Death?***

As an antidote to the pessimism of the previous three essays, I propose to have a look at another essay entitled *Is There a Life After Death*. Its tone is more optimistic since its subject is the possibility of conscious life. It is worth viewing it as a supplement to the previous three pieces: we can compare their terminology.

The title of James' philosophical essay *Is There a Life After Death?* presents us with a paradox. Life and death are supposed to be in opposition to each other, mutually exclusive states; once life is over, death begins. Still, the question in the title is about the possibility of undoing the exclusive opposition by some means. It seems that in the Jamesian framework there is a possibility of a third way, a non-exclusive opposition - the individual's personality, and thus the concept of the imagination has a major role to play. The context of the question is the elderly James questioning himself about basic values that he has held from his youth and that seem to be ignored by actual life.

The essay projects a framework in which instead of the opposition life – death there is a network of minimal pairs. First, life can be divided into two kinds: life not lived and lived life (or living), its opposite. Within life, life lived is a life in which individual consciousness is active, it is able to sense relations and make associations. Non-life is the opposite of lived life on this existential level: it means the absence of conscious reflection. Both kinds of lives are lives on a material level; the difference between them is on the existential plane.

With the introduction of the existential aspect the dual opposition of life and death is broken up and a hypothetical possibility of an existential life after the death of the body is opened. In this sense, the question in the title refers to the possibility of a renewed lived life in the existential sense after physical death.

Perhaps it is not surprising now that there are not only two possible answers to the question above. If the question entailed a twist with the inclusion of the existential dimension, the answer will necessarily involve this aspect, too. So, as far as James is concerned, there are two types of people answering the question, one group that is aware of the question itself and the possibility opened by it, and the other group that has never even considered this question. Those who have never considered it live life on a material level: the life of the scientist in which it is sheer nonsense to ask the above question because he is absolutely unaware of the possibility of the existential dimension. The second group consists of people who are aware of the question and either *want* to live life after death or not. The personal intention, in James' opinion, will depend on the kinds of happenings the person has encountered in the course of his life.

In this framework the term 'being' denotes lived life rather than non – lived life. Lived life with the activities of the consciousness is at the center of James' concerns. The question, from the perspective of metaphysics, is whether 'being' as the existential center of an individual's life has a chance to go on after death if the person wants it to. Also, as this yes or no question is explicated, it becomes more problematic how one can attain 'being' in order to be able to opt for a "life after death."

For James, personality is the main factor that can ensure lived life and thus differentiate being from non – being. As James puts it, it all depends on the weight of the interest of what life has predominantly said to us (*LD* 116): if it had anything to say, then being in the sense of personal awareness of life is offered. James presents the permanent features of personality and then rephrases the question in the title of the essay within this new context.

The introduction of the temporal aspect into the scheme of the personality is James' reason for worry. If the personality is seen in time, then several questions arise as to its durability. Firstly, it seems that personality resists tenses other than the present tense. Associations, reactions of the sensibility are always happening now, consequently, the personality knows about itself as it is now and not as it was yesterday. Also, one has to consider that to think about the personality itself is an abstraction, because if the

personality exists in the present and is an ongoing progression, then to think about it is only possible in terms of a hypothetical “I”, a sign to reckon with when different experiences of that same “I” are talked about. That is, one can know about the practice of the personality through the linguistic reduction of the actual experience as experience of the same hypothetical “I”. Thirdly, it seems that although James firmly believes in his general idea of being and personality, his contemporaries do not seem to be interested in it at all. This leads to the last and biggest problem, whether it is possible to reconstruct personality after death knowing about its basic nature in the present and the contemporary neglect of the issue as a whole.

The question “Is there a Life after Death?”, then, is a question about the death of the human personality. James’ conviction is that immortality is personal if anything: only with a reliance on the notion of a personal being, the maintenance of an existential dimension can we ever consider the question. Is it possible to think of the life of the consciousness, of personality in time? Is it possible to renew the personality, the action of the mind? These questions can only be answered if the notion of experience is seen to constitute the background of “lived life” and “personality.”

The process of experience entails the problem of personality and lived life as its workings explain the ways in which the latter two are produced. Experience in the essay is characterized as personal, and an experience of another existence (*LD* 117). Another existence is practically the adventure of the personality; it is a reaction dependent on one’s sensibilities. One’s sensibilities, in turn, constitute one’s experience of nature, life, society and knowledge (*LD* 120). It is this adventure of the sensibility of the consciousness that creates intensity: a *vibration* as James likes to put it. Notice the similarity to the description of the personality here. It is as if in this system personality was a question of experience: a conviction that if experience is attained, you will have a personality and through that lived life. Thus we are back to the title again. No wonder, then, that the initial question is also rephrased, now in terms of experience:

Do we feel capable of a brutal rupture with registered promises, started curiosities, waiting initiations? The mere acquired momentum of intelligence, of perception, of vibration, of experience in a word, would have carried them on, we argue, to *something*, the something that never takes place for us, if the laboratory brain were *not* really all (*LD* 121).

In fact in this passage there is also an attempt to answer the question. The answer is not concerned with how ‘things’ are in the world but rather with how they are in the individual’s consciousness.

What it comes to is then that our faith or our hope may to some degree resist the fact, once accomplished, of watched and deplored death, but that they may well break down before the avidity and consistency with which everything insufferably continues to die (*LD* 121).

So the renewal of the personal process of experience depends on the faith or hope of the experiencing person.

And this is where he brings the concept of the imagination into the discussion, the play of the imagination as the practice of consciousness and the imaginable relations to be perceived wherever one directs the reflector of consciousness. The life of the mind and the play of the free imagination are now presented as the two major aspects or means of enlarging consciousness that gives one the vision of being with unlimited relations.

For James, incidentally, the mapping of experience was exactly the main topic of his life as an artist. And it is as an artist that he can appreciate experience, independence of thought, boundlessly multiplied personal relations most. He claims that this is the tool that carries one beyond a profound observation of the world (*LD* 124). The project is that a man of imagination living an intellectual life and sensitive to questions of being should enlarge questions of being and share them with or make them shareable for others. The artist must “surrender to invasive floods” (*LD* 124) that make up nine-tenths of his consciousness and that make him interesting. James thinks he lived and worked like this and, accordingly, he has the reason to desire the renewal of existence, existence the forms of which he had cultivated, that is, being.

The full answer to the question in the title is possible to give in terms of the explanation above. Life after death can only be that of the lived life or being of one’s personality. Lived life means intellectual life, the awareness of consciousness that involves the life of the mind and the play of the imagination. Cultivation and observation change into processes different from our ordinary understanding of them. They become faculties that enable one to perceive unlimited relations. Cultivation in this sense means that one’s personality becomes a process for the sake of survival in the existential sense. Also, one has to realize that reality and the world are not the reasons of personal experience but are the results of it.



## 5. Conclusion

Both in the articles about the manners and speech of American women and in the metaphysical essay James is concerned with relations that make up life in the existential sense. His criticism of American women presents the absence of his ideal of civilized speech and behavior that would result in a life of interpersonal relations. His discourse on the life of the mind surveys the metaphysical purpose of engaging in imaginative activity. Taking the trouble to make distinctions in conversation has the same imaginative status as has immersing oneself in intellectual engagements. Both sets of relations involve a moral aspect. The critic of manners has the responsibility to remind others of their duty to cultivate their taste. Similarly, the man of imagination has the responsibility to decide to have a life or not. For James, 'being', i.e. life in an existential sense, is first and foremost a question of deciding to live a life of imaginative cultivation. Both civilized speech and an active mind serve life - in the existential sense.

One last word on the notion of culture used in this argument. In James' critical output the importance of the individual perceiver appears in a process of interpretation that is directly connected to culture. What can be the intellectual roots of his concept of culture? As we know, culture taken as an ideal both of society and the human mind that has its root in the humanistic tradition can be seen in two diverse ways. One is, with the Enlightenment philosophers, to develop the idea in opposition to the idea of nature. In this case, only a society stripped of cultural bonds and customs can be just and effective because the principle of competition would prevail in it. The other way to think about culture is to say, together with Victorian cultural critics, that a society without cultural bonds has no cohesion and falls into anarchy. Likewise, the mind loses all practical and moral orientation when it is stripped of culture, and the world becomes chaos (Schloss 1992: 122). On the basis of the above articles I think I have to make the blunt claim about James' Victorian intellectual legacy. Comparing his notions of speech and manners to those of Matthew Arnold on culture would make another essay, though.

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## **SOLACE IN BLOOD. THE DANCE OF VIOLENCE IN *BLOOD MERIDIAN* BY CORMAC McCARTHY**

**GEORGIANA LOLEA**  
University of Timișoara

*Abstract:* Cormac McCarthy's depiction of violence in *Blood Meridian* has given rise to countless debates concerning the issue of morality. My paper analyzes both the lavish depictions of violence and the ways in which the figure of the kid, the key element of this debate, can be distorted by the shrewd narrator.

*Keywords:* American madness, lack of catharsis, mindless violence, the nameless rage, redemptive meanings.

### **1. Introduction**

In *L.A. vs. N.Y.*, the Romanian journalist Stelian Tănase (2006: 366-367) points out that “the American madness” is genuine, full of intensity and rich in meaning and generated by “the boredom of absolute freedom”, and “the emptiness given by immensity”. The comparison used to illustrate the ennui created by boundless freedom is that of watching a never-ending train with its carriages flooded in light and then wondering what could ever be next.

In *Blood Meridian or the Evening Redness in the West*, McCarthy's novel published in 1985, Glanton's gang of scalp hunters roam through the entrails of an America untamed by boundaries. Their absolute freedom of movement and action is projected upon the background of the wild 1850s - marked by Manifest Destiny and the Gold Rush and the youth of the American Dream - when everything seemed possible and limitless and space was not yet fragmented by barbed wire. The vast spaces give rise to limitless freedom and hence to boundless violence.

The title and the subtitle of McCarthy's fifth book send to the very substance of the whole story: bloodshed and violence. Their meaning is decoded for us by the most learned and versatile character in the book, Judge Holden:

The way of the world is to bloom and to flower and die but in the affairs of men there is no waning and the noon of his expression signals the onset of night. His spirit is exhausted at the peak of its achievement. His meridian is at once his darkening and the evening of his day (McCarthy 1985: 146-147).

The idea of the inevitable evolution - involution, as marks of any worldly affair, is later on preached again by Judge Holden in his exposé on the Anasazi: "All progressions from a higher to a lower order are marked by ruins and mystery and a residue of nameless rage" (146). Glanton's gang appears imbibed in this "nameless rage", and their acts of violence pertain to their meridian, therefore to the beginning of their end.

## **2. "Nameless rage": death seen as a trade/ a show/ a spectacle/a ritual and the irreverence towards the human body**

There is no dispute that the mother tongue of all characters is violence and war is their trade, therefore *Blood Meridian* can be defined as a grand epic achievement of blood and mindless violence. Judge Holden, the greatest prophet of war, preaches to his disciples, i.e. to Glanton's gang, about the sanctity of war. War is their god, their trade, their existence, their identity:

Ah, Davy, he said. It's your own trade we honor here. Why not rather take a small bow. Let each acknowledge each.

My trade?

Certainly.

What is my trade?

War. War is your trade. Is it not?

And it aint yours?

Mine too. Very much so (248).

There is rarely a page in *Blood Meridian* which does not depict slaughters, massacres, or mutilations. That is why the whole novel could be summed up using the words of one of Captain White's filibusters, words uttered before the horrible Comanche attack: "This looks like the high road to hell" (45). There is a profound irreverence for the human body, which is described in all its possible degradation: wounds full of pus - Sproule's arm "was swollen to the size of his thigh and it was garishly discolored and small worms worked in the open wound" - (67), bodies or corpses dismembered, flesh mutilated or decayed.

The naked bodies of the Chihuahua citizens killed by Glanton's gang (though the Sociedad de Guerra had been created for these citizens' protection) were "buried in a common grave" with "their wounds like the victims of surgical experimentation lying in the pit gaping sightlessly at the desert sky" (184). The dead Argonauts, mercilessly slaughtered in the desert by white

people who “preyed on travelers” and “disguised their work to be that of the savages” are:

right pilgrims [...]with their terrible wounds, the viscera spilled from their sides and the naked torsos bristling with arrowshafts. Some by their beards were men but yet more strange menstrual wounds between their legs and no man’s parts for these had been cut away and hung dark and strange from their grinning mouths (153).

And then again, the ape comparison is being employed, as these right nameless pilgrims are “gazing up with ape’s eyes at brother sun” (153). Death is seen as a spectacle in itself: one which should be weighed, and described with meticulous details. Death is ultimately a show, a ritual, and a lucrative trade. The Indians’ scalps are mere receipts that Glanton’s gang cash, therefore these scalps are assessed just like any other good on the market: “[Glanton] took the dripping trophy from McGill and turned it in the sun the way a man might qualify the pelt of an animal...” (99).

But if violence is overpowering, could there be any escape from it? According to judge Holden, the answer would be negative, because “if God meant to interfere in the degeneracy of mankind would he not have done so by now?” (146). Judge Holden problematizes death when he asks the kid, in the last scene of the play, before the curtain is drawn and he remains the last bear dancing: “What do you think death is, man?”. And he also offers an answer to the riddle: “What is death if not an agency?” and blood - “the tempering agent in the mortar which bonds” (329).

There is no escape from violence as violence is the true human nature and there is no room for choice. It is not that people cannot exert their will or that there is no such thing as fate. McCarthy’s characters roam freely through a world which surpasses notions of will or fate, choice or determinism. This so called “third destiny” is explained after the divination scene performed by the jugglers and it makes the notions of will and fate sound hollow: “as if beyond will or fate he and his beasts and his trappings moved both in card and in substance under consignment to some third and other destiny” (96). Upon this third destiny, which surpasses notions of fate and will, ponders the ex-priest Tobin, as well, when he wonders if in the massacre of the Argonauts in the desert “some might not see the hand of a cynical god conducting with what austerity and what surprise so lethal a congruence” (153).

### 3. Redemptive meanings vs. a lack of catharsis

Maybe the most hotly debated issue concerning *Blood Meridian* centers on the moral core of the book. The questions which are most often asked are: What is the meaning of all this violence and why did the author depict it so lavishly? Can the kid be the embodiment of the Good or is his morality a mere illusion?

The 1992 Vintage International edition of *Blood Meridian* has on its jacket a quotation from Michael Herr, who states that the novel is “a classic American novel of regeneration through violence. McCarthy can only be compared with our great writers, with Melville and Faulkner, and this is his masterpiece”. On the one hand, if read as “a novel of regeneration through violence”, *Blood Meridian* is as an ample parable about Good and Evil, and a novel whose ending, though proclaiming the prevalence of Evil, stands nonetheless as a testimony for the regeneration and the audacity of Good.

The idea that the use of violence in *Blood Meridian* is not gratuitous and that this kind of violence has deep roots in the American history is embraced by many other scholars, professors or literary critics. Depicted by Harold Bloom (2000: 255) as “a canonical imaginative achievement”, *Blood Meridian* stands as “both an American and a universal tragedy of blood” and “none of its carnage is gratuitous or redundant; it belonged to the Mexico-Texas borderland in 1849-1850, which is where and when most of the novel is set”. The history of the Wild West fully sustains the critic’s arguments. One history book clearly points out:

What madness explains hunting parties riding out several times a week and bagging 50-60 Indians at a time, with nothing more at issue than a good day’s fun? Or groups of self-appointed “volunteers” setting fire to entire villages and killing everybody who tried to escape – women, children, babies, old men? It was genocide without ideology, politics, theology, or metaphysics, and it was undertaken with such cold-blooded zeal that one might regard the reports as hyperbolic if they weren’t so frequent and from such reliable sources, like the renowned historian Hubert Howe Bancroft (Stegner 2002: 198).

Furthermore, the events presented in McCarthy’s book, such as the massacre of the peaceful Tiguas, depicted in all its horrifying details, might be just a fade image of the historical scenes of murder, looting and slaughter of the Native-Americans by the whites. Therefore, the violence depicted in *Blood Meridian* could easily act as a mirror of historical facts.

On the other hand, there is the other group of scholars who deem the idea of redemption through violence as a mere chimera. Steven Shaviro (1999: 149) considers that:

Western culture has dreamed for centuries of some act of heroic transgression and self-transformation: whether this take the Enlightenment form of rational mastery, or the romantic and mystical one of apocalyptic transfiguration. McCarthy, like Nietzsche, exposes not just the futility of the dream, but – far more troublingly- its inherent piety, its ironic dependence upon the very (supposed) mysteries that it claims to violate. What is most disturbing about the orgies of violence that punctuate *Blood Meridian* is that they fail to constitute a pattern, to unveil a mystery or to serve any comprehensible purpose.

An opinion as Steven Shaviro's rejects any sense of grandeur attached to violence, and the critic considers that readers who think that they can "derive from the play any profits of catharsis or redemption" merely "fool themselves" (Shaviro 1999: 151). The same idea is embraced by Barclay Owens (2000: 11) in *Cormac McCarthy's Western Novels*, when he states that: "Most critics of McCarthy do gravitate toward defensive positions, presuming a priori that such an accomplished writer must have a moral theme".

We are thus presented with two clashing views on McCarthy's use of violence in *Blood Meridian*. As for the writer, the only clue given as to why violence is at the core of his writing is the one offered in an interview. On the issue of death, his major theme of all his novels, McCarthy stated that:

Most people don't ever see anyone die. It used to be if you grew up in a family you saw everybody die. They died in their bed at home with everyone gathered around. Death is the major issue in the world. For you, for me, for all of us. It just is. To not be able to talk about it is very odd (Woodward 2005: 98).

The character mostly referred to in this debate regarding the (in)existent moral core of *Blood Meridian* is the kid. Therefore, we will further analyze the kid's act as the main pillar in the controversial use of violence in McCarthy's book.

#### **4. The kid as a 'free agent'**

In his essay, *Naming, Knowing and Nothingness. McCarthy's Moral Parables*, the critic Edwin T. Arnold (1999: 65) asserts that there is an underscored moral core to the whole story of violence, that the kid finally outgrows "his taste for mindless violence" and although fences cannot prevent

the Judge from forever exerting his demonic power, “moral choice remains, the judge can still be faced”.

But Edwin T. Arnold’s (1999) view is hotly contested by Barclay Owens (2000: 12) in his *Cormac McCarthy’s Western Novels*, who remarks that:

To my sensibilities, however, Arnold’s extreme faith in McCarthy as a creator of moral parables seems far-fetched and overstated, more of a reaction to perceived animadversion than clearheaded analysis. McCarthy himself has unswervingly directed out attention toward “mindless violence” throughout the text, and undue critical attempts to deflect it elsewhere – to tease out the kid’s tenuous “acts of clemency”, or to dwell on the judge’s mysterious character – may very well cloud the initial and recurrent shock of witnessing man’s atavistic nature.

Raising countless controversies regarding his (potential) moral transformation, the kid remains one of the most complex characters of *Blood Meridian* and one depicted by Judge Holden as “the last of the true” (327). More than that, the kid is considered to be a “free agent” by Tobin and by other members of Glanton’s gang and his small deeds of mercy could set him aside from the company he keeps. In conclusion, the kid is the key point from which the book might garner a redemptive meaning. This regeneration through violence presupposes a conscious process of change. But is there any (conscious) change in the kid’s act?

The first page of the novel introduces the kid to the readers and the description emphasizes that “in him broods already a taste for mindless violence” (3). The kid’s road is always marked by encounters with death, since in McCarthy’s novel death is the only reality - palpable and inescapable: “he sees a parricide hanging in a crossroads hamlet” (5), “he meets a deadcart bound out with a load of corpses” (22), while riding through narrow lanes “in that squalid kingdom of mud the sound of the little deathbells tolled thinly” (30), or “passed by the side of the road little wooden crosses propped in cairns of stone where travelers had met with death” (62).

After joining Glanton’s gang, the kid embarks, together with the other Argonauts, on a mercantile mission of scalping. Yet, the author proves to be very shrewd at depicting the acts of slaughter. We know that the kid is involved in massacres, but the reader is not allowed to see the kid slaying Native-Americans or Mexicans as s/he sees the other gang members, who loot and murder without any mercy:



One of the Delawares emerged from the smoke with a naked infant dangling in each hand and squatted at a ring of midden stones and swung them by the heels each in turn and bashed their heads against the stones so that the brains burst forth [...] Glanton drew his rifle from its scabbard and shot the two lead horses [...] One of the Delawares passed with a collection of heads like some strange vendor bound for market, the hair twisted about his wrist and the heads dangling and turning together (157).

So where is the kid during the massacres? At best, he is encompassed in the personal pronoun *they* (so he is not an individuality, but part of a plurality) or in the plurals “men” or “riders”:

They moved among the dead harvesting the long black locks with their knives... (157);  
Two weeks out they massacred a pueblo on the Nacozari River... (204);  
Riders were towing bodies out of the bloody waters of the lake... (157);  
Men were wading about in the red waters hacking aimlessly at the dead... (157).

At other times, the kid is included in the phrase “every man”: “Every man of them was firing point blank at the muleteers” (195).

Nevertheless, when there is an ambush such as the Apache ambuscado, and the gang is under fire, the kid is shown in action, and shooting Native-Americans as if an ambush legitimized his acts of murder: “The kid was lying on his belly holding the big Walker revolver in both hands and letting off the shots slowly and with care as if he’d done it all before in a dream” (109).

Furthermore, when recounting the slaughter of the peaceful Tiguas, the shrewd narrator inserts one sentence meant to reflect the kid’s stance on attacking the defenseless Tiguas: “No man stood to tender them a defense.” (173). Furthermore, we are told that Toadvine and the kid “conferred together”, “rode in silence” along Bathcat, and most possibly, they all agreed to Toadvine’s words “Them sons of bitches aint bothering nobody”. Nevertheless, none of them (the kid included) refused to take part in the complete wipe out of the meek and defenseless Indians. All they did was to “ride on”.

Therefore, there is a slight manipulation of the reader by a shrewd narrator who succeeds in preserving an aura of innocence to the kid by means of omission or by including the kid in a larger picture, and thus making his contours blurry or indistinguishable.

More than that, the kid stands apart as a complex character whose lack of verbosity makes even more difficult the task of pinning him down to a particular category.

The overwhelming but well hidden feeling of loneliness is a distinct feature of many of McCarthy's characters. Lester Ballard, the lonely necrophiliac, deems that the idiotic child, for whom he brought a bird as a pet, chewed its legs off because the child "wanted it to where it couldn't run off" (McCarthy 1989: 79). In a sense, Judge Holden has the same intention with the kid as the child had with the bird. Once the kid "empties out his heart into the common" (307), there is no way back for him and he won't be able "to run off" from his destiny.

The kid's besetting sin is considered to be his incapacity to choose. In his essay from *Perspectives on Cormac McCarthy*, Edwin T. Arnold (1999: 65) maintains his position regarding the existence of a moral core to the book and sees the kid as "another of McCarthy's unparented children" whose doomed fate is sealed by his "failing to examine his heart, to name and face the judge, to acknowledge responsibility". In the eyes of the Judge, the kid is "no assassin and no partisan either" and Holden believes that "there's a flawed place in the fabric of the kid's heart" (299).

The kid's choice not to shoot down the judge when he was presented with the opportunity and hence the kid's failure to act according to his own soul is correctly understood by the judge, who knows precisely how to take advantage of the kid's moral dilemma. While visiting the kid in prison, Judge Holden draws attention to the kid's dilemma and to the latter's refusal to make up his mind one way or another: "For even if you should have stood your ground, he said, yet what ground was it?" (307).

Nonetheless, we cannot stop from wondering how a sixteen-year old kid could have taken responsibility and stood up against a versatile, learned and far more experienced character, such as the terrible Judge Holden. There is an evident lack of balance in the display of forces in the novel. On the one hand, there is the monstrous, highly intelligent, well-read and well-traveled Judge Holden, who exhibits both a great physical force and a strong, well-shaped system of beliefs. On the other hand, there is the kid, an orphan adolescent who is illiterate and on his own in all his enterprises.

The kid's indecision might have brought about his fall and death, but if there is any moral lesson to this novel, we are inclined to believe that it would be the need to confront the evil although the balance of forces is highly unequal and the good is fighting a losing battle.

## 5. Conclusion

The mysteries concerning the use of violence in *Blood Meridian* could be summed up by using Judge Holden's words about mysteries: "Your heart's desire is to be told some mystery. The mystery is that there is no mystery" (252).

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# SENSE OF ISOLATION IN ARTHUR MILLER'S *DEATH OF A SALESMAN*

NOORBAKHSH HOOTI  
Razi University Kermanshah

*Abstract:* This study is an attempt to analyze the protagonist, Willy Loman's gradual growth of sense of isolation. Loman's tragic sense of isolation starts when in pursuit of some cherished illusion, he forgets the reality of life, and consequently loses track of the tortuous move of time, as Heidegger (1962) stated that the future is the fundamental aspect of time that allows individuals to discover their authentic identity. His repeated daydream sequences are juxtaposed with his present failures, and these incongruities between the past and the present shatter his image of himself as a success and ultimately leads to his collapse and his resort to tragic isolation and frustration.

*Keywords:* Heidegger, identity, isolation, Loman, protagonist,

## 1. Introduction

It is not inappropriate to have a brief journey through the 20<sup>th</sup> century before entering the world of isolation of Miller's characters in *Death of a Salesman*. The 20th century has been described as an era of moral perplexity and uncertainty. The rise of the scientific spirit and rationalism, and especially psychology led to a questioning of accepted social beliefs, conventions and traditions, and as the result of the teaching of modern psychology, man is no longer considered as self responsible or rational in his behavior.

There is a break-up of the old authoritarian pattern in family relationships. The war of the generations' of the old and the young has resulted in a re-orientation of parent-child relationship. This has resulted into problems and frustrations. All in all, the 20th Century may be called an era of revolt against authority. Political and religious skepticism, general disillusionment, etc., have been some of the prominent features of the 20th century. A symbol of the revolt of the post-war generation has been the Dictum, "Power corrupts man and man corrupts power". A journey from extrovert to introvert could be seen, neurosis and spiritual gloom are widespread, economic depression, unemployment, overpopulation, anxiety etc., have caused stress, strains and nervous breakdowns.

The heroes portrayed are the persons who are neurotic, mentally and emotionally crippled. There is an atmosphere of moral unease and uncertainty, a collapse of faith in the accepted patterns of social relationships.

The analysis of *The Death of a Salesman* in this study seeks to capture the complex identity predicaments of Miller's protagonist, who have lost track of time. *Death of a Salesman* occurs during a convergence of past and present, "at that terrible moment when the voice of the past is no longer distant but quite as loud as the voice of the present ... The past and present are ... openly and vocally intertwined" (Miller 1958: 26).

The facts and fictions of Willy's history become tangled with his current situation because he is forced to confront the many failures he has fobbed off previously through lying, both to his family and to himself. Willy is unable to reconcile his past and present, and finally pessimistically ponders over the vanity and absurdity of the future life. As he confides in Ben, his mythical brother, just before he commits suicide, Willy feels that carrying on such a life would be the equivalent of "standing here the rest of my life ringing up zero" (Miller 1958: 97). The essential point about Willy's character is his relationship with the past. He is angry when he looks back at the past in which he longs to be contained, but all in vain. Thus, Willy survives by idealizing the past and by creating defensive pockets of memory to which he can retire, when the isolation of his present and the desolation of his future becomes too much to bear. There is strong connection between the individual and the psychological problem he faces.

Willy belongs to no world. There is no route back for him into the salesmanship world of his blooming years. The only possible solution is a retreat into fantasy and day dreaming, through which he gets temporary mental solace. So Willy's wandering state is the product of his desperation and isolation. He belongs to neither the past world of his friends, his wife and his children, nor can he reconcile with the present world. Willy undergoes an existential crisis because he lacks a vision of his future. Philosopher Martin Heidegger (1962) explains the importance of this vision in his existentialist writings. There is a closely related link between Heidegger's view of existential being and time, and it is in relation to temporality that one creates an identity. As Barrett (1958: 228) has stated:

Heidegger's theory of time is novel, in that, unlike earlier philosophers with their "nows," he gives priority to the future tense. The future, according to him, is primary because it is the region toward which man projects and in which he defines his own

being ... Man looks forward, toward the open region of the future, and in so looking he takes upon himself the burden of the past (or of what out of the past he selects as his inheritance) and thereby orients himself in a certain way to his present and actual situation in life.

The play includes seven daydream sequences that are integral to advancing the depiction of Willy as a man who has lost his grip on the present and “the story proceeds in two dimensions – real time and remembered time” (Carson 1982: 46).

Willy's frustration and sense of isolation is buried under these interludes. Miller wants to bring to light Willy's interior mental state by creating the reveries that he falls into throughout the play, particularly when he must confront his failures as a businessman. Willy's personality engulfs two opposite strains: a sense of utter futility and uselessness of any kind of struggle, and the vigorous energy exerted by an isolated man to impose his ideas on others. The sense of futility springs from his living in an organized society, which leaves very little space to the imagination.

## **2. Argument**

The affirmative note of Miller's *Death of a Salesman* derives its energy from the exertion and pains of the characters. The paradox of the situation lies in the hero's efforts to project an image of himself which his society rejects and yet he remains to the end unaware of the reasons of the rejection. He is much too absorbed in his own world and feelings to care for forces that are really controlling his activities. The tragic vision that emerges out of the play is intimately associated with the dramatization of the abstraction of human values in conflict with the social experience. Miller sees in the democratic society a tendency to bulldoze the individual into a faceless non-entity. His hero Willy cries for his identity, as though all his efforts and assumptions were directed to this end.

There is a unanimous agreement among most of the critics that Miller's work includes an existential thread – the title of *Death of a Salesman* alone makes it obvious that Miller will address issues related to human existence in the play. Often, critics believe that Willy's source of despair and isolation is due to the social pressures from the capitalist culture. Some believe that Willy is the victim of his circumstances and his internal motivation. Hawthorn (1991) pointed out that it is the fault of the society, which creates such dreams, and individuals are simply conditioned by the prevailing

circumstances of the surroundings, and a view that is itself fundamentally individualistic that human beings have to work out their own salvation and choose the right life for themselves. But unfortunately Willy is not strong enough to overcome the stumbling blocks to attain his old rooted aspirations.

It is necessary to emphasize that Loman is gregarious by nature. A salesman can hardly afford to be lonely. Post-war drama and fiction tend to focus on the lonely man. But Miller, in his choice of a salesman as the hero of the play, wants to demonstrate the progression of loneliness in a basically sociable man. Ben is the ideal of Loman's aspiration, and he appears at the end of Act I. Before that we always see him in the company of his family or friends. Act II however, is an easy in disillusion; shock after shock make his life unbearable, and as he loses interest in the objective world his subjective world gains increasing importance for him, the bridge between the two being more and more tenuous. At the end we see a completely isolated man, lonely in his struggle with a hostile invisible enemy.

Hence, the theme of isolation (especially growing isolation) has been very important in Miller's work. In spite of the contact he makes with Linda, Biff and Happy, Willy is presented as being very much alone in his suffering. He finds himself lonely amidst the fussy people of the messy world of convulsion. Feldman (1980) stated that Willy cannot resist the load of the social pressure, and just inculcates in himself that selling is the best career. But unfortunately he is not aware or does not dare to face the fact that he does not possess a place in the capitalist society any more where machinery has succeeded humans.

Williams (1966: 104) asserted:

Willy Loman is a man who from selling things has passed to selling himself, and has become, in effect, a commodity which like other commodities will at a certain point be discarded by the laws of economy. He brings tragedy down on himself, not by opposing the lie, but by living it.

Because Willy is victimized by these commercial values, he lives inauthentically, particularly with respect to Heidegger's definition of authentic being. By inauthenticity Heidegger (1962) means to live under the dictated values, as Steiner (1978) commented that in inauthentic existence there is a constant apprehension of other people's opinions, there is a fear that others decide for us, the fear of being compelled to live under the imposed standards.

Miller introduces Willy as a character who communicates the idea of isolated, fragmented, and anxious living modern man subjected to an industrial society. He tries to sustain himself by maintaining relationship with his family members. Even there also he fails. So we may see Willy emerging as a man bewildered and defeated by the modern consumer society. He failed to establish successful relationship and successful business. He feels trapped and consequently isolated. He is repelled at every moment he tries to relate himself. Miller deals with the theme of isolation in this play on the level of subjective consciousness of Willy on one hand, and on the actual situation on the other.

As Willy struggles to rebuild his dignity through escape to the past, he becomes alienated from himself and those around him, and since he loses track of time he falls behind the present world: “anomie and alienation occur in the context of the memory of a previous, better state of things, real or imagined” (Barker 1995: 86). These reversions only widen the gap between Willy and those closest to him, his family and friends.

Willy reaches his climax of alienation and frustration when he adamantly sticks to the firm belief that his only possible identity lies in his occupation, and ignores the other aspects of his life – his family, community, or religion – to be important in shaping his sense of self. By giving paramount importance to the very single aspect of himself, he does not allow his other facets to give his existence meaning.

Bigsby (2000) believed this to be yet another factor that contributes to his alienation, stating that Willy is stranded in time and space and stripped of an identity that could only have come from acknowledging the authority of the past and the necessities of the present rather than the seductive light of a golden future,

Willy is too helpless to unleash himself from his fossilized naïve illusions. He lacks the authority over his own acts; that is why his identity is molded by the external forces. He finds himself fluctuating helplessly in the invincible swamp of his new world of dejection and frustration. He cannot perpetuate his dreams of his sweet world, a world, which is no more; neither can he balance his expectations with the existing circumstances of life. Sharma (1974: 75) claimed:

Although Willy is aware, maybe dimly and imperfectly, that he is not cut out for success in the world of trade and commerce, he nevertheless nurses the dream of getting the better of everybody else. And this leads him into alienation from himself, obscuring his real identity.



Willy finds himself a stranger in the capitalist society that gives more importance to machine, and man is simply reduced to a disposable commodity. "Business is business", Howard says as he refuses to permit Willy to work in the New York office (Miller 1999: 59). Willy replies "in those days, there was personality ... respect, and comradeship... A man is not a piece of fruit" (Miller 1999: 60).

Willy criticizes the outside world, the establishment pattern because he is depressed from within. He feels rootless and drifted away and fails to find a place and a pattern to attach with and find meaningful realization of his life. He suffers from the isolation from his immediate context, from his own world. The familiar world becomes unfamiliar to him because he cannot find any space or involvement in it. He is unable to establish correspondence with his surroundings, with his life partner, with his social structure and more importantly with himself. He fails to establish meaningful relationship with either Cliff or Happy. His resentment thus springs from this fundamental frustration, this basic isolation. However, Miller expresses Willy's isolation through class-struggle and social anxiety, and through need for change.

Willy's final relationship to death, in which he invites the death through committing suicide, stands in direct opposition to Heidegger's concept of Being-towards-death. "If one is to find authentic being and live within the constraints of time with an eye towards the future, one must always be aware that death – without the padding of an afterlife – is the ultimate end of each being" (Heidegger 1962: 305). However, this reminds us that life should not be deliberately pushed towards the cliff of death. Life should be lived, though death is inevitable but it is not supposed to be invited in a perilous manner.

While making a close scrutiny at Willy Loman, we may note that he is a maladjusted figure, at odds with his environment. He is a social misfit, even a neurotic. This misfit character is set into the normal environment by Miller and consequently he appears abnormal and unacceptable.

The critics commonly believe that Willy seems so forceful that it is hard for him to reconcile with his acceptance of total defeat, but then that is precisely the reason that he is found in a hopeless and helpless condition. It will not be out of place to say in this context that Miller brought on the stage a conflict between youth and age, private and public life, optimism and suicidal despair. The play seems to condemn a system that promises and indeed demands total commitment to success without regard to human values. It is a

system that, as Willy says to Howard, will "eat the orange and throw the peel away" (Miller 1999: 63). Willy's language and feelings are foreign to the prevalent concept of success. There are tears of frustration lurking from behind, so in a sense Willy represents the uninteresting and colorless life of the post Depression society. A sense of isolation from the living dynamics of society makes him feel unwanted. As a result of this, he lives an erratic life on the periphery of the society.

Willy can find no meaning in his exploration of the past, and thus he is unable to understand how his present is informed by the past. Time "operates" in Miller's work by showing the complex interrelationship of the past and the present and their ability to affect an individual's perception of himself:

It is not only that the present interrogates the past for meaning, which only becomes apparent with the passage of time but that the present already contains the past whose shape and form it tries to measure (Biggsby 2000: 4).

Because he either does not wish or lacks the ability to question the capitalist dream, Willy ultimately comes to the point that he cannot start from scratch, neither can he free himself from the frequenting lurid illusions of the past, and he pessimistically believes that a future does not await him.

Willy "retreats to his memory world in part to confront the truth that lies there and in part to escape the consequences of the past exposed by the linear present" (Schroeder 1989: 91).

Willy finds himself doomed to have a constant journey from present to past and vice versa that proves futile in terms of his search for solutions to his dilemma. With each of his flights into day-dreams, he "moves toward and retreats from the discovery of his identity. Drifting back and forth between the past and the present, Willy desperately gropes for answers to the questions that have tormented him all his life" (Centola 1988: 297). He does not find answers because he refuses to reconsider the basis for his values about success, which prioritizes personality and charm above all other standards. This technique of juxtaposing the two worlds gives us an insight into the mind of Willy, and interprets different layers of reality. The personal/ subjective world of Willy is anxious to find its objective-correlative, and the alternative appearance of the two aspects of reality strengthens the dramatist's version of the changing world.

Willy believes that he is never wrong. He is always correct in his attitude towards the world and in his behavior as well. He thinks that he is the product of social conditions, so whatever is wrong is there in and with society.

It is the society that is to be blamed and not him. He blames the society for what he is. He is not responsible for anything he does or speaks, because he lives in such social conditions that force him to behave likewise. It is the society that is the culprit and not him. He seeks excuse in the prevailing social conditions. His reactions are reinforced and conditioned by his nature and the situation he lives in. His determined and uncompromising approach leads to frustration and isolation.

In addition, Willy seeks to be defined by others, and his assessment of his entire life is based on his material wealth. His occupation becomes the focal point of his existence, and becomes his identity rather than the mere occupation. He does not succeed in keeping these two aloof from each other and the character as a salesman, prosperous or not, becomes an integral part of Willy's identity, on and off the road. Hawthorn (1991: 4) asserted:

Willy's problem is not that he is divided, but that he cannot keep his separate identities apart ... Willy's mistake is, as Charley points out at the end of the play, that he allows the dreams necessary to his work to take over his whole person.

When Willy is convinced that he cannot afford to pay the bills through work as a salesman, he finds himself ditched by his job title that used to mold his being, and ultimately feels marooned in isolation.

In all of these areas, Willy becomes a helpless victim of inauthentic being, from a Heideggerian perspective his imprudent relationship to time leads to numerous bitter problems when, instead of utilizing the present time to plan and work on his future aspirations, he simply keeps on resorting to the past until he has no sense of any future; he seems to trust others more than himself, he is a being for others because he allows the opinions of the society as a whole as well as the individuals around him to define what achievement looks like; and he does not engage in authentic Being-towards-death, since he commits suicide and immediately ceases his possibilities for the future.

At the end of the play the realization comes both to Willy and his elder son Biff. Willy's awareness leads him to suicide. Biff's realization is more fully articulated: "Pop I'm a dime a dozen, and so are you! And again will you take the phony dream and burn it before something happen" (Miller 1973: 168).

The ending of the play shows the reflections of Willy's family, as well as his best friend Charley, clarifying the disturbed life that Willy used to put up with. Linda, calls out to Willy, crying "We're free... we're free" (Miller 1999: 109), which shows the indecisive life journey that Willy has had. He was not

aware that he could change his life and goals; neither did he realize that he was at the center of all of his successes and failures.

### 3. Conclusion

In spite of all the problems and absurdities that Willy has undergone, his actions are still understandable. The complexity of understanding one's relationship to the past and one's society, and the consequences of such an understanding bring even the strongest figures to their knees, and prevent them from finding out "meaning" and applying them in their lives. As Miller (1999: xiii) clearly stated:

Being human ... is something most of us fail at most of the time, and a little mercy is eminently in order given the societies we live in, which purport to be stable and sound as mountains when in fact they are trembling in a fast wind blowing mindlessly around the earth.

To conclude, it may be stated that Miller expresses the isolation of a salesman who becomes the victim of a capitalist society, who is not vigorous enough to keep track of time, and consequently is discarded as an exhausted and lost stamina. Finally in his climax of isolation and desolation he comes to the point of committing suicide as the sole alternative to save his family.

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**GHETTO NERD IN THE LAND OF THE LOST  
REPRESENTATIONS OF THE ‘HOOD’ IN JUNOR DIAZ’S *THE  
BRIEF WONDROUS LIFE OF OSCAR WAO***

**DANIELA ROGOBETE**

University of Craiova

*Abstract: A highly amusing though disturbing combination of history and myth, politics and superstitions forms the framework of Junot Diaz’s 2008 Pulitzer winner novel *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*. Defining the ‘hood’ through Oscar’s “wondrous” adventures, through his rediscovery of both his Dominican roots and American self becomes a cultural endeavour meant to remap the past, the present and the profusion of geographical, political, cultural and linguistic spaces overlapping in this novel.*

*Keywords: barrio, fukú, hood, identity, space.*

**1. Introduction: Fighting the Fukú**

Though history and the rewriting of the Past are the main problems lying at the core of the novel, the reconfiguration of the urban space and the continuous commuting between the Dominican *barrio* and New Jersey *neighbourhood* are also ranged among the many issues discussed in this novel.

The novel tells the story of the Cabral family, starting in the Dominican Republic, during the dictatorial regime of Trujillo, continuing in America, where the youngest daughter of the family, survivor of a tragedy that decimated her entire family, immigrates, and finally, the story of her two children, the last offsprings of the Cabrals, Lola and Oscar. The story combines episodes of atrocious violence, tender evocations of a pre-colonial Latin America and humorous incursions into North American contemporary reality, achieving a mixture of pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial histories, which succeed in bridging several cultural spaces by dint of the Fukú Americanus. Fukú or the “Doom of the New World”, brought from Africa by the slaves and engendered at the moment of intersection of two worlds, was unleashed by the Europeans’ arrival on the Hispaniola. Fukú appears to be a generator of historic events, of universal explanations for world tragedies and traumatic happenings and its personification in the novel is the Dominican “dictator-for-life” (Diaz 2008: 2) Rafael Leónidas Trujillo Molína. It comes to rule everybody’s life, especially of those people who, at a certain moment, happened to intersect Trujillo’s path. It seems to have always run in Dominican history as this nation

advances from colonialism to dictatorship and the instauration of the State Police, towards a modern nation ridden by racism, violence and misogyny.

The same *fukú* may perhaps be blamed for the fact that Oscar de León, the grandson of a brilliant doctor back in DR, is a very un-Dominican teenager, an anti-hero whose promising early childhood is soon contradicted by a terrible adolescence. Unappealing, overweight and clumsy, inhibited and shy, with no talent whatsoever in picking up girls, Oscar grows up being rejected by the people in the Dominican community and by the young people in his neighbourhood. It is during this troubled period of rejection and of personal searching for an identity that his love for the fantastic was born and cultivated. He comes to assume the part of a Watcher – a metaphorical character frequently invoked in the novel – acquiring in his case a more pejorative meaning, that of a *parigüayo*, as he is banished at the periphery of his peers' community due to his strange looks, his weird literary preferences and his incapacity to communicate with people of his age.

The novel is fragmented, alternating narrative voices and perspectives, multiplying versions of the same historical truth, offering a supernatural counterpart for each personal or public event, even counterbalancing the *fukú* with its fantastic counter spell – the *zafa*. All stories seem to go around the mistakes and absurdities of History which threaten to destroy individuals at the moment when their private narrations intersect the major, official discourse of History. The account of the Dominican noble origins of the Cabrals, their ordeals, their exile in America and their going back in search for roots and the revelation of lost stories, all have in common, apart the *fukú*, some fantastic elements working as narrative connectors: metaphorical warning characters (The Faceless Man), supernatural saviors (the Mongoose) or foretelling elements (the book with empty pages).

When disaster seemed to strike the second generation, exile was the only solution in order to leave the *fukú* behind and escape its tragic consequences. At that moment America is described as “the land of the lost”:

nothing more and nothing less than a país overrun by gangsters, putas, and no-accounts. Its cities swarmed with machines and industry, as thick with *sinvergüencería* as Santo Domingo was with heat, a cuco shod in iron, exhaling fumes, with the glittering promise of coin deep in the cold lightless shaft of eyes (158).

This movement away from DR, from the comforting precincts of the *barrio* to the new confines of the *neighbourhood*, is seen as a jump from the Third World to the First World, from the dark ages to the 21<sup>st</sup> century, in an attempt to leave the Past behind and erase its traumas as if they never existed.

## **2. Neighbourhood Remapped: Between Inner Cities and Exocities**

The city exists as a series of doubles; it has official and hidden cultures, it is a real place and a site of imagination. Its elaborate network of streets, housing, public buildings, transport systems, parks, and shops is paralleled by a complex of attitudes, habits, customs, expectancies and hopes that reside in us as urban subjects. We discover that urban “reality” is not single but multiple, that inside the city there is always another city (Chambers 1986: 64).

Urban Studies have started paying an increasing interest in the analysis of the formation, social structure and interactions of neighbourhoods as social units ensuring the good functioning of the metropolis. They generally start from Bourdieu’s notion of *habitus* seen as a necessary tool in understanding society and Henri Lefebvre’s (1992, 2002) ideas about the social production of space, envisaging neighbourhoods in terms of principles that “generate and organize practices and representations” (Bourdieu 1992: 53).

Neighbourhoods have been theorized as particular spaces not necessarily delimited by physical boundaries but characterized by an entire network of overlapping social relations established among their inhabitants; they generate a certain sense of belonging and communion and a specific code of acceptance and accepted behaviours within the confines of the neighbourhood, which generally leads to the construction of a communal feeling of self-esteem.

Defining the concept of “neighbourhood” has always proven to be a difficult task since it seemed to refer to two different urban spaces: either to very well functioning suburb areas of financial affluence and excellent living conditions or to low-income urban zones afflicted by a high degree of criminality and social problems. The understanding of neighbourhoods underwent a drastic change when the ever increasing urbanization started producing “a social order in which the traditional ties of community – shared space, close kinship links, shared religious and moral values – were being replaced by anonymity, individualism and competition” (Forrest and Kearns 2001: 2125). The erosion of social cohesion operated at different levels and through different factors and engendered various changes in social interaction.



In 1997, Manuel Castells theorised the factors of dissolution considered to be responsible for social decline and for a “polarized society” where the gap between social strata becomes very obvious. He included among these factors of social dissolution inside neighbourhoods - social disorder (referring to various rates of criminality), social discrepancies and inequalities, disparate moral values combined with an increasing crisis of the patriarchal family, the ever diminishing level of social interaction and the low degree of place attachment (due to the different locations of homes and work places). The various degrees of cohesion in different neighbourhoods may also contribute either to the fragmentation or the cohesion of an entire city. In this regard, social identity becomes a highly debatable problem determined by the sense of belonging to a local neighbourhood, by other extra-neighbourhood, urban coordinates and by opposition to other such neighbourhoods.

People socialize and interact in their local environment, be it in the village, in the city or in the suburb, and they build social networks among their neighbours. On the other hand, locally based identities intersect with other sources of meaning and social recognition, in a highly diversified pattern that allows for alternative interpretations (Castells 1997: 60).

Though seen as a metonym of home and thus a search to prolong the same sense of security and comfort outside one’s backyard, the neighbourhood acquires ambiguous values. Starting from the generally accepted definition of neighbourhood as associated to social problems and agglomeration of disadvantaged people who present themselves as a real threat to moral and social order of the city. Bigger social problems and a higher degree of unemployment entail a higher level of social cohesion which in this case becomes a factor of high risk for social order. On the other hand, the higher the degree of non-involvement and the weaker the social ties, the higher the level of social order and comfort inside the neighbourhood. Baumgartner was one of the theorists who highlighted these ambiguous values of community ties in relation to social order inside the metropolis:

People in the suburbs live in a world characterized by non-violence and non-confrontation, in which civility prevails and disturbances of the peace are uncommon. In this sense, suburbia is a model of social order. The order is not born, however, of conditions widely perceived to generate social harmony. It does not arise from intimacy and connectedness, but rather from some of the very things more often presumed to bring about conflict and violence – transience, fragmentation, isolation, atomization and indifference among people (Baumgartner 1988: 134).

Neighbourhoods also imply a certain local reputation which has to be maintained and cultivated reinforcing in his way the specific characteristics of local groups and communities. Sometimes this fact leads to an attempt to exclude the outside world, to reinforce the sense of security within the neighbourhood and thus to a *voluntary ghettoisation* based on social rejection of everything and everybody considered to threaten the social order. New urban approaches speak of the peripheral neighbourhood in terms of “postsuburbia”, “the metropolis inverted”, “the city turned inside-out” or “peripheral urbanization” (Soja 2008: 238), as a “product of voluntary residential decentralization, initially of a wealthy elite, but soon followed, closer to the city center, by working-class inner suburbs and further out by primarily white middle-class ‘pioneers’, pushing ever outward the suburban ‘frontier’, following the grand American tradition of civilizing frontier settlement” (240).

Cornell West (1990) made the distinction between what is generally coined as “hood” – usually associated to popular culture and hip-hop - and the common term of “neighbourhood”. He characterizes the former through an extreme individualism and the latter by a sense of collective identity. In the attempt to define local identities, theorists of urban spaces agree in envisaging the neighbourhood from three perspectives: in terms of *community* – related to the appraisal of the degree of cohesion of social ties, of *context* – referring to a particular “reputation” attached to a certain neighbourhood, and finally in terms of *commodity* – according to which a particular neighbourhood is sought for its security and comfort, for the living and job potential it offers, for its quality of being a “consumption niche” (Forrest and Kearns 2001: 2142).

All these aspects are present in Diaz’s representation of the “neighbourhood” though what he offers in *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* is rather a negative representation of the ‘hood’ as it is presented from the perspective of Oscar’s rejection from his community. This geek tragic-comedy, as it was often called – roughly goes around the same coordinates in the New Jersey episodes. The commodity feature of the neighbourhood they come to inhabit is obvious since exile caused by political oppression is what makes the family leave DR in order to escape the Fukú Americanus and search for a better future. The American Dream is reduced in Beli’s case – Oscar’s mother – to a desire for invisibility, which might help her get lost in “the land of the lost”; in Oscar’s case, The American Dream acquires opposite values as he is

desperately longing for social acceptance, the respect of his peers and the girls' love and attention.

In building Oscar's portrait, Diaz wanted to undermine the general image of Dominican masculinity and what he considers to be the stereotypical obsessions of writers of colour by making his main hero an absolute weird-looking nerd, rejected by everybody around him. What pertains to the *community* aspect acquires hilarious connotations since the scorn of the Dominicano-Puerto-Rican neighbourhood is directed against his looks which weren't those of a Dominican macho and against his preoccupations for genres that were far from those of a Dominican player whereas the scorn of the black kids is directed against his excessive nerdiness.

In Oscar's case, the *contextual* characteristic of neighbourhood prevails as the negative social reputation built around him gives Diaz the occasion to rise against any possible form of authority, be it political, historical, authorial/narrative or linguistic.

### **3. From the Barrio into the Neighbourhood and back**

When speaking about life in the Dominican Republic during the early and mid-twentieth century, Diaz draws a very unflattering image of the country whose history seems to perpetuate the same errors of the Past, denounced through frequent oppositions between the founding myths of the Old World or pre-colonial legends and colonial or post-colonial events. In defining Dominican roots, Diaz refers to a particular stereotypical image of masculinity consecrated by Western (re)descriptions of Latin America which presents the typical Dominican male as a promiscuous person, a womanizer and a playboy, whereas the terrible Dominican women are generally objectified. "Way too often writers of colour are basically, nothing more than performers of their otherness. I'm trying to figure out ways to disrupt that" (Lewis 2006).

The general atmosphere of mistrust, oppression and injustice during the Trujillo regime – vividly portrayed in the story of Abelard Cabral, Oscar's famous grandfather – leads to an extreme claustrophobic image of the barrio. The paradoxical feature of this kind of barrio is that its inhabitants on the one hand struggle to keep apart from each other, to acquire an invisible status, to mind their own business that might keep them away from Trujillo and, on the other hand, they close ranks in front of a common threat, the State Police. The voluntary confinement and the officially imposed exile into fear, ignorance and duplicity transform a generally united community into a political ghetto.

Metonymically speaking, this ghetto is taken to stand for the entire Dominican Republic, seen as another Alcatraz.

(...) The Dominican Republic of Rafael Leónidas Trujillo Molína, the Dictatingest Dictator who ever Dictated. This was a country, a society that had been designed to be virtually escape-proof. Alcatraz of the Antilles. There weren't any Houdini holes in that Plátano Curtain (80)

Escaping one's *barrio cerrado*, escaping DR is finally taken to stand for an escape from one's dreadful past, unrewarding present and predictable, unsatisfying future and ultimately, this is equated with an escape from History. Closed communities based on racial prejudices are thus engendered, perpetuating stereotypical descriptions and patters of accepted or rejected behaviours. Therefore, a particular emphasis is placed upon skin colour, gender roles and impossible relationships. Since any sense of belonging to a community is doomed to fail people are redirected towards smaller groups and isolate themselves within the boundaries, not always entirely secure, of their families. If a highly fractured community fails to provide a proper sense of belonging, the highest amount of respect among its members or ultimately, a coherent form of resistance to social and political structures, then the emphasis falls upon family ties; in this regard, family history, though contaminated by superstitions, unreliable memories and gossip, almost always comes in opposition with an officially fabricated community or national history. In this way, reviving and rewriting family history represents in fact a "historical rescue mission" (81) meant to recuperate a falsified history, one step forward in building a sense of belonging to a community. If in the part narrating the last years of Trujillo's dictatorship, a community start taking shape and a sense of solidarity starts emerging out of fear, mistrust and entrapment within official lies, this newly-formed barrio is glued together by fukú and its traumatic scars left upon people's minds.

The post-Trujillo Dominican barrio acquires a higher degree of cohesion though it remains an ethnic enclave still haunted by the spectres of the Past that often come back to reopen the old wounds. The transition from the Dominican barrio to the American neighbourhood marks an important step in forging the Cabrals' identity. The immigration to America exposes the family to new challenges and opportunities but at the same time to new social and racial prejudices which are acutely felt especially by Oscar, the fat, nerdy

teenager, obsessed with girls but constantly rejected by them, who finds his solace and refuge in science fiction and computer games.

In New Jersey Oscar finds himself in a symbolic ghetto, partly self-imposed, partly forced upon him, where he tries to create his own spaces of resistance. One of these spaces is precisely this “nerdy” combination of historic facts and instances of popular culture. This is explained as an attempt to “imprint the real with the crazy, or to contaminate the real with all this nerdy narrative” (Lewis 2006). In the same way the two cultural spaces – Dominican and American – are permanently juxtaposed and alternated, metonymically represented in the novel by the two “neighbour” communities living, as Diaz claims, in a “situation of simultaneity”. “Living in a place like Dominican Republic, we didn’t need to do that as memory, we were doing that as we lived. Two worlds were existing at exactly the same time. In a way, your imagination was bifurcated. So you couldn’t help but live in the Dominican Republic but also in the United States. You couldn’t help but live in the present and in the past the way most people live, but also in the future. You have to have an amazing imagination as an immigrant” (Lewis 2006). This jump between two communities, two historic periods and ultimately, two identities, was facilitated by the embrace of SF that provided metaphorical analogies.

If for all the historic events mentioned in the text Diaz provides ample footnotes and funny comments, there are neither explanations for all the references to genre novels, Japanese cartoons or computer games nor translations for all the Spanish words left as such in the text together with the idiosyncratic combination of academic, highly colloquial, black urban, black-Dominican English. Diaz explains his disturbing use of language registers, of untranslated Spanish vernacular words and his intertextual references to popular culture which create a “nerdish jargon” most people may not be familiar with, as some “disorienting devices”. These correspond to all the gaps and silences in the novel. What has been termed as “streetwise brand of Spanglish” (Kakutani 2007) serves to create new spaces of resistance and conflicting tensions that might cohere with the general sense of historic unreliability by preserving a certain amount of unintelligibility. Spanglish becomes “an accident of immigrant history” (O’Rourke 2007) – another facet of the multilayered history in the novel, an element of incomprehension equivalent to the silences of history or to the gaps in the collective and individual memory. All these gaps in the texts create the same alienating effect for the readers, engendering what

Diaz calls “a code of silence”, as the “fundamental byproduct of trauma is silence” (Diaz 2007).

In Oscar’s case the real journey of initiation takes him from the neighbourhood back into the *barrio*. The journey back to the Dominican Republic places Oscar in touch with his roots, with the lost history of his family and restores part of his self-esteem. The ambiguity lying at the core of the novel related to the vague remembrance of the Past and its various conflicting official recordings, to the permanent oscillation between rejection and acceptance, individualism and community solidarity, to the hesitation between *fukú* or *zafa* explanations of events or among the innumerable genre references, finds its best expression in what Diaz considers to be the essence of the Caribbean – the *baca*.

A *baca* is a shape-shifter with no original form, but everyone knows the *baca*” – says the writer. “In some ways it’s the Caribbean essence. In the Dominican Republic it’s a part of folklore. (...) You can’t define it, but you can describe it once you see it, and I wanted a book like that, with all these built-in oppositions (...) I wanted to see if it was possible to create a book, that, no matter how you tried to describe it, if you just took one inch around it, suddenly the book would resist your entire description (Ch’ien 2008).

#### **4. Conclusion**

Oscar remains the unconventional suburban middle-class American hardcore geek, raised in a Dominican neighbourhood and following the same principles his mother tried to leave behind when immigrating to America; his ability in speaking Klingonian, in playing D&D and drawing anime characters along with his ambition of becoming the next Dominican J. R. R. Tolkien would normally make him the archetypal nerd had it not been for the lack of self-transformation which, in comparison with other genre productions, in Oscar’s case fails to happen. Finally, Diaz’s novel speaks about marginalization and failure, whether personal or collective, about rejection – be it of/ by one’s community, of history in its official recordings, of authorship, authority and reader’s expectations, of strict cultural delimitations. One’s position at the margin or within one’s community, under or outside the traumatic range of the *fukú* finally remains a question of personal option, as Diaz seems to suggest: “I know I’ve thrown a lot of fantasy and sci-fi in the mix but this is supposed to be a *true* account of the Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao. This is your chance. If blue pill, continue. If red pill, return to the Matrix” (285).

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# SYMBOLISM OF AMERICAN GOTHIC SHORT STORIES: A COGNITIVE APPROACH

SVITLANA SHURMA

Kyiv National Linguistic University

*Abstract:* Though being of a metonymical nature, symbols in literary texts may on a scale from metaphor to metonymy, tend either to the former or to the latter. The research is focused on two types of symbols – global and textual ones – represented in Gothic Short Fiction, and on their intertextual links in the texts by E. Poe, A. Bierce and H. Lovecraft.

*Keywords:* artistic detail, conceptual metaphor, conceptual metonymy, global and textual symbols, Gothic short fiction.

## 1. Introduction

Research of symbolism in Gothic literature and its peculiar genre forms has been carried out within linguostylistical (Rudkovska 2006: 32-41), literary (Kovachev 1999, Birkhead 1963), gender (Ellis 2001, Wisker 2001) and psychoanalytical (Massé 2001, Miles 2002: 2-8) studies. The paper focuses on E. Poe's, A. Bierce's and H. Lovecraft's writings, which can be referred to as "Gothic". In general, Gothic prose falls into two categories: the so-called "Gothic novella" (Rudkovska 2006: 17, see also Markin 2003: 132-138) and "Gothic novel" (Antonov 2000: 5-6, Kovachev 1999, Miles 2002: 1). We also distinguish the Gothic short story as a separate genre characterized by a peculiar literary world, where the death theme revealed through rich imagery and symbolism is dominant.

My paper addresses the issue of literary symbolism and symbols that function in E. Poe's, A. Bierce's and H. Lovecraft's Gothic short stories and play a significant role in text formation. We depart from Yu. Lotman's (1996: 145) and U. Eco's (1986: 56) views on symbolism, and thus differentiate between two types of symbols in a literary text: (1) the symbol as a cognitive and cultural category (Kövesces 2000: 53) existing before texts, out of which literary texts may unfold (Arutiunova 1990: 6, Lotman 1996: 145, Toporov 1995: 63), and (2) the symbol existing only within a literary text and being understood as such only in some literary context (Arutiunova 1990: 88, Eco 1986: 56).



## 2. Global symbols

We call the first type of symbol a global one. It exists in the world or national culture, but when it unfolds into a literary text, it subordinates both text plot and structure (Shelestiuk 2003: 243). Therefore, by global symbol we mean a certain semiotic entity, a linguistic sign within which one reality is displayed through another one (Toporov 1995: 63), thus revealing the notions and/ or ideas beyond human understanding, e.g. love, faith. In other words, this is a semiotic expression of some non-semiotic sense (Lotman 1996: 146).

In literary texts, global symbols are not created by a writer, but are rather chosen by him/ her either consciously or subconsciously from the cultural layers found in the thesaurus of the author, in his/ her conceptual picture of the world. So, one and the same global symbol may unfold into different plots and this process is unpredictable as the global symbol has the memory more ancient than the memory of the text into which it unfolds (Lotman 1996: 147). The global symbol may transform a part of the memory it brings into the text, as in E. Poe's *Ligeia*, where 'the Conqueror Worm' global symbol unfolds. This symbol is mentioned in the verse that Ligeia whispers to her beloved shortly before dying: "That the play is the tragedy, "Man",/ And its hero the Conqueror Worm"; and in the question that is posed later: "Shall this Conqueror be not once conquered?" Correspondingly, the plot is structured as the fight of people's will against "the grim phantasm" of death.

Though symbols cannot be rationally interpreted, as their meanings are inexhaustible (Lotman 1996: 125), yet, an author addresses one of the symbol referents to its "model reader" (Eco 1984: ii). Such reference based on the whole system of culturally significant associations (Averintsev 1999: 154) is made possible due to the ability of global symbols to highlight the inexplicable.

The global symbol in the world culture is characterized by stability; there are a lot of universal symbols, for instance, the 'dove' is the symbol of peace and hope, the 'cross' is a symbol of Christianity and faith, etc. Such symbols that exist in the culture form a special symbolic field that correlates with their typical objects of reference, that is with those conceptospheres that are actualized when symbols are "refracted" in the literary texts of different authors. Such reference is indirect and is conditioned by the interaction of symbols in a certain textual field which serves as a medium between symbols and their referents (Deacon 2006: 35).

The "Referent - Symbol" ascendant direction, from referent to text, is characteristic of global symbols, as this type of symbol is motivated (Nesterov

2002: 10, Shelestiuk 2003: 233) by a multitude of associations, though not by textual context.

The symbolic, textual and reference fields of the Gothic short story form its literary dimension (see Fig. 1) as a genre. In the following Figure, S refers to symbols or symbolic groups that exist in the general cultural symbolic field ( $S_1 \dots S_n$ ). The field is created by those symbols that exist in the culture and in this or that way define the plots and composition of the short stories in question.

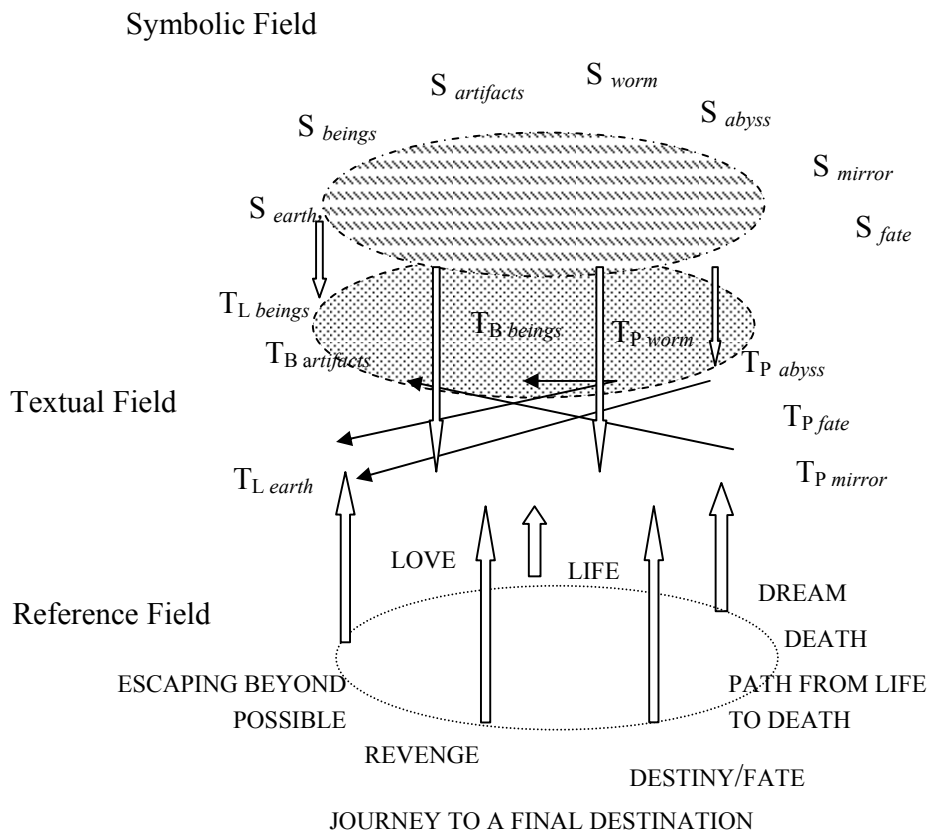


Fig. 1. The literary Dimension of Gothic Short Story from a Symbolic Perspective

Sign  $T_B$  stands for the same symbols or symbolic groups that are refracted in the textual field and appear in the work of individual authors (P for E. Poe, B for A. Bierce, L for H. Lovecraft). In the textual field, symbols are

transformed: for example, the 'abyss' symbol group of E. Poe's short stories are refracted in H. Lovecraft's work by way of creating a correlating but not identical 'earth' symbol group. Intertextual connections between symbols are mostly realized as the influence of the predecessor writer onto the creative work of his/ her followers; by this we refer to the transformation of E. Poe's symbols in writings by A. Bierce and H. Lovecraft.

The referent field is formed by those typical concepts that are symbolized in the works by the three authors and mould the textual field of Gothic short stories. The latter works as a "prism" through which symbols that function in the culture are refracted and acquire some genre features.

In the analyzed American Gothic short stories, the concepts of LIFE, DEATH, JOURNEY TO A FINAL DESTINATION, LOVE, DREAM, PATH FROM LIFE TO DEATH, FATE, and REVENGE are common referents that form the reference field. Their refraction in the textual field creates individual variations: for instance, while the symbolism of E. Poe's and A. Bierce's short fiction is connected with death as a final destination, in H. Lovecraft's works these symbols refer to the past and the future, but not to the present. The focus is shifted from the death of an individual to the death of civilizations and planets are revealed in his texts as the subcategory of 'earth' symbols (see Fig. 1).

### **3. Textual symbols**

Apart from global symbols, one comes across another type of symbols in the short stories, a textual one. This type of symbols is characterized by a descending direction of reference when a text influences the connection between some symbol and its referents, but not vice versa.

The major difference between global and textual symbols is the character of their textual representation. While the global symbol exists before the text and unfolds into the text, the textual one is a textual category *per se*. It is a variety of a trope, a twofold entity, that connects conceptual and verbal aspects of a sign. We regard a textual symbol as context dependant, as a literary text becomes a "reserve of symbols" (Eco 1986: 56). Quite often the authors themselves create their own symbols that acquire such status only within a certain context, in which the secondary meaning of a symbolic word is highlighted and the primary one is foreshadowed (Shelestiuk 1997: 132).

The textual symbol appears as a result of the author's creative act. Sometimes global symbols may become textual ones in some contexts, when they do not serve for text creation. For example, the 'shadow' symbol is a global

one in E. Poe's short story *Shadow – A Parable*, but in *The Island of the Fay* 'shadow' is only a textual symbol, an important artistic detail.

Unlike global symbols, textual ones are characterized by openness to interpretations, context determinacy and ambiguity (Eco 1986: 161). For example, the 'temple' symbol in H. Lovecraft's *The Nameless City* is a textual one and it appears in the short story as an artistic detail that refers to a building which the main character approaches in an opiate oblivion. The 'temple' symbol is actualized only within a macrocontext of several paragraphs and correlates with such conceptospheres as: (1) CURIOSITY – achieved through the use of the verbs "fancied", "wondered", the metaphor "thirst for wonder" etc.; (2) UNKNOWN – "I was quite unbalanced with that instinct for the strange and the unknown"; and (3) DEATH. The last concept is triggered by allusions, both direct and fictional, to Alhazred, the author of fictitious *Necronomicon*, to Damascius, renowned for his magic, and to Thomas Moore, the Romanticist, whose citation ("the Seat of Death") is provided.

#### **4. The nature of symbols**

Textual/ global symbol correlation with conceptospheres is made possible due to the cognitive mechanism of metonymic substitution of one or several abstract concepts by more concrete ones (Shelestiuk 1997: 129, Lakoff, Johnson 1980: 40). The metaphoric component (see Shelestiuk 2003: 235-259) is weak in symbols, shifted to the background, or completely lost. The cognitive base of any symbol is formed by a conceptual metonymy or a mental structure in which vehicle entity (correlate) gives "mental, cognitive access" to target entity (referent) (Kövesces 2002: 145). Nevertheless, the symbol is not a metonymy, in which two concepts belong to one taxonomy. The metonymic nature of symbols is realized as a metonymic relation of contiguity between taxonomically different objects and phenomena. For instance, the 'worm' symbol is created from the conceptual metonymy WORM for DEATH/ EVIL.

In American Gothic short stories, tropes (mainly metaphors) or artistic details become the sources of symbols.

##### **4.1. Metaphoric symbol creation**

To become a source of symbol, a verbal metaphor should unfold from a combination of conceptual metaphoric and metonymic components, with the metonymic component being dominant. For example, E. Poe's metaphor "his grayer eyes are Sybils of the future" from the short story *MS Found in the*

*Bottle*, taken outside its context, unfolds from a conceptual metaphor KNOWING IS SEEING, that initiates the emergence of allusion to a blind foreteller Sybil. Yet, in the context of the Gothic short story this verbal poetic image becomes symbolic, due to actualization of metonymic component EYES for SUBJECT/DESTINY. Thus, the metaphoric component of the verbal poetic image promotes its metaphoric reading, while its metonymic component triggers symbolization of the verbal metaphor.

In general, the interaction of verbal poetic images and symbols in the American Gothic short stories is directed from metaphor to symbol, but not the other way round. The emergence of a symbol from a verbal poetic image may be caused by the following factors: (1) symbolic interpretation of a verbal metaphor or (2) symbolization of a verbal poetic image with further development of symbolic meanings in a macrocontext. In the first case, there is a single use of symbolic verbal poetic image in the text, while in the second, there can be a single or multiple use of potential symbol that acquires its meaning within a paragraph, text fragment or the whole text. The wider the context, the more new interpretations this symbol gets, especially when it is used as an artistic detail.

For example, in H. Lovecraft's *Nyarlahotep*, a story of apocalyptic visions brought by Nyarlahotep to the city of men, both variants of metaphoric symbol creation can be traced. The 'wind' symbol appears in the short story only once as part of the verbal metaphor "charnel winds that brush the pallid stars and make them flicker low". This symbol is connected with the concept of DEATH as the verbal poetic image itself contains functionally significant epithets: "charnel" with reference to the wind and "pallid" with reference to the stars. Therefore, there occurs a joining of the conceptual metaphor WIND IS A BEING and the conceptual metonymy WIND for DEATH. As this textual symbol appears only once in the text, its only source of interpretation is the above mentioned verbal poetic image.

Another example from the same short story is the 'heat' symbol, that appears in the text due to the metonymic component HEAT for DISASTER, in the verbal poetic image "the autumn heat lingered fearsomely", which in its own turn appears from the conceptual structure the GREAT CHAIN OF BEING. The symbol that first appears in the microcontext as part of a verbal poetic image later in the text acquires more meanings with the help of such epithets as "stifling night", "choking room", "damp, hot, deserted midnight street"; "I felt the chill which was not of the hot autumn", that foreground the metonymic

component HEAT for SUFFOCATION/ DEATH, which, in the context of the whole short story, correlates with the general atmosphere of the "crawling chaos".

#### **4.2. Non-metaphoric symbol creation**

Still, metaphor is not the only source of symbols. In Poe's, Bierce's and Lovecraft's heritage there are a number of Gothic short stories (Poe and Lovecraft – 2 short stories, Bierce - 6 short stories) where verbal metaphors are completely absent. Nevertheless, the short stories are perceived as symbolic. In such cases, artistic details become symbol creating elements. To identify an artistic detail as symbolic one, we apply Miall's (1998: el-ref) three-phase model that reflects reader's possible reactions to functionally meaningful elements of different literary texts. The first phase called "defamiliarisation" presupposes the reader's reaction to some feelings evoked by a passage or fragment of a literary text; the second one implies a cognitive reaction that triggers a search for extralinguistic context for the defamiliarized elements of the text; and the third phase is connected with recontextualising, when a certain passage is perceived emotionally within the relevant context found in the second phase (Miall 1998: el-ref).

Of course, not every artistic detail becomes a symbol. The definition of the symbol as a sign unit, whose conceptual side evokes deeper readings that are outside the conventional meaning of a lexical unit, answers the question of why one artistic detail is perceived as symbol, and another is not.

To illustrate the point, let us take Bierce's short story *Staley Fleming's Hallucination* which is styled as a dialogue between a doctor and a man called Fleming, on his hallucinations in which every night he sees the dog of a deceased enemy. After the doctor's visit, the patient dies of the inexistent beast's bite.

No verbal metaphor is used in this short story, though several symbols may be traced, among which there is the 'dog' symbol. On the one hand, 'dog' may be regarded as an artistic detail along with "bed", "coal" etc. details. However, the question of why it is the dog that comes to Fleming in his hallucinations becomes the starting point of analysis. The search for some cultural context establishes the intertextual connection with the cultural perception of the 'dog' symbol. In Europe, there was a traditional conception of dogs as faithful and fair friends (Krugosvet: el-ref), but in the short story the 'dog' symbol is not interpreted as a friend alone. Words, connected with death, e.g.: "description of the beast fits the dog of the late Atwell Barton", "It died of

starvation on his grave"; and with the feeling of a threat: "intently watching me"; "It [expression of the dog. – S. Sh.] seems to me sinister"; together with the alliteration of sounds /b/, /d/ evoke unpleasant feelings that at the same time intersect with the associations connected with faithfulness, e.g.: "It died of starvation on his grave". As we can see, the 'dog' symbol in the short story is ambiguous. Still, such conflict is not unexpected. For instance, in Christianity, this symbol has only positive connotations (faithfulness, nobility, watchfulness); in pagan cultures of the North, it embodies witchcraft, demonic forces, death; and in ancient tribes, it used to have the meaning of a lifeguard, a guide and a protector after death (Krugosvet: el-ref).

## 5. Conclusion

All in all, both global and textual symbols play a significant role in text formation. A metonymic component of the image or an artistic detail may foster the emergence of a textual symbol as a trope which, in its own turn, complies with a culturally motivated global symbol. Regarding symbols as clues to literary text interpretation, textual symbols should be taken as text phenomena proper, and global symbols as components of text interpretation.

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## **A CAT IN THE RAIN AND IN THE READER'S MIND**

**GABRIELA TUCAN**

University of Timișoara

***Abstract:** The present paper is concerned with the construction of various worlds that appear during the course of a short narrative and their particular cognitive effects in the mind of the reader. Narratological and cognitive theories will be used in order to have a better understanding of how readers are able to construct a mental representation for one of Ernest Hemingway's short stories, "Cat in the Rain".*

***Keywords:** cognitive linguistics, cognitive poetics, contextual worlds, mental space, possible worlds theory, reception theory.*

### **1. Introduction: Cognition, meaning, and the mind**

The idea behind this paper shares the recent concern whether literary studies can still give a comprehensive account of the current transformations in society than it used to be the case. It is true that the study of the literary text in academia, and not only here, has suffered multiple changes due to the re-profiling of the reader. Pragmatically speaking, literature and literary studies have no longer been able to ignore the growing interest for the latest forms of art, very often made known by the new media. Therefore, it has become almost impossible not to reflect on the differences and most often similarities between the literary text and the other forms of recent art, which, admittedly, have been fully and probably more easily appropriated than it used to be the case with the literary text. Perhaps this is due to the accessibility of recent art in the sense that this one is more directly connected to the everyday experience of the art consumer. On the basis of these changes, literature has been 're-branded' and can be now seen as part and parcel of everyday human experience.

Starting from the premise that in understanding literary texts one needs to use our general cognitive capacities, I will try to explain literary reading by means of a cognitive poetics framework. My choice is not only related to the above-mentioned changes in the present reception of literature, but it also attempts at creating networks of collaboration across other branches of main cognitive studies. Cognitive poetics can be thus understood as a borderline discipline between stylistics and narratology, on the one hand, and linguistics, psychology, and the newer science of artificial intelligence, on the other hand. The study and the teaching of the literary text can become in this way

thoroughly more scientific and will thus gain more solid ground at the crossroads between human and social sciences.

In very broad terms, cognitive poetics or cognitive stylistics, as it is also known, claims that reading can be explained with reference to very general human principles of cognition and communication, which are used for making sense of the world. By means of these principles, it will be easier to acknowledge the presumed or observed psychological effects of the literary text on the reader's mind. In other words, one of the purposes of cognitive poetics is to explain how meaning is created in the text and which cognitive tools are used in order to decipher the process of meaning-making.

Given the preoccupation with the making of the meaning in the reader's mind, one can safely notice that the interest is moved away from the text to the reader and the correspondent reading process. However, this approach to the reader is not new, but it can be tracked back in the earlier history of literary theory. The starting point can be seen with the onset of structuralism in the early '60s, but only its later development will be of interest for establishing the relation with the newer cognitive stylistics. Jonathan Culler is the one who created the branch of *structuralist poetics* around 1975 and whose aim was not primarily interpretative, but concerned with finding the methods in the text that produce new and unexpected meanings. Basically, he seeks to determine

the conditions of meaning [that will show] how we go about making sense of texts (...) [and] which are the interpretive operations on which literature itself, as an institution, is based. (...) The study of literature, as opposed to the perusal and discussion of individual works, would become an attempt to understand the conventions which make literature possible (Culler 1975: viii).

Modern cognitive poetics shares the same concern with structuralist poetics in that they both seek to explain how meanings are created rather than aiming at the interpretation of a given text. More attention to the reception of texts will be granted in the '70s when the actual reception theories emerge. The death of the author, previously proclaimed, shifts the focal point onto the reader, now an indispensable element that gives substance to the text by using the tools of interpretation. In truth, literature and the literary reading are now becoming extensively self-reflexive in opposition to the tendencies in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, time period during which the text itself was meant to offer the right key to interpretation. The transition is thus made towards the act

of reading seen as a self-reflexive activity, which can now shed new light on the relation between reader and text.

In *The Limits of Interpretation* (1994), U. Eco explains on what grounds appeared the reception theories and what exactly assured their resounding success on the literary market. First and foremost, the theoretician claims that these new theories appeared as a reaction to the limited and limiting methods applied by structuralism and which claimed that texts could be examined objectively as a linguistic object. Secondly, the reception theories denied the supremacy of any formal semantics that ignored the practical circumstances in which statements were produced.

However, a more significant step for the reception theories is taken by the representatives of the Konstanz School on whose inauguration ceremony H. R. Jauss (1970) gave the opening speech, *Literary History as a Challenge to Literary Theory*, which changes dramatically the understanding of the literary history. Since then the literary history has no longer been understood as a collection of literary studies, seen in their chronological order, but as an assembly of studies with the purpose of understating how a text is produced, and even more importantly, how the text is received by its readership. As shown by Jauss (1970: 11), the publishing of a literary work is nothing but an ordinary “fact”, which will turn into a significant “event” through its prospective impact on the reading public.

One needs to comprehend the changes made by the Konstanz School in the sense that the aesthetics of literary production is now replaced with the aesthetics of reception and its observable literary effects. They now make the clear break from the previous experience of the Russian Formalist School that sees the reader as the perceiving subject who, by following the directions in the text, will only have to discover its form or its techniques of procedure. Therefore, the proposition made by the representative of the Konstanz School J. H. Jauss (1970: 22) claims the repositioning of the reader in his/ her genuine role of the addressee, fact which reconsiders the relationship author-text-reader. The reader is given a more dynamic role to play, much different from the one assumed by the formalist reading

By placing the reader at the heart of the reception theory, Jauss (1970: 25) speaks of the link between the literary research and the sociological one, but the critic promptly adds that this social function of literature needs to go beyond the traditional aesthetics of production and representation.

This is the moment when the theories of reception give a new definition to the studies of literature, different from the one of the Russian formalists, which sees the aesthetic value of a literary piece in its capacity to completely destroy the previous procedures of perceiving and understanding. It is true, though, that Jauss (1970: 29-30) as well gives credit to this departure from the old values in order to establish the new aestheticism, but his endeavour leaves room for the dialogue between the past and the present, and the aesthetic values they bring along.

Hence, one can speak of the dialectic character of literature, which means that any present work of art will be seen and understood with reference to the other works that have appeared in its proximity. The Konstanz School changes the perception of the literary history, now comprehended in its complexity and beyond a simple succession of literary facts. From now on the representatives of the School will discuss the literary history in terms of a dynamic process of reception, that is to say a process of renewing the text, through the eyes of different readers, irrespective of their cultural background; it may be the ordinary reader, the literary critic or the author.

## **2. Cognitive poetics and links with other cognitive sciences**

In comparison with the theories discussed above, namely the reception theories and the reader-oriented criticism, cognitive poetics ranges a more ample scope. Cognitive poetics claim that a serious and thoroughly reflexive reading can become a legitimate form of scientific reading whose meanings will be always shared by readers (either individual readers or community of readers) and will thus never remain captive in the reader's mind. In an attempt to collect all important reflections on cognitive poetics so far and in doing so to legitimize the science of reading, the poetician Peter Stockwell writes his introduction to this new groundbreaking science, *Cognitive Poetics: An Introduction* (2002). In the introductory chapter Stockwell understands readings as "the data through which we can generalise patterns and principles across readers and texts" (Stockwell 2002: 2), a highly abstract definition, though. However, our engagement with the reading and with the functional processes that are activated during reading need not be comprehended in abstract terms. There is not, in Stockwell's opinion, a general or an abstract model that can be applied to readings, that is why we need to attend to the multiple reading, "to the detail and quality of many different readings. Particular readings are important for us;

they are not simply the means to an abstract end. Indeed, it is in the detail of readings that all the interest and fascination lies” (Stockwell 2002: 2).

One of the defining elements of cognitive poetics is the *context* in which the reading will be performed, and according to which meanings will be adjusted. There are as many readings as contexts, given the fact that the context is evaluated in much detail to foster the appropriate reading. In fact, the meaning-making of the text depends on the context and the assumptions that underline the questions being asked. As a result, readings do not have a purely objective status, but they will always be in relation to the circumstances in which they are produced. From this viewpoint, of the relation between text and context, literature, along with its creative language, will reconnect the different readings between the academia and the everyday.

For a better understanding of cognitive poetics and its principles, one must consider the previous development in the cognitive sciences, namely those of cognitive linguistics and psychology. In short, the premise underlining their work is the one that states that all forms of expression and perception are closely related to the biological and material circumstances in which the individual stands at a given moment in time. This is due to the way in which the human mind is ‘embodied’; it is meant to perceive both literally and figuratively. Stockwell illustrates this disposition of the human mind by a series of adverbial phrases built with ‘up’ and ‘down’. All this labelling is bound to our cognitive and material existence:

It means that all of our experiences, knowledge, beliefs and wishes are involved in and expressible only through patterns of language that have their roots in our material existence (Stockwell 2002: 5).

Concerned with meaning formation in the reader’s mind, cognitive poetics does not ignore the readers’ experience which, more importantly, eases their access to the literary text. This leads to the following principle in cognitive poetics, namely that the text and its meanings are only partially created by the hints offered by the text, seen as an object in its own right. The reading is therefore the process through which the reader arrives at the *contextual worlds* of the text. These contextual worlds appear under different titles, according to the particular branch of cognitive sciences in which they are developed. For instance, in pragmatics and the philosophy of language one can speak of *possible worlds*, in narratology this corresponds to *discourse worlds*, and in cognitive linguistics they shape the theory of *the mental space*. In order for

these contextual worlds to be created in the reader's mind, the text needs to offer a *rich context*, which will be plausible and credible for the reader, in spite of the "limited and under-specified strings of language in texts" (Stockwell 2002: 92).

More appropriate for understanding literary worlds, *discourse worlds* are "dynamic readerly interactions with possible worlds" (Stockwell 2002: 93), or, to put it differently, discourse worlds are possible worlds with a highly cognitive and narratological dimension. It is in this discourse or fictional world where fictional statements are judged. So, the truth-value of a statement in a discourse world is given by the textual evidence which will allow readers to judge what is true or false in a particular discourse world.

### **3. Cognitive poetic analysis – *Cat in the Rain*, E. Hemingway. Possible world theory**

For more practical purposes, I will now choose one of Hemingway's short stories *Cat in the Rain* in order to examine more attentively the mental relationships formed in a very short narrative. I will resort to the theory of possible worlds, borrowed from the philosophy of language, and to the mental space theory, derived from cognitive linguistics. Given the wide variety of mental spaces that are being constructed during the course of the narrative, I will try to prove that the cognitive representation of the plotline, i.e. the easily observable sequences of events and states of affairs, will reveal only partially the world of the text in its entirety. For a better understanding, the reader needs to go deeper into the text and conceive of events and activities that do not actually 'happen' in the story, but are only imaginary projections or wished situations that are unfolding in the more hidden life of the characters. In conclusion, the point I am trying to make is that for a more comprehensive view of the textual world, readers need to be aware of these both dimensions of the narrative text (the text actual world and the non-actual/ virtual text worlds), with more careful attention paid to what is not uttered or realized, but still present as a prospective reality in the story.

As in the case of many other short stories, Hemingway keeps the narrative extremely short, thus revealing only the tip of the iceberg, the rest to be discovered by the reader. Nothing much seems to happen in this story: an American couple spend their holiday in an Italian hotel. While the husband is much engrossed in his reading, his wife goes out to get a cat she sees through the window. It is raining and the wife wants to protect the cat from the rain

outside. In the reception lounge she meets the receptionist, they exchange a few words, and then she gets in the courtyard, but the cat has already gone. Back in the hotel room, the wife cannot have a proper conversation with her husband, as this one keeps on reading. She tells him how much she wants to have a cat and several other things while the husband tries hard to keep focus on his reading. The story ends with a knock on the hotel door, a maid is sent by the hotel keeper to offer the wife a cat.

In the possible world of the text, the marriage of the American couple is an event in the actual domain whereas the wife's desire to get into the possession of several things, including the cat, is never realized. This is to say that in the possible world of the text there are two sets of domains: *the text actual world* and some other *alternative possible worlds* (Ryan 1991 apud. Gavins, Steen 2003: 85).

Given the assumption that the two worlds, the real one and the text world, correspond almost identically to one another, I will now proceed with the reading of Hemingway's text in a possible world approach; this would result in reading the text on two different dimensions: first, the plotline, the actual domain of the text which records all existing events and actions performed by the characters. Second, other worlds are embedded within the actual world of the text, whenever the characters cope with an alternate version of themselves, "whenever anyone has a flashback, a flashforward, imagines something, plans something, or considers an unrealised possibility. In each of these cases, we have to keep track of the character in the current discourse world, as well as the idea of the same character who is younger (flashback), older (flashforward)" (Stockwell 2002: 94). Finally, the understanding of a text is due to the active combination between the actual events of the text and these alternate versions of the world activated by the characters.

Sometimes the actual text world and its counterparts come into conflict, as the belief system of one character is never entirely revealed to the other characters, but only shown to the reader, who better understands the source of the conflict and the cause of constant misunderstandings. It is in this virtual world where the character finds refuge and thinks that only the realization of this prospective world would solve the conflict and bring into the text more harmony. Stockwell (2002: 94-95) describes after Ryan (1991) several of these alternate worlds, which are character-centred: *epistemic worlds* or *knowledge worlds* that speak of what characters believe to be true or false in their world; *speculative worlds* that are made up of all unrealized actions, of

what characters anticipate to be happening next; *intention worlds* refer to what the character plans to do in a deliberate manner; *wish worlds* show how characters imagine their discourse world; *obligation worlds* operate with the set of moral values that the character holds; *fantasy worlds* are about the character's wishes, dreams, and visions that are only imaginarily represented.

Ryan cited by Semino (2003: 86) in the chapter dedicated to mental spaces in Hemingway's short stories explains that plot development is triggered by the constant changes in the relations between the text alternate worlds. A text is thus constructed by a very complex network of continually changing virtual worlds, and subsequently the text will be classified according to the world in which the most dramatic changes happen (Gavins, Steen 2003: 88). In *Cat in the Rain* the conflict mostly lies in the *wish worlds* of the characters and which will finally turn the story into a highly frustrating experience with unfulfilled plans hanging in their future.

To start with, in the first paragraph the reader is given an ample description of the place, the hotel where the American couple is accommodated and its surroundings. There is also the observation that they don't know any of the people in the hotel, so the American couple is later introduced while spending the afternoon alone in their hotel room. Therefore, the focus will be mainly on these two protagonists and their separate non-actual worlds. In the actual world of the text nothing much happens. In the more hidden, non-actual world the wife actually plans to make a slight change in the boredom of their holiday and, by extension, in their seemingly unsuccessful marriage. This only happens in her *intention world*, which is never explicitly shared with her husband. She hopes their holiday and love affair might be different and thus populates her *wish world* with tiny but exciting happenings, which seem nonetheless not to disturb the actual world where the husband simply carries on with his reading.

The following part introduces another character, the hotel owner, whom the wife meets in the reception lounge and where they exchange a few words. When the wife gets in the courtyard in search for the cat, an umbrella opens behind her. The hotel keeper sends a maid to attend the wife, because he probably feels it is his duty in his *obligation world* to offer his help. His gesture is not only triggered by the official standard in their hotel, that one of assisting their clients, but it is also a sign of implicit friendship. For a short while, in the conversation with the maid, the wife's *wish world* is partially revealed to this stranger, who probably understands the emptiness in the life of the wife. She



stresses by repetition what she really desires right there and right then: ‘A cat?’ the maid laughed. ‘A cat in the rain?’/ ‘Yes,’ she said, ‘under the table.’ Then, ‘Oh, I wanted it so much. I wanted a kitty’ (Hemingway 1995: 108). First the wife uses the word *cat* and then *kitty*, normally used by children, what could lead to the assumption that she needs more protection and attention as a child would need. It is in her *wish world* where she projects her desires for more affection and understanding on the part of her husband. When the wife and the maid both return to the hotel, ‘the padrone bowed from his desk. Something felt very small and tight inside the girl. The padrone made her feel very small and at the same time really important. She had a momentary feeling of being of supreme importance’ (Hemingway 1995: 108). The insight look into her thoughts and emotions makes room for yet another non-actual world, that one of her *fantasies*. By indulging in fantasies, she envisages herself as an important figure for someone, even if this person is a complete stranger to her. It is this contradictory feeling, a mix of pettiness and importance, that momentarily changes her perspective in the way a child would behave in the circumstances. She is no longer the wife but the girl who apparently for no good reason feels attached to the hotel keeper, who seems to offer her some comfort. Their worlds never clash and that is probably why there is a temporal suspension in the plotline.

Back in the text actual world, the wife finds her husband engrossed in the same activity and tries to give him some more hints that would disclose part of her dreams, wishes, and willingness to change something in their relationship: ‘I wanted it so much,’ she said. ‘I don’t know why I wanted it so much. I wanted that poor kitty. It isn’t any fun to be a poor kitty out in the rain’ (Hemingway 1995: 108), but the husband says nothing and just resumes his reading. Basically the conflict continues with the clash between the void in the actual domain of the story and the bitter excitement that emerges from the wife’s unrealized wish and fantasy worlds.

As a deeper introspection into her fantasies and desires, the wife engages in a dialogue with herself in front of the mirror. From time to time she just asks her husband some questions but she doesn’t seem to be really listening to his answers, which are anyway brief and uninterested. It is now when the wife realizes that their wish worlds are so separated to the point of utter non-communication. There is nothing in the text that speaks of the husband’s inner wish worlds. The rest of the text will be thus dedicated to this rather absurd one-sided dialogue, in which the wife suggests, as for herself, several changes

she would like to make in her life. The apparently futile transformations (a change in her hairstyle, dinner by candles and silverware, new clothes, but most of all a kitty to look after) in her wish world reveal the more serious problems in her life. It might be the attention her husband refuses to give her or the absence of a child that deprives her of the joy of motherhood. However, this being underspecified in the text, the reader is left to make suppositions in his/her role of an intruder in these hidden worlds of the female character, which denies access to the unsentimental male character. So, what could have been a short enjoyable holiday turns out as a complete failure of communication.

#### 4. Conclusion

My analysis of the effect of *Cat in the Rain* shows that in the end the female character's frustration increases due to the unrealized wishes and plans. Her extended virtual narrative comes into conflict with her husband's refusal to discover her Want spaces, so that, in the final paragraph, there is a more epistemically distant space between the two of them. To conclude, a mental space approach will consider both the linguistic features of the text and, more significantly, the non-actual or virtual spaces of the story. So, in the process of meaning-making one needs to explore more comprehensively the potentiality of these unrealized worlds. In this respect, I have tried to provide a cognitive account of text processing and explain how readers can benefit from a closer interaction with the text. With regard to this interaction, both possible worlds theory and mental space theory have much to offer to readers.

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# CHARLES BROCKDEN BROWN AND LITERARY THEORY: SOME CONSEQUENCES OF AMERICAN GOTHIC REVIVAL

DAGMARA ZAJĄC  
Jagiellonian University

*Abstract:* The paper aims at presenting some effects of the rapid expansion of Gothic criticism in the seventies. Bringing about aesthetic reevaluation of the genre itself, the Revival might also have resulted in many instances of overinterpretation. Charles Brockden Brown's "Wieland" is discussed as a case in point. Two different readings of the novel are considered: I believe that both may be challenged on more or less serious grounds.

*Keywords:* Brown, Gothic revival, overinterpretation, Wieland.

## 1. Introduction

Ever since the Gothic emerged as a literary form in the eighteenth century, there has been a lot of controversy surrounding it. The early critics regarded the texts of Walpole and Radcliffe as practically worthless. As Leslie Fiedler points out in his famous study, some of them would consider Gothic a "pathological symptom" rather than a proper literary movement. For Wordsworth, who was the heir of the "genteel sentimentality" of the eighteenth century, Gothic sensationalism seemed simply a reaction to the decay of sensibility in an industrialized and brutalized world, in which men had grown so insensitive that only "shock treatments" of increasing intensity could force them to react (Fiedler 1966: 135). Coleridge was of a similar opinion: "The horrible and the preternatural," he wrote in a review of *The Monk*, "have usually seized on the popular taste, at the rise and decline of literature. Most powerful stimulants, they can never be required except by the torpor of an unawakened, or the languor of an exhausted, appetite" (Coleridge 1797: 295).

Still, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, critical attitudes started to change. Fred Botting argues that this revival was connected to the rise of literary theory in the sixties: he describes it as a group of new critical approaches, ranging from Marxism to psychoanalysis. Marxist, feminist and psychoanalytic approaches in particular influenced the discussion by defining the cultural significance of the Gothic, as, for example, expressions of class violence and anxiety, representation of female oppression and rage, or sexual repression and freedom.

Subaltern features, the elements suppressed by a dominant bourgeois and patriarchal ideology, form the basis of such critiques; they also constitute the locus for a kind of liberation of meanings, if not attitudes, and thus, in part, become manifestations of critical assumptions themselves (Botting 2001: 4).

## **2. Charles Brockden Brown and the Gothic Revival**

The Gothic novels of Charles Brockden Brown were at that time subject to similar reevaluation. Although he has always been considered to have played a crucial part in the development of American literature, he was often accused of a wide range of literary faults, such as “his apparent inability to tell a story simply; his weak and inconclusive endings; a tendency to work up to powerful climaxes that never come off; an almost fiendish delight in lecturing his readers; and a heavy, involved, verbose style” (Clark 1952: 162). Starting from the 70s, however, more and more critics began to appreciate his novels. There have been numerous attempts to prove that the various paradoxes, omissions, and incongruities proliferating in Brown’s text are not the result of his clumsiness as a writer; that they are not a matter of coincidence and they may very well be a part of Brown’s conscious design. Numerous critics of different scholarly backgrounds have tried to account for the ambiguities and confusion in Brown’s texts, particularly *Wieland, or, the Transformation*. The readings range from historical, social and philosophical to purely linguistic. Some critics, such as Jane Tompkins, argue that *Wieland* should be read as a political tract. Others, like Roland Hagenbüchle or Harvey Gable, opt for a more universal approach, maintaining that Brown’s primary concern was the epistemological crisis or the problem of evil. Finally, there are some who would share the opinion of Norman Grabo that the novel was designed to explore female psychology in a revolutionary and innovative way. It should be emphasized that such a variety of different and often contradictory interpretations is paradigmatic of a more general tendency in the contemporary critical reception of Gothic fiction.

There is a paradox connected to this exploratory enthusiasm for the Gothic. It has been accurately described in Elisabeth Napier’s *The Failure of Gothic: Problems of Disjunction in an Eighteenth-Century Literary Form*. Considering the eighteenth-century rejection and the twentieth-century appreciation of Gothic fiction, she asks an important question. The torrent of criticism defending and celebrating the Gothic has its origin in the revival of the 70s. But hasn’t it also resulted in acts of overinterpretation? Hasn’t it brought about a full-scale “reader-response” mode of criticism?

Napier considers the tendency of Gothic writers to emphasize external and superficial manifestations of emotional behavior over and above inner psychological states. In other words, the authors do not focus on psychological complexities. Only the actions of a character are described and it is left for the reader to deduce “complex psychological movements,” having only “certain wildness of aspect,” or “settled paleness of the countenance” as evidence. Consequently, Napier maintains that one possible explanation of this phenomenon might be that the Gothic is attempting to render psychological truths that it cannot fully confront but that certain “more enlightened critics” have been able to deduce from it. In her book, she argues that if this is the case, the Gothic has simply been subjected to *overreading* (Napier 1987: 7).

Charles Brockden Brown’s *Wieland* provides an interesting example of how radically a work of Gothic fiction can be reevaluated. In my opinion, it might also serve as an example of a text subjected to overinterpretation. The two readings that I am going to discuss in this paper offer interesting interpretations of the novel, which are by no means groundless. In most cases, however, it is still possible to argue that the critics have simply been misled and carried away by their enthusiasm, as they were fascinated by certain features of the novel that might seem surprisingly modern. I want to argue that both readings may be challenged on more or less serious grounds. Moreover, for the purpose of this paper I will take advantage of the degree of freedom provided by the theoretical lack of consensus concerning the importance and relevance of the author’s intentions for the process of interpretation. I believe that in the case of *Wieland*, Brown’s intentions have to necessarily be taken into account.

One of the reasons may be the fact that throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth century, writers tended to regard themselves primarily as involved citizens, not as artists. Still, as Jane Tompkins (1986: 41) rightly notes:

modern critical expectations about the nature of literary production have replaced those that motivated the writing of *Wieland*, and the result is a variety of interpretations that reflect the concerns of twentieth century critics more closely than they do the concerns that animated Brown's novel.

For example, a critic interested in psychoanalysis attempts to find in *Wieland* various symbols of suppression and sexual restraint. A follower of Jacques Derrida, on the other hand, would rather pursue the originary complexity of the novel. Although any such reading may include arguments that will actually

make sense, the problem with some of the approaches is the loss of context within which the novel was written.

In the article, *The Double-Tongued Deceiver: Sincerity and Duplicity in the Novels of Charles Brockden Brown*, Michael Davitt Bell (1974) argues that what inspired *Wieland* was what he describes as "writer's anxiety." He points out that in the nineteenth and nineteenth century, "it was the consensus of American critics, ministers and moralists that novels were at best frivolous and usually dangerous" (144). Bell gives the example of the Rev. Samuel Miller, whom Brown knew personally. The Reverend complained in 1803 that novel-reading had "a tendency too much to engross the mind, to fill it with artificial views, and to diminish the taste for more solid reading" (Miller 1811: 114). He claimed that "To fill the mind with unreal and delusive pictures of life is, in the end, to beguile it from sober duty, and to cheat it of substantial enjoyment". Miller's attack was at that time quite representative.

Interestingly enough, most contemporary novelists shared this fear of fiction and imagination. For instance, in a long footnote to *The Power of Sympathy*, the author William Hill Brown draws a moral from the seduction of one Elizabeth Whitman, a woman endowed with "a poetical imagination. She was a great reader of novels and romances, and having imbibed her ideas of the *characters of men*, from these fallacious sources, became vain and coquettish, and rejected several offers of marriage, in expectation of receiving one more agreeable to her fanciful idea" (1937: 3). Bell argues that this fear of the influence that fiction may have on the impressionable minds of its readers was also shared by Brown.

In this approach, Carwin emerges not as a villain or a Lovelace-Faust character, but as an artist. Bell refers to the widely known opinion of Brown in which he states that the purpose of the novelist's "lofty eloquence is to enchain the attention and ravish the souls of those who study and reflect" (Brown 1978: 228). Bell links this idea with Clara's response to Carwin's strangely erotic voice, which was:

not only mellifluous and clear, but the emphasis was so just, and the modulation so impassioned, that it seemed as if an heart of stone could not fail of being moved by it. It imparted to me an emotion altogether involuntary and uncontrollable. When he uttered the words, 'for charity's sweet sake,' I dropped the cloth that I held in my hand, my heart overflowed with sympathy and my eyes with unbidden tears (Brown 1997: 64).

Clara is the reader, ravished by the power of the writer's voice. In Bell's words, "Here is the writer's passionate eloquence, uncontrollable in its appeal, irrational in its effects" (Bell 1973: 147). Bell argues that Carwin had a part in Theodore's mania, by indirectly influencing him, which is a quite popular interpretation. What makes it interesting is that Bell believes that Carwin's early vocal deceptions disturb Theodore's ability to distinguish between fact and fiction, leading him to accept the reality of voices produced by his own imagination. Bell points out that "this is precisely the sense in which moralists, including Brown, feared that fiction would unsettle the mental balance of novel-readers" (147).

Although Bell's reading is extremely interesting and takes into account Brown's historical context, it can still be challenged. First of all, I believe that we have to bear in mind Brown's intentions concerning the novel. In the Advertisement, the author limits himself to tentatively hoping that his work will be "ranked with the few productions whose usefulness secures to them a lasting reputation" (Brown 1997: 3). What is significant about this remark is that Brown connected the value of *Wieland* with its *usefulness*; in other words, he wanted his novel to have a practical *use*. Brown's sense of purpose was so powerful that he even sent the copy of *Wieland* to Thomas Jefferson, who was then Vice President of the United States. This letter clearly shows that not only did Brown value his novel; he also believed that it will be appreciated by Jefferson, who indeed "regarded Gothic with contempt" (Brown 1997: 163). The only thing that might convince this prominent statesman to value such a work would be clear, "purposeful", message.

To return to Bell (1974): if Brown identified the value of *Wieland* with its usefulness, it would necessarily mean that by undermining his own status as a novelist, Brown intended to question the role of a writer as such. Consequently, sending a copy of *Wieland* to Jefferson would rather confirm the latter in his negative opinion of fiction. Considering the letter itself, as well as Brown's high opinion of his own writing, such a conclusion is probably out of the question.

Another interesting reading was presented by Norman Grabo in his *Coincidental Art of Charles Brockden Brown* (1981). In my opinion, Grabo's reading shows what might happen if both the author's intentions and historical context are overlooked. I believe this particular interpretation to be a perfect example of what Jane Tompkins describes as "modern critical expectations



about the nature of literary production [replacing] those that motivated the writing of *Wieland*' (1986: 41).

Grabo, employing a mixture of the psychoanalytical approach and the New Critical, concentrates on Clara, the narrator. There is a number of interesting ideas among his arguments. For instance, the concept of Clara's concluding story as an attempt to conventionalize her traumatic experience is one of the most convincing attempts to account for the Stuart-Conway-Maxwell episode, the subplot that has always been a source of interpretational problems. Still, a few of Grabo's other ideas seem to be something of an exaggeration. Such might be the case with his interpretation of one of the novel's episodes.

One evening, Clara is sitting alone in her room, thinking about her beloved – Henry Pleyel. At one point, she decides to look through her late father's manuscripts, which are kept in her bedroom's closet. As she approaches the door, she gets scared half to death by the strange noises and a voice coming from the inside of the closet. For a moment, she thinks it might be her brother, trying to play a trick on her. It turns out to be Carwin – the villain.

First of all, Grabo (1981) associates Clara's fantasizing of Pleyel with her sexual awakening, which actually makes quite plausible a motivation for her confused state of mind. As he goes on, however, Grabo seems to be pushing his psychoanalytical interpretation a bit too far:

[Clara] determines to reread her father's memoirs, which are kept in her private closet with her other books and papers. Sexually charged, hyperimaginative, deeply frustrated, and yearning for her father's comfort, she approaches her closet door (1981: 88).

This is the moment Clara thinks it might be actually *Wieland* – her brother – trying to scare her.

Not understanding herself why she wants to bring him out and persisting in attempts to open the closet door despite what she believes to be a "divine" warning against doing so, she finally succeeds in revealing the hidden presence — not her brother but Carwin!... He confesses his impulse to divest Clara of her honor but mysteriously vows to refrain from his purpose... Then he backs out... The great irony of the scene is that he does not satisfy Clara's barely suppressed sexual desires. Not only does he not rape her, he is not even her brother! (1981: 15-16).

If ascribing such motives and incestuous desires to Clara is an exaggeration, so is Grabo's final interpretation of the novel. In a nutshell, he believes Carwin to be Clara's "self-generated sexuality – raw, irrational,

irresponsible, violent, even criminal” (27). At the same time, he believes him to be the replica of that other aspect of her father, the one which “refused or failed to carry out his obedience to the source of creation, whereas Theodore is his obverse twin, the replica of his father's duty, obedience, and guilt (ibid).” In other words, the two characters are nothing more than projections of Clara’s mind: Theodore stands for her “fatherly madness,” and Carwin for her “private sexuality” (28).

Theodore and Carwin are opposites, and so we might expect Clara to be choosing between them; in another, since they both share features of her father, Clara wants both... The choice of either is impossible, and the impossibility is put in essentially sexual terms. She cannot be entirely united to Theodore because of the obvious incestuous connections... [still, she cannot] surrender to Carwin's utter lawlessness, no matter how strong her fascination (28).

Consequently, Grabo gives a rather incredible reading of the novel as a whole. Theodore does not murder his wife and children of his own accord: Clara “wills” him to do that. Grabo argues that although she cannot be entirely united to him, “she can very much desire to supplant his wife and children” (26). Such a reading of Brown’s novel, if rather extreme and exaggerated, shows the fascinating potential which *Wieland* has for being analyzed within different critical approaches.

### 3. Conclusion

To conclude: one may ask: has *Wieland* been subject to overreading? Is Brown’s work nothing else but a badly structured, conventional piece of early American fiction? Can we agree with Elisabeth Napier’s suggestion that the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century Gothic has largely been subjected to overreading? The debate over the significance of Brown’s novel, and the true value of all the Gothic texts, has not been yet brought to an end. Ever since the Revival of the 70s, *Wieland* has been open to new interpretations. The ever-increasing number of critical texts dealing with Brown and his fellow Ghoticists definitely proves one thing: the interest in this kind of fiction is still vivid in academic circles, despite the permanent lack of consensus over its true significance and meaning.

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SECTION THREE:

**BRITISH AND  
COMONWEALTH  
LITERATURE**

## REALITY THROUGH YEATS' POETRY

FLORENTINA ANGHEL

University of Craiova

*Abstract: The present article tackles the relation between reality and art in William Butler Yeats' poetry, exploring both historical poems and poems inspired from Celtic mythology. Although representational art is mainly considered to be closer to reality, reality also transcends into the works that are created as a response to the readers' horizon of expectation, in Yeats' case the revival movement in Ireland. Such contextualization ensures the documentary value of art.*

*Key words: Irish culture and history, poetry, reality, William Butler Yeats.*

*I have passed with a nod of the head  
Or polite meaningless words,  
Or have lingered awhile and said  
Polite meaningless words...  
(Yeats 1996: 83).*

### 1. Introduction

The relationship between art and reality is often debated as the ever refining artistic techniques permanently struggle to make art float loose and stir the reader's imagination. Even a contextualizing approach that is considered able to pull the strings is speculative enough to allow various interpretations to emerge. Poetry, more than the other literary genres, twists the image of reality for an aesthetic purpose, aiming to encapsulate facts, emotions and artistry within its extremely restrictive form.

William Butler Yeats' statement urging to the creation of "an art that is close to pure music" and that is freed from imitation (cf. Kiberd 2002: 440) and his interest in occultism, symbolism and mythology challenge the reader for whom Ireland gets shape in his verse. Yeats' poetry can be easily contextualized as it suggests and/or mentions aspects of Irish culture and life, being strongly rooted in reality. Besides, contemporary critics show increasing eagerness to demonstrate the interdependence of art and reality.

In her work *Culture and the Real* Catherine Belsey mentions the possibility to see "human beings as entirely culturally constructed" (Belsey 2005: 3) and refers to Jean Baudrillard's example of the interrelation between the 'real' America and Disneyland. "Disneyland is part of American culture –

but so is American culture” (Belsey 2005: 3). It would be, in a similar way, difficult to draw a line to separate reality from invention in Yeats’ work as they interact at different levels, and one cannot be imagined without the other.

However, considering the complexity and variety of Yeats’ work, more aspects, such as art as imitation and art as invention, have to be considered for a thorough understanding of how reality emerges through poetry. Two major aspects: mimesis and invention, therefore alteration, define the tension within the artistic creation. While art perceived as mimesis can be an invitation to establish a correspondence between the work of art and the reality it reflects, art as invention implies the personal involvement in the work that serves the author’s search for originality and value. Art implies representation of the signified and it does this in a symbolic way, attempting immortality. Following the inspiring poststructuralist theories, the reader can indulge in the pleasure of speculating on the text whose authority subversively shapes ideas revealing attitudinal hypothesis of the author.

## **2. Art as imitation**

As a result of his involvement in writing drama and in stage performance, being the leader of the Anglo-Irish literary revival movement, Yeats launched the idea of “ritual purgation” and that of “a necessary and prior indifference” (Kiberd 2002: 439) that helped the actress to

... mimic religious fervour and repentance only after their abatement, because by then they left her lukewarm enough to regard them from a dispassionate distance. Art itself might therefore be often no more than a successful faking of feelings which are all-but-dead to the artist (Kiberd 2002: 439).

Yeats thus establishes a mimetic relationship between reality and art, which makes the latter be an echo of the former by direct reference to facts or by emulating feelings.

Following a natural course in a troubled Ireland, besides the biographical speculations concerning his efforts to please Maud Gonne, Yeats published poems inspired from contemporary events, which strengthened the correspondence between his art and reality. He either describes events or states opinions and issues that the common Irish worded. Embodying different poetic egos, William Butler Yeats offers more perspectives upon the Irish in his poems.

*September 1913* projects the image of a spiritually paralyzed and mercantile Ireland whose Romanticism and aspirations have died, partly reminding of the one James Joyce depicted in *Dubliners*. The poem is actually a reminder of the lockout of the workers who were members of the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union organized by Jim Larkin and James Connolly. In *The Course of Irish History* T. W. Moody and F. X. Martin describe the brutal repression movement the workers had to endure for eight months:

Dublin witnessed massive rallies, baton charges by the police resulting in numerous injuries and a couple of deaths, riots, arrests, imprisonments, food-ships from English sympathizers, and sympathetic strikes (Moody 2001: 251).

Unlike Moody and Martin, Yeats chooses to show the workers not as being repressed, but as being passive and contrasts them to heroic figures of the past like Fitzgerald, Emmet and Tone and to his friend, O'Leary, who embodies the idea of integrity and Romantic idealism. The author thus reaches two aims: on the one hand registers an important and yet unsuccessful event in Irish history, on the other hand he reveals his dismay at the way in which people acted and the events unfolded at the time.

Although the Union's attempt was not successful, the Dubliners established the Citizen Army which was to contribute to the rising in 1916. *Easter, 1916* is an excellent poem grasping not only images of the Easter Rising, but also feelings and thoughts, so interwoven as to create the adequate tension specific to each part of the cycle that the author follows from the beginning to the heroes' death. Two parallel planes can be identified: one of the speakers who is a spectator and stands in opposition with the people passing in the other direction, towards the Post Office, and one of the common Irish who made "the terrible beauty" be born.

The first stanza is centred on the speaker, revealing his thoughts and feelings towards the marching people. He seems embarrassed because of his indifference and formal behaviour inappropriate to the situation, but he also feels different, arrogant and superior, unable to endanger his life, yet ready to produce a "mocking tale or a gibe/ To please a companion/ Around the fire at the club" (Yeats 1996: 83). The author contrasts words and facts, and makes the stanza embody the idea that art, here associated with words and a refined style, cannot have the same impact as facts. Art as a form of expression rather than a way to change a situation is one of Yeats' concerns. The artist's focus on

achieving an original work shifts his interest from the content that he wants to express to the form, which makes his initial feelings fade away and makes him pretend that he lives the same experience. The poet is an actor who embodies different egos, yet, the different hypotheses do not imply a rupture with reality, but different perspectives.

The second and the third stanzas are detailed descriptions of the kinds of people who participated in the rising and of some images, like flashes, illustrating the way in which some birds and animals reacted during the fight. By describing the tension among the birds and horses, Yeats succeeds in suggesting that the fight was extremely terrible, escaping the power of words. The poet creates an evanescent picture of the part that he actually missed, the fight which takes the reader back to the first stanza that announces his absence.

The last stanza is like a requiem for the dead heroes whose immortality the poet tried to strengthen in his verse: questions and corpses remained. Yeats anchored the poem in Irish reality by also naming the leaders who died for their dream: MacDonagh, MacBride, Connolly and Pearse. *Easter, 1916* depicts both inner and outer reality.

Another poem, partly related to the reason for which some of the people died during the Easter Rising – they did not want to fight in the British war against Germany –, *An Irish Airman Foresees His Death*, raises the question of the legitimacy of the Irish people's participation in a war that was not theirs. The poem can be related, as Kiberd says (2002: 486), to Major Robert Gregory's death in World War I. The speaker's longing for death seems a result of his discontent with his life, eventually seen as death: "I balanced all, brought all to mind,/ The years to come seemed waste of breath,/ A waste of breath the years behind/ In balance with this life, this death" (55). The former half of the poem is an accurate statement of facts that, despite the very clearly mentioned birth-place, betrays spiritual paralysis and lack of identity: "I know that I shall meet my fate/ Somewhere among the clouds above;/ Those that I fight I do not hate,/ Those that I guard I do not love;/ My country is Kiltartan Cross,/ My countrymen Kiltartan's poor,/ Nor likely end could bring them loss/ Or leave them happier than before" (55).

Romantic accents of the same stage hosting other masks create the frame of the poem *Parnell's Funeral*. This poem is a lesson of Irish history that gathers heroes of Protestant background on the deluding stage that Ireland provides, which explains why Parnell is "the Great Comedian". The "crowd" apparently assumes the role of the wise viewer who can contextualize, compare



and comment on the scene. History in Yeats' opinion means repetition and reversal at the same time presented in images that change from symbolic in the first stanza to concrete in the third stanza and in the second part of the text.

The reiterated Irish paralysis breathes through the lines of the poem again and history is turned into drama "When strangers murdered Emmet, Fitzgerald, Tone,/ We lived like men that watch a painted stage" (172). Robert Emmet, whose uprising was put down in 1803, Lord Edward Fitzgerald, who fought with "The United Irishmen" and was caught (1798), and Theobald Wolfe Tone, who fought for Catholic emancipation but was arrested and sent before a martial court in 1798, are heroes whose "performance" and death animated Ireland a century before Parnell's death (1891). Yeats still announces a change, seemingly for worse: while Emmet and Fitzgerald and Tone had been murdered by strangers, Parnell was "excruciated" by his own people, his own party.

The second part of the text, a kind of epilogue in content and having a form different from the first part, depicts a country "torn apart" by inner fights and a civil war arising from the lack of firm leaders such as: Eamon de Valera who was to be a president of the Republic of Ireland (1959-1973), William T. Cosgrave – who followed Arthur Griffith in the position of the first head of the Irish Free State government in 1922 and General Eoin O'Duffy – who was the leader of the Irish Civil Guard and a leader of the Army of the Free State.

### **3. Art as innovation**

Aiming at showing how reality remains in works that ensure its eternity, Catherine Belsey's establishes the relation between a dead person and the monument erected as a reminder. The reader can notice that the monument cannot replace the person, it is the certification of an absence. The monument is real and is based on elements of the person's biography (Belsey 2005: 67). The revival movement in Ireland made the Irish turn to their past and their legendary heroes. In his poems Yeats too revived myths and heroes making Irish reality last. The legendary heroes that populate his verse can be found in the Irish legends, the history heroes are either models for his created heroes or simply mentioned in his work, turning his poems into documents.

There is an inexorable cause-effect concatenation in the relation between art and reality that he refers to, a concatenation that makes of art a twisted echo of reality. Yeats cultivated national literature to answer the intellectual needs of the Irish who were fighting to preserve their nationality. In

order to reach “the highest aesthetic quality”, the poet “revived and romanticised the early legends and history of Ireland” (Kiberd 2002: 245) by reinventing Irish heroes and by creating new ones: Cu Chulain can be seen as a fictional response to the “prosaic Grattan or O’Connell” (Kiberd 2002: 246). His heroes are adapted so as to be a voice coming from the past and, yet, to be understood by the author’s contemporaries. Cu Chulain’s words in Yeats’ play *Cathleen Ni Houlihan* echo the tragedy of the Easter Rising:

It is a hard service they take that may help me. Many that are red-cheeked now will be pale-cheeked; many that have been free to walk the hills and the bogs and the rushes will be sent to walk hard streets in far countries; many a good plan will be broken; many that have gathered money will not stay to spend it; many a child will be born and there will be no father at the christening to give it a name. they that have red cheeks will have pale cheeks for my sake; and for all that they will think that they are well paid.

They shall be remembered forever,

They shall be alive forever,

They shall be speaking forever,

The people shall hear them forever (Yeats in Moody 2001: 246).

As far as mythology is concerned, Yeats follows two directions: one which is mimetic in the sense that the original meaning is preserved in the text, yet the author undermines it by suggesting similarities or relations with his times, and one which springs from Yeats’ imagination, but which can be related to myths and heroes of the past.

In an attempt to highlight the way in which Irish culture was “Protestantized”, Declan Kiberd mentions the necessity of prior indifference “which might be the price of full knowledge.” His idea has its roots in Yeats’ poems and autobiography (Kiberd 2002: 439). *Leda and the Swan*, which is apparently a simple reference to Greek history, is seen by Kiberd as a result of the “Protestant skepticism about the worship of ideals or images” (2002: 436). Art comes after reality and what it provides is a copy of real facts and feelings as artists pretend, just like actors. It might as well be a symbolic reference to Ireland’s colonization if Leda embodies Ireland before becoming the poor old woman (Shan Van Vocht) and the Swan represents the merciless and powerful England. As history cannot be changed, the author expresses a hope that Leda might have remained with something from the experience she had: “Being so caught up,/ So mastered by the brute blood of the air,/ Did she put on his

knowledge with his power/ Before the indifferent beak could let her drop?" (121).

Therefore William Butler Yeats' art both encourages and rejects an association between art and life. On the one hand his poetic principles, symbols and search for artistic form, different from common apprehension of life, drove his poems and plays away from life and reality: *Leda and the Swan* is a poem that crosses the boundaries of the Irish identity in its literal meaning. The author tried to avoid representational art, aiming at reflecting the artist's inner truth and personality, or as Kiberd said:

... a truth of internal coherence rather than exterior correspondence to a known world, [which] may have unexpected roots in his puritan unease at a too-easy confusion of art and life (Kiberd 2002: 440).

On the other hand, too much of the Irish identity (culture, politics and history) and his own feelings towards the Anglo-Irish cohabitation and conflicts can be found in his work.

Yeats' verse inspired from Celtic mythology arises from his attempt to empower literature of Irish inspiration and ensure the artists' success, which results in the avoidance of "imitation" of contemporary reality and of "the emulation of English forms":

If we busy ourselves with poetry and the countryman, two things which have always mixed with one another in life as on the stage (...) we may recover, in the course of years, a lost art which, being an imitation of nothing English, may bring our actors a secure fame and a sufficient livelihood" (cf. Kiberd 2002: 440).

He writes *The Stolen Child*, a ballad like poem, showing how a human child is lured by a fairy away from home, "to the woods and waters wild" (2). He echoes the myths of the changeling, the human child whose soul is taken by fairies and replaced with the soul of a fairy's child.

Away with us, he's going,  
The solemn-eyed;  
He'll hear no more the lowing  
Of the calves on the warm hill-side.  
Or the kettle on the hob  
Sing peace into his breast;  
Or see the brown mice bob  
Round and round the oat meal chest.  
For he comes, the human child,

To the woods and waters wild,  
With a fairy hand in hand,  
From a world more full of weeping than  
he can understand (3).

Although these poems are not representational of reality, they undoubtedly warn the reader about the need to revive old tradition within a community searching for its cultural identity. The thirst of Yeats' contemporaries for revitalizing drops of the past is an actual picture of the Irish culture at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The spirit of the time emerges in symbols, legendary heroes and myths to feed the Irish's conscience and their nostalgia for a heroic past. In a similar way the poem *The Song of Wandering Aengus* is a purely musical reference back to the Celtic god of love, son of Daghdha – “the chief God of the Irish pantheon” (Hackney 2003: 26).

Yeats allowed his newly invented heroes – Red Hanrahan, an Irish hero, and Cathleen, the daughter of Houlihan – to populate his poetry, too. *Red Hanrahan's Song About Ireland* is actually a song dedicated to Cathleen Ni Houlihan who thus embodies everything that Ireland means, a very romanticized image to be born in her heroes' hearts. A story meant to make the Irish remember what their roots are and also what they have to fight and die for.

The old brown thorn-trees break in two high over Cummen Strand,  
Under a bitter black wind that blows from the left hand;  
Our courage breaks like an old tree in a black wind and dies,  
But we have hidden in our hearts the flame out of the eyes  
Of Cathleen, the daughter of Houlihan. (30).

Yeats' interest in myths and legends shows his awareness of the contemporary horizon of expectation, being an emulation of the past literature for the sake of the present reality. Besides, the reality of the author's time breathes through the form of his poems and through the language he uses. Although he did not want to imitate anything English, his poems of Irish or Celtic inspiration are written in English, which stands for the otherwise harsh reality the Irish had to face: the Anglo-Irish cohabitation and their identity getting shape as a mixture of identities.

#### **4. Conclusion**

As Yeats' poetry demonstrates, Ireland is an inexhaustible source of inspiration and by exploiting the Irish cultural heritage and his contemporary

context, the artist creates different poetry. He refuses to emulate the English, but shapes his ideas and feelings by using English vesture and praises the form of his verse. His art is both imitation and innovation: Yeats benefits from the Irish “sluggish matter”, but he worked on the way in which he expressed it, which made him suspect the artist, and especially the Irish artist, of prior indifference and insincerity. Irrespective of its symbolism, artistry and thus alteration of the source, Yeats’ poetry remains a document through which Irish reality at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century is worded. As Beardsley, a philosopher of art, states:

The dominant movement of Plato’s thought about art, taking it all in all, is strongly moralistic in a broad sense ... it insists that the final evaluation of an work of art ... must take into account the all ends and values of the whole society (Beardsley 1975: 48).

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## MARLOW – THE INTROVERTED STORYTELLER

ANA CRISTINA BĂNICERU

University of Timișoara

**Abstract:** *The present paper is an attempt at analysing the much-debated “Heart of Darkness” by Joseph Conrad, focusing on the narrator, Marlow, who is a paradoxical mixture between a modernist narrator and an oral storyteller. The result of this mixture is an introverted storyteller, a representative of a ‘sea-talk’ or ‘sea-discourse’ in crisis which announces the demise of storytelling as it was known before the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.*

**Keywords:** *captive audience, narrator, power spoken word, storytelling.*

### 1. Introduction

With Modernism, oral discourse in its residual forms vanishes almost completely from the novel. The modernist novel progressively becomes plotless, de-heroicised, self-conscious and introverted. The key word here is ‘introversion’, an introversion and self-consciousness which developed with the appearance of print and reached their peak in Modernism. Writing separates the knower from the known, the signifier from the signified, making possible according to Havelock (qtd. in Ong 2002: 104) an increasingly articulate introspectivity which “opens the psyche as never before not only to the external world quite distinct from itself but also to the interior self against whom the world is set”. Writing and implicitly reading isolates the individual from his/her community, since according to Ong (2002: 71) sight isolates and sound incorporates.

In the same time, sight is a dissecting sense, sharpening self-analysis and concentrating meaning in language and not in the surrounding world. Thus, meaning becomes free from context and closely linked with language. According to Wittgenstein (qtd. in Childs 2000: 153) “our language determines our view”. This obsession with language becomes acute in Modernism and Postmodernism. In many modernist novels, among which *Heart of Darkness* the problematics and failure of language occupy a central position.

In the same time, Walter Benjamin (1973: 101) states that the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century witnesses the end of the art of storytelling, because the epic side of wisdom and truth is dying out. Stories lack their former moralizing dimension. Furthermore, ‘the storyteller takes what he tells from experience’. But experience is no longer valued, since at the end of the First

War World, men returned poorer in communicable experience (Benjamin 1973: 101). The modern storyteller has no counsel or wisdom for his listeners and his addressees have lost their gift for listening.

In this context, *Heart of Darkness* perfectly illustrates a paradoxical mixture between a precocious Modernism and an acute nostalgia for an 'archetypal scene of a story told around the village fire at night' (Childs 2000: 148). This mixture translates itself in the powerful tension between speech and writing. But above all, it is a continuous negotiation between telling and listening, since *Heart of Darkness* is as much about storytelling as it is about listening.

## **2. Marlow between Storyteller and Monologist**

What causes Marlow's nautical story or sea-talk to break down? What determines Marlow's almost schizophrenic nature, his split between his storytelling drive and the inward turn of his narrative? Marlow seems, at a first glance, to be one of those picaros whose travels were the perfect pretexts for the act of storytelling. He seems to be the itinerant hero who embarks himself on a self-discovery trip at the end of which he will have something to talk about, an experience or a piece of wisdom to share. Nevertheless, he proves himself to be one of those men who returned home with an incommunicable experience. From the onset, Marlow is torn between his urge to share his experience and his inability to voice it. First time he tries to tell his story to the Intended he fails, choosing instead to tell a lie. His experience proves itself to be too traumatic to be put into words. It is like the memory of a nightmare: "It seems to me I am trying to tell you a dream" (55). What Marlow experienced in Congo belongs to the realm of the unnameable, thus falling outside language. The loss of his ability to tell the story coincides with a loss of innocence, as in the middle of the jungle, he will have to confront not the wilderness of an unknown continent but "a ghastly parody of civilization" (Berthoud 1993: 57).

Marlow went to Congo for adventure, for the unknown, but as he penetrated deeper into the heart of darkness; his journey lost all meaning, becoming an absurd, empty quest. That is one of the reasons why he needs Kurtz and he goes in search for him. Kurtz will legitimize his story, or at least this is what he thinks, he will provide him with an ending worthy of a story, a conclusion, "a summing up". Kurtz, who was a man of great eloquence, will reveal the truth for him. But what Marlow discovers is only the shadow of a myth; the great manipulator of words is dying.

At the end of the journey lies not ivory or fame, but the capacity to turn experience into language: a voice (Brooks 1987: 113).

He had summed up—he had judged. “The horror!” He was a remarkable man. After all, this was the expression of some sort of belief; it had candour, it had conviction, it had a vibrating note of revolt in its whisper, it had the appalling face of a glimpsed truth—the strange commingling of desire and hate” ( 97).

As Peter Brooks (1987: 116) suggests, “The Horror! The Horror!”, Kurtz last words, appear as minimal language, even more, they represent a fall from language into nonsense and non-language. The great manipulator of words, the man of the Empire who could sustain the ideology that alone was considered to redeem the whole process of colonization, fails to tell his story. Kurtz is a failed storyteller who dies leaving behind what Brooks (1987) calls an unreadable report which fails to account for his life. Thus, Marlow loses the centre of his story, since Kurtz is the “vanishing point of *Heart of Darkness*” (Greaney 2001: 72). *Heart of Darkness* becomes one of those modernist texts that militate against reaching any conclusions. In other words, Marlow in contrast with Benjamin’s storyteller has no counsel for his audience.

### **3. Marlow’s Captive Audience**

As I have already stated, *Heart of Darkness* is also a story about the act of listening, or better said, it reflects the troubled relationship between speaker and listener. It is a perfect example of the “discourse of the ear” (Derrida qtd. in Greaney 2001: 24). On the one hand we have Marlow, the egotistical, introverted storyteller, whose story resembles a dramatic monologue. On the other hand, we have his passive, obtuse listeners. According to Walter J. Ong (2002) oral literature is participatory, empathetic and performative. In other words, there is a strong connection between the storyteller and his audience. R. Finnegan (2007: 45) considers that the term ‘audience’ too marginalising, since the audience took active part in the creative act of narration. A better term would be ‘replier’. In storytelling the replier enhanced the performance by responses, questions, asides, comments. Without them, the story would have been inconceivable. In addition, the story tellers would have to keep their attention alert using various tricks, specific formulae, and they would have to mould their stories to the needs of their audience. In other words, the act of storytelling involves a high degree of extroversion.



Even though in the novella we have a re-enactment of an archetypal oral storytelling scene, with the listeners sitting around the teller, we can no longer say that we are dealing with the same empathetic relationship. Marlow's listeners are reluctant to hear about his adventures. As Greaney (2001: 65) noticed:

they seem to tolerate, rather than relish, his eccentric storytelling habits. '[W]e were fated', remarks the frame narrator, incapable of mustering even the most perfunctory enthusiasm for his friend's impending anecdote, '- we were fated, before the ebb began to run, to hear about one of Marlow's inconclusive experiences'.

It would not be farfetched to envisage Marlow's listeners as captive audience. Aaron Foghel quoted in Greaney (2001: 23) pointed out that, in *Heart of Darkness*, the act of listening has become an involuntary obsession. He goes even further and talks about moments of aural trauma or traumatically excessive hearing. Even though Marlow's listeners are unwilling to listen to his "inconclusive" story, they cannot help themselves from listening to it to the end.

There was not a word from anybody (.....) I listened, I listened on the watch for the sentence, for the word, that would give me the clue to the faint uneasiness inspired by this narrative that seemed to shape itself without human lips in the heavy night-air of the river (55).

Marlow is not only a teller of stories but a reteller. We have the feeling that he has to tell and retell his story to escape the traumatic moment he experienced and turn it into language. The same retelling applies to his listeners:

the ambiguous wisdom he has transmitted to his listeners will have to be retransmitted by them as narrative to future listeners. The process is potentially infinite, any closure or termination merely provisional. *Heart of Darkness* does not "end"; it is a potentially interminable analysis that simply breaks off (Brooks 1987: 124).

Both speaker and listener are incarcerated in their own subjectivity. We have few if any interventions coming from either the frame narrator or the other speakers. The few commentaries we have are directed to the implied reader.

"Mind," he began again, lifting one arm from the elbow, the palm of the hand outwards, so that, with his legs folded before him, he had the pose of a Buddha preaching in European clothes and without a lotus flower (34).

The comparison between Marlow and Buddha in European clothes establishes an ironic distance, a way of undermining the credibility of the second narrator. The distance between audience and storyteller is also suggested by the latter's portrayal as a voice. "It had become so pitch dark that we listeners could hardly see one another. For a long time already he, sitting apart, had been no more to us than a voice. His narrative seems to "shape itself without human lips in the heavy night-air of the river" (55). Marlow becomes trapped in "the prison house of language" and his loose dream-like discourse disrobes him of his humanity. He is on the verge of becoming one of those abstract storytellers that populate Woolf's and Beckett's novels who seem to address no one and whose introversion is taken to extremes.

In fact the word *voice* is repeated many times becoming almost a narrative fetish. It is first associated with Kurtz whose eloquence puzzles Marlow and turns the former into a God. Additionally, as I have already said, Marlow becomes a voice to the other listeners, a voice that beguiles them in spite of their will, hence the association between the spoken word and power, an association that goes back to the pre-literate societies. Oral peoples consider words to have great power, even more; their magical potency was never question (Ong 2000: 32). Moreover, Marlow becomes aware of the fact that "of all the weapons at the colonists' disposal, language is the most insidiously powerful" (Greaney 2001: 67). The association between the process of colonization, language and power or between any ideology and power is not in the least uncommon. It has been given due space by Ashcroft and Griffiths, in *The Empire Writers Back* (2002).

The frame narrator also acknowledges that Marlow is different from the other storytellers:

The yarns of seamen have a direct simplicity, the whole meaning of which lies within the shell of a cracked nut. But Marlow was not typical (if his propensity to spin yarns be excepted), and to him the meaning of an episode was not inside like a kernel but outside, enveloping the tale which brought it out only as a glow brings out a haze, in the likeness of one of these misty halos that sometimes are made visible by the spectral illumination of moonshine (33).

The meaning is not within; the story does not contain any hidden wisdom. Contrary to an oral storyteller, Marlow has no counsel for his listeners, no moral advice. The meaning is constructed by his listeners, since meaning is interpretation. Modernism detaches itself from oral tradition, but paradoxically, in the same time, it involves the reader more in the text, putting his/her interpretive power to test. As Marlow narrates his story, his listeners are progressively swallowed up by darkness. Both storyteller and his story become difficult to perceive. The same thing can be said about the readers of *Heart of Darkness* who have difficulties in unravelling the meaning of such a problematic text.

#### 4. Conclusion

Marlow's double status is not only given by the nature of his narration, a mixture between a storyteller and a monologist, concerned more with conveying his impressions than with simple facts, but also by his paradoxical relationship with his listeners. He marks the demise of storytelling as it was known before, but in the same time he announces its problematic afterlife.

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**EDWARD BOND'S *THE WAR PLAYS*  
PROJECTING THE DOOMED FUTURE OF MANKIND**

**YAVUZ ÇELİK**  
University of Pamukkale

*Abstract: Edward Bond is quite conspicuous among the contemporary English playwrights through his persistent touch on the issues of violence, terror and militarism in his plays. His trilogy *The War Plays* is also very striking as a play built on familial, social and military violence to the extent of pointing to the probable apocalyptic state of the world.*

*Keywords: apocalyptic, authority, injustice, society, theatre, violence.*

### **1. Introduction**

It is unanimously agreed that Edward Bond is one of the most important British playwrights from the 1960s onwards. To several critics of note, this is because he has determinedly dealt with a single question in his plays throughout his career as a playwright: human violence. Disagreeing with those who strictly criticize him for writing about such issues as violence, injustice, militarism and so on, Bond regards his writing about them as natural as Jane Austen's writing about manners (Hirst 1985: 132). The reason for his insistence on this unfamiliar theme is his strong belief that it would be an immoral act not to write about brutality in the century of devastating world wars, holocaust, genocide and violence which, he believes, shapes, reshapes and obsesses the society. Naturally, he argues that his interest in violence is not for the sake of an aesthetic preoccupation but simply as a fact of life (Stoll 1976: 415). If there were no violence, he suggests, he would not need to write any play on and with violence. He strongly regards it as a problem that should be dealt with, not individually alone, but collectively. His depiction of violence as the shaper of society is indeed justified by today's world where people are often eroded by hatred, enmity, hypocrisy and even madness in their relationships and surroundings. Similarly, "we are 'socially mad', mad collectively not individually", says Bond (2000: 23) in his own lecture on drama.

Obsessed by this aspect of the society, Bond believes that man does not have a biological potential to be violent and aggressive. To him, man's instinct for violence is largely the upshot of his identity as the member of his

society. While a child has 'radical innocence', he gradually loses it as long as he grows up. In a sense, he holds the society responsible for igniting this potential in man and considers the violence between people to be concomitant with the conflicts and power struggle in the society. In the struggle for power and for the more in today's competitive world, one is often merciless and unjust to the other as it is his own purpose or end that often justifies his methods or means. To put it another way, what is called individualism in the modern sense of the word seems to have forced the individual to become more inclined for *I* and disinclined from the *other*. Then it seems pretty natural that man should adopt an aggressive and brutal attitude to these unnatural social conditions in the presence of such a wide and widening gap between the nations and between the individuals making up them. As reflected by Bond too, there would be nothing more normal and usual than the actual response of aggression and violence to such conditions.

With these points in mind, the audience would not be surprised to see unusually violent or vicious scenes in Bond's plays, especially after the experience of seeing the play *Saved*, in which a baby, left in its pram in the street, is stoned to death by a group of youngsters including his probable father. Largely because of tackling such gruesome topics and issues, Bond's early years as a playwright are marked by strict criticism and even condemnation of his art, by audience's repulsive responses and reluctance to admit his plays. His works till the 1970s are, therefore, credited with having shaken and disturbed the audience and uncomfortably changed their unexamined habit of attending the theatre. Perplexed by the disturbingly and horribly unusual scenes and narratives in his plays, the audiences have in the course of time grown so much accustomed to witnessing them that they have even come to regard it abnormal not to see a violent scene in his plays.

The question as to why Bond persists in writing about violence as his dominant theme seems to have found its answer recently. The destruction of the New York World Trade Centre stands out, today, as one of the ultimate and inevitable results of such violence. What's more, this act of violence has in turn brought about another wave of it, which has certainly superseded the former, however justifiable it may be claimed to be. America's bombing and conquest of Iraq for no sound and reliable reasons, Jews' murder of numerous Philistines without any discrimination of innocent children, pregnant women or the elderly, some unidentified men's setting fire to cars and houses at nights in Turkey, a teenager's madness to kill 15 students at his school in Germany, not

to mention many others, can be given as the evidence and proof of Bond's due alarm at such issues. Presently, we are really trapped and stifled in the age of violence.

## **2. "The war plays": nightmarish violence**

With the above present-time picture of the world, it would be right and proper to credit Bond with the vision and ability to foresee such catastrophic events and actions as well as the apocalyptic state of the future's world. This is best seen in his *The War Plays*, a trilogy of 1985 the first play of which attempts to reveal the contemporary cultural corruption and conditioning through the unnatural relations in a family surrounded by atrocious people and events. The second play of the trilogy is concerned with a group of people waiting for their death in helplessness and paranoia after a nuclear holocaust. The third one, excluded from the context of this presentation due to the lack of time and place, enlarges these issues by focusing on a post-apocalyptic 'Mother Courage' for whom schizoid suffering becomes a survival technique. In short, the whole trilogy deals with familial and social violence, injustice, militarism, post-nuclear destruction and catastrophes, and so on.

This trilogy is fairly confusing and equally terrifying in that what is shown and presented in it seems beyond imagination. It is just at the beginning of the play that Bond confuses the audience through the main character of the play, namely Monster's scintillating depiction of what is done to welcome a new-born baby in the world, saying pompously: "No exiled hero could return to a land more welcoming/ No president be received into office with such preparation/ No victor be greeted with so much joy" (Bond 1991: 3). Expecting the story to go on in the same colourful tone as above, the audiences are surprised and even shocked to hear Monster saying "But now we kill them" (4).

These contrasting and horrifying words clearly show, in the beginning, the writer's intention of illustrating the conflicts, contradictions and reversals within the society. He seems to remind the people that they destroy the flowers that they grow up and wait in peerless excitement to blossom. This contrast helps him build his story on the gap between life and death: They bear and raise their children, only to kill or witness them killed later or, more tragically, become a killer. So it would not be an exaggeration to argue that man is biologically the producer and consumer of others' lives. However, it turns out later that Bond's main concern in the play is the state of the society and the world under the threat of nuclear bombs and rockets. He appears to be implying

that his fear of a probable destruction of the future is not rootless; he fears because of the evidently destroyed past at the hands of human being, which was World War II that Bond experienced when he was around 10. The character of Monster, for example, is born into the furnace of World War II due to his mother's unabated spasm led by her fear and terror, and speaks at the beginning of the play to the audience in an epic style to make them believe in the truth of what is told or portrayed in the play that they will see. In a sense, he judges the history, accusing human beings of creating such inhuman actions, cases or events that seem too impossible even to envisage:

Now we will show scenes from the life I did not live/ If what happens seems such that human beings would not allow it to happen, you have not read the histories of your times (5).

This speech affirms and is affirmed by Bond's own view of art:

Art is the close scrutiny of reality and therefore I put on the stage only those things that I know happen in our society. I'm not interested in an imaginary world. I'm interested in a real world. And in fact, of course, all things that I put on the stage are understatements (Stoll 1976: 415).

Believing his works, though often labelled as plays of violence, to be incapable of depicting the seriousness and dimension of all violence that occurs in the work, Bond does not confine himself to drawing the picture only but also offers a solution. "We don't learn from other people's mistakes - not even from most of our own. But knowledge is collected and tools handed on. We cant go back to the beginning but we can change the future" (96), says one of the survivors in the second part of the trilogy entitled *Tin Can People*, appearing to be the spokesman of Bond. This shows a propound sense of regret about the irreversible past that he knows is tainted by human blood and deaths. Here, Bond seems to prescribe precisely what could, and should, be done to avoid such intolerable days; his prescription is changing the future and he has a deep trust in dramatic arts to contribute to this process which is, however, only possible through the changes in human mentality, social order and international affairs.

Another survivor in the same play, on the other hand, says in great regret: "Yes we'll all die!/ No one'll escape!/ They killed millions with their bombs - and now they're dead, they're killing the rest of us with their diseases!" (79). This picture of the post-nuclear war world populated by those

who have been killed and those who are waiting for their deaths helplessly justifies the first survivor and Bond in demanding a radical change in the existing system and order, as it obviously seems that civilization – not to mention the culture – is on the brink of apocalypse because of the never-ending wars and inconceivable violence. The case appears very pathetic when the first man, having managed to survive a nuclear bombing, is appalled to see a few people alive after 17 years of loneliness and can only identify them as human because they are ‘corpse-shaped’. To the audiences’ shock, he has no idea about what a human is like and he can only guess it through his frequent encounters with the dead bodies.

What is clear from the above examples of the second part of the trilogy is that it is mainly concerned with the paranoid people having fear of anything that seems unusual. Few people who have managed to survive a nuclear bombing live among the ruins with the fear of dying at any time. They are possessed by the fear that any stranger may bring them death seeds. It is for this reason that they have doubts about admitting a stranger into their own group. “You should’ve questioned him before he had time to invent a false story. We mustn’t get excited. We have to be careful,” (62) says the second man to the others after meeting another survivor for the first time. This case is also not much strange to us. This inexplicable but unavoidable fear of death under such circumstances appears to be no more different from the fear of anthrax in the US following their attack on Afghanistan in 2001 or the fear of explosion by terrorists after the 9-11 case. What was once regarded as a nightmare in that society seems to have become a truth of life recently. This foreboding part, therefore, accompanies the previous one in justifying Bond as a playwright of great vision.

Bond states that *The War Plays* is a trilogy ‘projected into the future to show where abuse of power and irresponsible behaviour might lead us to’. This ultimate truth is the loss of human culture- maybe human race- in the play, and loss of innumerable lives, irreparable destruction of international affairs and widening gaps between the cultures in real life. To him, any delay in solving such rooted problems in the society may accelerate the end of human life and even the world. In one of his interviews, he says that he is a typical member of his society and just this reality makes him think that his problems are the problems that everybody else must seek to solve if they are not going to die, or be killed, or be very unhappy (Stoll 1976: 415).



Bond in his plays gives place to a variety of violent scenes and unfamiliar images in such a way as to serve his intention of reminding people about the state in which they really are and the situation in which violence occurs. Not surprisingly, he not only gives an event alone in his plays but also puts its meanings, causes and consequences in any way. He aims to make the audience question or confirm or change the values underlying the social judgement. This makes it essential for the audiences to keep alert in order that they can distinguish between the right and the wrong or the good and the evil, as well as grab the causes of both. To this end, Bond usually places the moments of violence early in his plays and then takes consideration of what has happened or what consequences it has led to, a strategy which is obviously followed in *The War Plays* as the first part of the trilogy gives place to personal acts of violence and the second part portrays the aftermath of a nuclear war, namely the predestined zenith of inhumane violence when not curbed.

Besides the presence of violence and deaths in *The War Plays*, Bond mainly dwells on two parties that play an important role in determining the future of the society; the state authority and the military forces. He seems to be holding both accountable for all that goes on. The former is to blame for not serving its people adequately. "The good citizen is satisfied more by serving than being served" (18), says the buyer, for example, to Monster during a hard bargain about the selling of their son for training, educating and upbringing. This autocratic speech implicitly represents the unquestioned power of the state and the state's expectation from its citizens to serve slavishly without complaining about the way they are served. In another instance, however, the son charges the government with depriving him and millions alike of a job whatsoever, for which he seems reluctant to rid a woman of dying under a bench, as he aims to replace her in the factory. One's death seems to be another one's hope for survival in the world of the hungry and unemployed, which is actually a shame on mankind. If you leave one group hungry and thirsty, namely underprivileged, while the other group enjoys the pleasure of living, then you should not be surprised to find that group transformed into cannibals or murderers deprived of humanly feelings. For example, the son does not admit that he is evil while his father, who saves the woman, is good. What's more, he is blatant in expressing his anguish at the way he is ruled:

You would call my father good and me evil/ No, the pittance paid to the workless ensures that all seek work/ The government rules by creating two classes of citizens/ I am second class: I have no work/ I cant afford to behave as if I were first class (25).

In other words, he puts the blame on the government and the class distinction imposed by them, and he believes that it is the way they govern the country that creates the evil in the society. Monster concludes the episode with a poem on the impossibility of doing goodness or being a good person in the world of injustices, evil thoughts and widened gaps between the rich and those who are left and made poorer by them: "Those who would change the world by kindness should learn/ Where kindness is most needed it cannot be given" (26).

In another episode, before all the examples, the teacher forcing Monster to take revenge on his friend for spitting on his sleeve represents the authority that makes the laws and imposes them on the ruled. Though he at first behaves tolerantly and ignores the accidental behaviour of his friend, excusing his apologies, he, motivated and urged by his teacher finds himself in a fight because his spit on his friend in return is not tolerated. What shocks the audience in this scene is that Monster's initial tolerance and goodness is quick to be replaced by hatred and fight at the instigation of the authority. He says after the fight: "I had not yet learned to hate/ That knowledge is gained in higher schools/ So far I knew only the basis of hate: fear" (10). Bond here seems to condemn the schools as he sees them as part of the strategy of the governments in shaping the individuals to their taste and approval.

As for the other party that has a significant role in today's world, the army or military force seems in the play to be the primary cause of all that has happened. This is best reflected in the striking change in the son's mood and expressions after he joins the army. The son is nothing in the society but he is someone in the army; he admits being nothing in the society before enlisting in his own words: "Without work I'm an outcast/ The community won't give me the power to control my life" (24). However, the same son, who accuses his father in that instance of helping a woman in need whose qualifications are better than his and who, therefore, has a bigger chance to be employed, turns out to be someone else in the army, saying in a boastful and bossy manner: "I am the army/ My feet are on the earth/ My hand is on the moon/ My head is out in space" (28). This incredible and horrific change in his appreciation of himself seems to have put him in a conflict. He seems to have been trapped in an unavoidable contradiction between his inner and outer worlds, namely between who he indeed is and who he has been made to feel he is. To speak roughly, he cannot be himself because his new world and identity surrounding and indeed swallowing him press him to be as they like. Then there appears a

gap between the social reality around him and the individual reality within him. The result of such a conflict is, of course, madness of the son, killing his father at the dinner table with no regret about his act of murdering. Why he feels no regret is explicable by his words again: "I am the army/ I shit on the earth from the stratosphere/ And wipe my arse on the lists of the dead/ Bow down and worship me" (28). In a sense, he seems to mean to the shame and terror of mankind that if he is stronger and has a big army, he has the right to do anything he would like to. He does not need to make any explanations about or deliver any apologies for what he does; as long as he is a soldier, he is right in doing anything. "I like the army/ When you're a soldier all your problems are solved by training/ Kill or be killed / No apologies or explanations" (30), says the son to emphasize the unquestioned power of the army, or in other words the dictating authority of militarism. Not caring about the deaths of people, whether guilty or innocent, civilian or military, the son is also determined to show no mercy to those who 'whine to him in fear' or 'plead for the human race.' He goes as far as to boast that the soldier's reward for his skills is the pleasure of seeing the way he kills. Above all, he believes or is made to believe that the army is doing everything for the public good at the expense of killing people. That is, it can be said that he has been dehumanized in the army because to conduct such inhuman deeds as a soldier requires one to be robbed of his manliness.

In the scene where the son kills his father, Bond again manages to bewilder the audience, forcing them to think about the reason or urge underlying his act. Why does the son choose his own father to kill instead of an old man – too old to live more than a week – whose 'bones were as weak as a broken fence' though he has the option and chance to do so? While this question occupies the minds of the audience disturbingly, the essential question is forgotten, at least for a while: Why is the son obliged to kill someone in his home town? The son does not seem grieved or repentant or ashamed of what he is wanted to do and does: "I'm not ashamed to tell you why I'm here: Every squaddie's been sent back to his own street to shoot one civvie-corpse" (30). To the shock of the audience, the son says he does this for the public's good in the name of the army. In case of the survival of more than enough people in the country, he argues, there would be a famine that would later cause their death. Not satisfied with the explanation of his son, Monster, just before he is killed by his own son, feels pain and gets into a hot debate with him. "He sits there in human clothes and speaks our language/ Doesn't the food humans eat poison

you?” (31) says Monster to his son as he represents here the questioning man with logic and common sense while the son appears to be the symbol of resolute and unquestioned power of the state and the army. The death of Monster signifies that if common man and rationality are defeated by irrationality and authority, the society and then the world run into an irreversible chaos and find ultimately their way into self-destruction.

Apart from such bewildering scenes Bond, as usual, includes a lot of scenes of violence in this play. “A society that cannot function without hate needs enemies – it even seeks its own destruction so that its social-psyche may know it was right to hate its enemies,” says Bond (283) and illustrates his thoughts through the events and speeches in the play. It can be seen that there are almost no episodes dominated by absolute peace and friendship in the first two plays of the trilogy. This is best seen in the above-mentioned fighting scene between Monster and his friend at school as an example of how destructive the authority may prove to be in individual relationships and in shaping the society, or in the murder of Monster by his son at the behest of the army.

Another fighting scene is between Monster and his wife, who declares her admiration of and love for him in the previous episode. That scene of love is soon followed by the scene of fighting during which Monster forces her to lick and eat the pieces of bread he throws and stamps on the floor, also pushing them into her mouth. Here Bond seems to imply that marriage as a social institution does away with the essence of love between couples as they are crushed under the social rules and expectations. One’s impatience and over-insistence leads the other into fury and violence though the same extremities do not arouse the same reaction before marriage. Bond again compels the audience to contemplate over this process of change in people’s attitudes to one another after marrying. In fact, the event is best summarized and interpreted by the wife’s last speech:

As the nature doesn’t define what shall make us angry/ We define ourselves by the things we allow to make us angry/ If we choose these wrongly or are wrongly taught, we are blind with rage even when we’re most calm (16).

More shocking than all are, perhaps, the songs of the chorus at the beginning of each section in the second part, drawing a ruined picture of the world following a nuclear bombing; these are all apocalyptic pictures which make one’s hair stand on end as it is really impossible and unbearable to envisage that state of the world today. “The skin of one person clothed the

bones of another/ It was one animal with a hundred thousand legs and arms and one body covered with mouths that shouted its pain” says the first chorus, for example, to describe the chaotic and inescapable atmosphere and state of the world left barren and unpopulated after a nuclear war, when “people fled in all directions from one hell into another” (51). This scene is no different from the collapse of the twin towers, after which a lot of people died on the others while the survivors were running wildly in all directions to get out. Or the case in Afghanistan, in Iraq, in the Philistines, or any probable war today: A lot of bodies are turning into lifeless corpses all in pieces under the falling bombs which can be seen as the unenveloped letters of democracy, human rights and justice concealing the selfish motives for benefit and profit coloured by violence and hatred and from which everybody runs away in desperation. In a sense, violence is disguised by the manipulation of unjust rulers as law and order. One remark from Bond’s commentary on *The War Plays* lays everything bare in a similar way:

The great social injustices, the class divisions, economic exploitation, wars of conquest and greed, the charade of law-and-order, the prisons and punishments – all these barbarities are sanctioned in the name of the highest good and carried out in the conviction of innocence. We ruin the world by our honest efforts to make it better (253).

Bearing such other examples at the beginning of each section, the choruses serve to set the scene before the onset of the action. Each, in a sense, seems to be a stage direction invented by Bond, which portrays the setting of the action to take place. This view can also be supported by the fact that Bond does not additionally give a detailed description of the settings or the characters in the play. Instead, he shows his characters within their own situations in the play and seems to leave it to the audience to decide on the personality or mood of the characters or seriousness of the events. In this way he seems to be confirming himself stating that his plays are indeed not about violence itself; rather they are about the kind of situation in which violence happens or is committed because it occurs there in the way that it happens to an audience (Bond 1972: 10).

With scenes of violence on the stage and descriptions and portrayal of pre- and post-violence state of those involved in this irrational action, the first play of the trilogy entitled *Red, Black and Ignorant* ends with Monster’s wife’s accusations levelled against the rulers and the ruled of barbarous times: their

hands are bloody red due to their murders, their hearts are coal black due to their evil thoughts and their minds are ignorant, since anyone that is not ignorant would retreat from and stop others committing such crimes, let alone do them. Monster, though dead, comes to the scene and ends the play with his speech to his son as a direct satire of militarism and totalitarianism:

Democracy isn't the right to vote but freedom to know and the knowledge based on knowing/ Your democracy is the way truth is suppressed and freedom hustled away to prison/ What is the freedom you gave me?/ Two fists of ash /Where is the freedom in that? (40)

### **3. Conclusion**

As can be seen, unlike some of his contemporaries who can be said to write merely to strengthen the state of the Establishment, Bond does not put his theatre at the slavish service of them. Therefore, he has several times gone on ill terms with the authorities. He appears to be writing to enable the audience to get their own judgement through their questions. To that end, he aims to show the audience in his play not only what is happening or what has happened but how or why it has happened, as well. He has the intention of making the audience think about the past and the present time in such a way that they could make correlations between tomorrow and today, for the latter should be accepted as the past of the former. In other words, he aims to enable the audience to see the underlying factors of a disaster in the past and then to take their measures against another probable one in the days to come if they still have a desire to survive and live like humans, not corpses.

In conclusion, he seems quite right in feeling apprehensive about the days to come, if any, because each new day makes us see or hear the humans' self-centred and maddening wars for no sound reasons other than basically money and power, their hideous murder of people of all ages and nations, their glorious invention of more lethal weapons at the service of the rich and powerful in particular, their madness and irresponsible subversion of all the traditions, rules, laws and moral values, their arrogant violation of others' rights under innocent guises, their bestial destruction of nature all around the world, their desperation about the emergence of an unheard-of disease for inexplicable reasons and their ignorant negligence of the rumours concerning the approximation of the end of the world due to the global warming. All these alarming facts require here the repetition of Bond's cry that as long as the money-headed and power-blinded world powers do not give up their bossy and

hegemonic desire to control the rest of the world under the name of justice-maker and people of these countries do not stop deeming the others as deserving of any pejorative or humiliating or discriminating adjective and any violence or imposition, we should make sure that there will be no future in which to live in peace and as humans.

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# NARRATIVE PERSPECTIVE AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF SPACE IN A *CLOCKWORK ORANGE*

CLAUDIA DOROHOLSCHI

University of Timișoara

*Abstract:* The paper analyses comparatively Anthony Burgess' *A Clockwork Orange* and Stanley Kubrick's film adaptation of the book and examines the way in which their different treatment of spatiality contributes to meaning construction in the two works, by looking at aspects such as how the first person narrative is transposed into the language of film, and how the use of narrative perspective functions as a spatially structuring device in the two media.

*Keywords:* *A Clockwork Orange*, adaptation, Anthony Burgess, film, narrative space, Stanley Kubrick.

## 1. Introduction

Stanley Kubrick's *A Clockwork Orange* (1971), based on Anthony Burgess's 1962 novel with the same title, begins with a close-up shot of the protagonist's eyes staring straight at the viewer, in a way which is both threatening and inclusive. The stare immediately identifies Alex (Malcolm McDowell) as the main character, yet does so in a way which simultaneously demands attention, addresses, but also defies, domineers, and possibly repels. It is a gaze that connects the viewer's space to the space of the film, and already hints at some of the most important questions the film poses about our relation to the protagonist and the degree of identification we allow ourselves to have with him. The camera then zooms out, and the tracking shot shows Alex in a static pose of domination over his environment – the gang of his 'droogs' and the surreal Korova Milkbar, populated by Allen Jones-inspired sculptures of nude women used as tables and drink dispensers. The décor, specially designed for the film, prefigures both the exuberant vitality and the disturbing relation with the opposite sex (and humans in general) that Alex will display in the course of the narrative. In comparison, the opening scene of Burgess' novel, which also introduces Alex and his friends sitting at the Korova Milkbar and musing on what brutal acts will constitute the evening's entertainment, spends little time on the concrete visual aspects of the setting, and relies on the compelling effect of Alex's first person narrative, engaging, intriguing through its use of Russian-inspired slang, and alienating in its mention of drugs and



violence. The novel's opening sentence is a question ("What's it going to be then, eh?" Burgess 2000: 3) whose effect is comparable to that achieved by Kubrick through the first shot of Alex's stare at the viewer: since the participants in the conversation haven't yet been introduced, the question hangs free, not yet attached to any speaker or interlocutor, half-directed at the reader. The next sentences gradually 'zoom out' into a picture that comes to include Alex, his friends, and the setting – yet the picture we get of the Milkbar focuses less on its visual dimension, and more on its functional ones (it is the hanging out place of rebellious teenagers who drink milk plus). In both book and film, the setting is just as crucial in announcing the world of the text as a dystopian one, and in placing the reader in an ambivalent relation towards the main character. But Kubrick's opening shot addresses the viewer more directly and more demandingly than Burgess's novel, as I will try to prove in what follows, transcending the boundaries of film space in a way which supports a set of meanings slightly different from those advanced by the book.

The fact that Kubrick's portrayal of the Korova milk bar is more vivid visually than Burgess's is partly due to the different nature of the two media. Classic narratology has noted fairly early on that there is one marked difference between the construction of narrative space in fiction as opposed to film: literature may or may not be set in a definite spatial framework, and "permits spatial representation to remain completely undefined" (Uspenskij 1973: 76), while in film the spatial elements "must be specified when shown" (Chatman 1978: 97). In cinema, story-space is "literal," visually corresponding to real-life objects and space, while "[i]n verbal narrative, it is abstract, requiring a reconstruction in the mind" (Chatman 1978: 96-97). Although, as more viewer-oriented film studies subsequently proved (e.g. Bordwell 1985), the viewer is not passive in perceiving space represented on screen, but instead actively reconstructs three-dimensional space based on visual cues offered by the bi-dimensional medium of the film, Chatman's distinction still stands. Literature may or may not be set in a definite spatial framework – it may give spatial cues by which the reader's mind imagines more or less of the space in which the action takes place, while the medium of film has to make definite what literature has the liberty to only suggest.

It is also helpful to distinguish between what we perceive (or mentally reconstruct) as the place where the narrative unfolds, and the way in which the respective media are constructing it. Chatman (1978: 9) calls these "story-space" and "discourse-space" – the "what" and the "way" of the narrative,

respectively – while Mieke Bal (2002: 133) distinguishes between space and place, between the representation of space within the text, and the place where the action is set, which is an element of the fabula. We only arrive at a sense of place in a literary or visual work through the mediation of the specific spatial cues of the respective medium. The illusion of space is created through the concrete elements of the texts, and only exists through them. Among these concrete elements of the text, focalization is one of the most important. As far as the representation of place in literature is concerned, “places are linked to certain points of perception,” and thus space can be defined as “places seen in relation to their perception” (Bal 2002: 133). Spatial rendering is affected by who sees, who speaks, and who thinks. Yet, there are significant differences in the ways in which focalization functions in film and literature. In literature, which is a verbal art, there is always someone who speaks; in film, with the exception of the particular case of the voice over narrator, the narrative as such (and implicitly space) are not rendered through a narrative voice, not articulated verbally. In literature, we may ‘see’ through the ‘eyes’ of an impersonal narrator, first person narrator, character, or not at all; in film, we ‘see’ what the camera cuts out – and this is rarely what characters see.

Burgess' *A Clockwork Orange* is a first person narrative, which collapses some of the more problematic point of view issues in the novel, since it overlaps narrative voice and focalization – who sees, who speaks and who thinks are all the same. Space is therefore rendered exclusively through Alex's perspective, and the way in which he controls space and relates to his surroundings is consistent with his disempowerment throughout the book. Kubrick's film also identifies Alex as a first person narrator – he is very present throughout as a voice-over which identifies him as the protagonist and central consciousness and it also preserves his Nadsat talk, the Russian-inspired argot Burgess invented for his teenage protagonist. But we do not literally ‘see’ through Alex's eyes except on a couple of occasions, since the camera has more liberty to move around than a first person narrator does in fiction – and Kubrick uses this liberty to lay emphasis on aspects that only partially overlap with those underscored by Burgess.

## **2. Dystopia and spatial distortion**

Both the novel and the film are set in a space that is a recognizable, yet highly defamiliarized version of the present, an effect which they achieve by different means. In the case of Burgess' novel, space is rather indeterminate;

there are several places that are important for the development of the action, e.g. the Korova Milkbar, Alex's flat, the sites of the attacks, the prison (which mostly coincide with the places represented in the film), but there are very few actual descriptions of places. Many of the spaces are referred to by unqualified, generic terms (e.g. 'alley' or 'shop'). As for the Korova Milkbar, the description is restricted to a 'long big plushy seat that ran round three walls' (4-5) and there are mentions of 'tables', a 'stereo', 'lights' (5), later some 'private cubies at the back' (21) which will activate familiar bar schemata – but there are also elements such as the Russian-sounding name and the 'milk plus' that is sold here which suggest this is not to be mentally constructed as an altogether familiar type of place.

In this particular case, the lack of detailed description is justified partly because it is a place that is familiar to the narrator; in addition to this, whenever Alex enters a new place, his predatory quality prompts him to first assess potential victims and aggressors. Consequently, he gives quick descriptions of characters and often of their spatial positions towards him, rather than descriptions of the environment, which is only marginally noted. There is more detailed description of setting on the several occasions when Alex approaches places, especially places that he is not familiar with, yet they function in very similar ways: they are predominantly recognizable modern-day cityscapes, slightly defamiliarized by unusual detail, but especially by the fact that that everything is filtered through Alex's eyes and narrated in his unusual Nadsat idiom.

Burgess' indefiniteness in spatial rendering thus helps create a familiar, but distorted space, using the reader's generic mental representations of familiar sites alongside occasional defamiliarizing elements. Working with a medium which is inherently definite in its rendering of space, Kubrick achieves a similar effect by filming mostly in actual London locations, which are sombre and/or futuristic, but many of which would also have been recognizable to his viewers. From the shabby industrial areas to the quirky interiors of the record shop, the Duke of New York or some of the houses, these would have had the same effect of connecting the dystopian world of the film to the viewer's immediate reality. Like Burgess, Kubrick also uses several defamiliarizing strategies. Not only does he add surreal and futuristic detail to his sets, which include custom-made artworks and gaudy interiors, but he also distorts his 'viewing eye' by the way in which he uses camera and lighting and by systematically bringing out the artificiality of the scene, most strikingly through his use of the wide angle

lens. Kubrick uses it extensively in his films, partly for practical reasons (i.e. it allows filming in low light conditions, and Kubrick usually favours natural lighting for both exterior and interior scenes). But while the normal angle lens will roughly mimic the perception of the human eye, with no readily visible distortions (Pramaggiore and Wallis 2005: 123), the wide angle lens creates rather dramatic spatial effects, distorting both space and facial features and adding an eerie feel to both. It creates a clarity and depth of field which places characters in a space that feels unnaturally large, and thus dwarfs them; it allows disturbingly near close-ups while still capturing enough of the surroundings, and thus gives not intimate shots of character, but contextualised shots of character and environment. Filmed with Kubrick's highly distorting lens, not even familiar London locations or featureless interiors will look quite right. In both book and film, then, dystopia is constructed as a prolongation of realities familiar to the viewer, and is thus set up as an immediate possibility, a threatening development arising from familiar circumstances rather than a distant hypothesis.

But Kubrick's wide angle lens adds more artificiality to his world even than the artificially constructed Nadsat talk of Burgess's Alex. Besides distortion of space, his wide angle lens also enhances the illusion of linear perspective, which Kubrick alludes at frequently in his carefully composed, static, artificial shots. Many of his scenes feel pictorial or stagey, and indeed on several occasions (some of which are Kubrick's own additions and don't occur in the book) characters are actually performing on stage. The rape scene at the derelict casino literally takes the shape of a ballet performance on an actual stage, culminating in a highly symmetrical fight scene and ending in the graceful exit of the naked rape victim. Aggression takes the shape of dance on many other occasions, culminating in the chillingly cheerful violence of the *Singing in the Rain* scene. When Alex is tested before his release, he is tested on a stage, and the man and woman who challenge him bow for applause at the end. Not only is this a distorted version of reality, consistent with the dystopian world proposed in the story, a credible and therefore even more frightening version of familiar reality. It is also one that foregrounds artifice, distancing us equally from victim and attacker, one that forces us into the self-aware, rational, unemotional mode of viewing which most of Kubrick's films seem to require. Alex is the main consciousness in the film, just as he is the first person narrator in the book; but while the first person narrator in the book is compelling and stimulates reader identification, despite the violent acts he indulges in (which is

probably why Burgess needed the morally redeeming final chapter of the book), in the film Alex is put on show, and we are alternately forced into identification and detachment towards him, both visually and morally.

### **3. Movement, transitions and transgressions of space. Spatial control**

Examining renderings of movement, of transitions from one space to another and of the relation between outside and inside offers similar insights into the way in which the novel and the film make use of spatiality. Burgess gives precise accounts of the physical locations of the characters and of movement, especially in the scenes involving violence. Protagonists are initially positioned within distinctly separate, distant groups – then (like in the case of the attack of the man from the library) attackers flank the victim, or otherwise physically approach him or her, very clearly transgressing personal and/ or group boundaries. Places are introduced to the reader through Alex's predatory perspective, which means that entrance into a new place usually involves a brief inspection not as much of surroundings, but of potential enemies or victims and his position towards them, as well as positions of victims and aggressors within a group. Space is often denoted through sounds heard from somewhere else, from outside or from another room – is both an anticipatory technique and a suggestion of Alex's alert perceptions of his environment, which are those of a predator as well as of one whose perceptions are drug-enhanced. Alex often renders his own visual perceptions in the words 'viddied clear' (28), suggesting perceptual as well as physical control of his surroundings. In the beginning, Alex is usually in control of both interior and exterior spaces, as well as entrances and exits. He roams freely about the city and explicitly equates being outside with being free (31). He is usually the one who invades his victims' personal space and makes physical contact. Spatial control is a sign of power, with recurrent mentions of the attackers dancing during violent scenes, in an ultimate statement of spatial domination.

Alex's gradual disempowerment is reflected in his gradual loss of spatial control. In the scene of Deltoid's visit to his flat, the intruder is the one who acts as though he is in control of the space ("“Sit”, he said, ‘sit, sit’, as though this was his domy and me his guest. And he sat in this starry rocking-chair of my dad's and began rocking, as if that was all he had come for;” Burgess 29). In the prison scenes, as Alex moves from freedom to confinement, he no longer controls his environment. He is squeezed into a crowded cell, and the final act of violence which eventually gets him into the Ludovico facility is

triggered by an invasion of this already suffocating space. During the Ludovico treatment, he is physically confined (he is strapped to a chair) and he loses visual control over the surrounding space as well. His disempowerment is complete, as the alert eye of the hunter is now forced to stare passively at the film clips he is being shown during his conditioning treatment. When Alex is eventually freed, after his successful 'cure,' the loss of his former private space (his room in his parents' flat is now occupied by a lodger) helps reinforce the idea that this is not freedom, but yet another limitation, and places Alex, the former victimiser, in the position of the victim.

Transitions and transgressions of space are made very clear in Kubrick's film version of the story as well, frequently in ways which use the specific means of the film medium to obtain similar effects to those achieved in the book. Thus, scenes of conflict often begin by setting up attackers and attacked as visually distinct groups. Another effect of the wide angle lens is that it helps accelerate movement; it is used both to create momentum before scenes of conflict, by enhancing the distance between the fighting parties, and for shots of actual fighting, when, in conjunction with camera movement or in alternation with a handheld camera, it contributes to dynamism and impetus as characters lash at each other, and thus makes invasions of personal space during the attacks seem all the more brutal.

Kubrick has a predilection for agoraphobic rather than claustrophobic spaces – no matter how small the place is, it still somehow manages to tower above the characters. Hence, his rendering of Alex's gradual loss of spatial control often involves placing the character in enclosed environments where distances have become surreally large, as in the scene of Alex's arrival at the Ludovico facility, in which the wide angle lens turns what is probably a rather normally-sized room into a vast empty expanse across which people have to shout at each other.

Just as in the book, the scene of Deltoid's visit to Alex's flat signals the beginning of Alex's progressive disempowerment, reflected in his progressive loss of spatial control. Here Deltoid's control over Alex's private space is even more invasive than in the book, since Kubrick adds sexual undertones to the scene. Deltoid sits next to Alex on the bed, touches him and eventually punches him in the groin. But the most brutal intrusion in the film is in fact the viewer's voyeuristic intrusion into Alex's personal space, as the camera takes us disturbingly close, films from painfully intimate angles, follows Alex going about private everyday activities, takes us with him into the

bathroom, and makes us witnesses to his privacy. As the protagonist is disempowered, the viewer is increasingly made to watch him not from the position of a passive member of the audience in a performance controlled by Alex, but from the position of the aggressor – such as in the later scene when Deltoid spits at Alex, rendered via a point of view shot from behind Deltoid which allows part of his head to slip into the frame. This prevents full identification with Alex as a victim, and on the contrary places the viewer in the position of his oppressor, making us question who we are – the wild, compelling, defiant but brutal Alex, or the self-righteous Deltoid who spits at his face.

In Burgess' novel, the Lodovico treatment has us confined to Alex's perspective, his feelings and his perceptual world. We are sensorially aware of his being sick and of what he hears and sees, and we are forced to watch with him what has now become the 'real horrorshow' of the re-conditioning film clips. In Kubrick's version, the camera is omniscient, and instead of watching the screen with Alex, it is Alex's reactions that we watch. Alex is put on show – in fact, he has become the 'real horrorshow', one in which the viewer is himself drawn in (it is also significant that the first aerial shot of the prison reveals it as a Panopticon, again playing upon the same all-encompassing metaphor of seeing, watching and power).

#### **4. Conclusions**

Kubrick's use of narrative perspective in the film consistently contributes to this relativization and questioning of the viewer's moral stance. Unlike the book, in which the first person narrative means that the readers follow Alex round and close in on his victims together with him, Kubrick's film uses an omniscient camera, despite the fact that he preserves Alex as a voice-over first person narrator. Thus, in the book, almost every scene of attack has Alex first enter his victims' space and locate his victims. This identification is unsettling, since it forces us to participate in the "ultra-violence" (14) on the side of the aggressor, but it helps create sympathy with Alex in the second half of the book, where he is being victimized himself. In the film, almost all attack scenes begin with cutting straight into the space of the victim and showing the approaching predator from the victim's perspective. This does create suspense, but paradoxically, though, not by the means one would expect – i.e. by creating sympathy with the victim in the face of an imminent attack. Instead, it gives the director time to introduce the victim to the viewer alongside hints of criticism

that will prevent any serious sympathetic involvement. The droogs' first victim, the drunken beggar, is introduced by a shot of his bottle to the musical background of his drunken song. In the first attack on F. Alexander and his wife, we first see Alex and his friends approach in their car; but then a shot of the interior of the house and of the characters ensures that the viewers are given enough insight into their lives to dismiss them as odd and ridiculous. The attack on the cat lady is preceded by a shot of the old woman exercising in a gaudy interior swarming with white cats. Where Burgess had an old world lady with a walking stick who keeps a bust of Beethoven on her sideboard, Kubrick has an obviously rich, grotesque old woman in a leotard with a collection of erotic modern art, who also gets killed with an element of her décor – yet this time not with a “silver malenky statue” (46), but with an enormous marble phallus. Where Burgess shows innocent victims under attack from an unambiguous predator, Kubrick shows a world where no sympathy is possible, and no moral position is unambiguously valid.

Like Burgess, Kubrick sets out to create a seductive character in Alex, feeling that this is imperative if the aim of the story's critique is to remain unambiguous:

It was absolutely necessary to give weight to Alex's brutality, otherwise I think there would be moral confusion with respect to what the government does to him. If he were a lesser villain, then one could say: 'Oh, yes, of course, he shouldn't be given this psychological conditioning; it's all too horrible and he really wasn't that bad after all.' On the other hand, when you have shown him committing such atrocious acts, and you still realize the immense evil on the part of the government in order to make him good, then I think the essential moral idea of the book is clear. It is necessary for man to have choice to be good or evil, even if he chooses evil. To deprive him of this choice is to make him something less than human – a clockwork orange (Kubrick in Strick and Houston 1972: 128).

Alex's initial question in the novel (“What's it going to be then, eh?”), at first an aggressive statement of defiance, gradually gathers the weight of a question about choice, and finds its answer in a statement which unambiguously posits freedom as the superior human value. Kubrick's treatment of the subject is faithful to Burgess's statement, but shifts its weight slightly. The film's treatment of spatiality, its emphasis on staginess, pictorialism and the act of viewing, its use of omniscient camera and point of view shots all contribute to a more pervasive questioning of who are the victims and who the victimizers, and turn the viewer into a voyeur who is made to reflect on his voyeuristic position.



Like Alex in the Lodovico treatment, we are compelled to watch the violence, but if in Burgess our identification with Alex forces us to see what Alex sees, in Kubrick the omniscient camera gives us the choice to look away, and questions our decision not to. Our own identification with Alex becomes a matter of choice – and thus makes more acute the interrogation of violence as a component of human nature.

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## DESIRED OTHERS IN ANGELA CARTER'S *THE INFERNAL DESIRE MACHINES OF DOCTOR HOFFMAN*

ELIZA CLAUDIA FILIMON

University of Timișoara

*Abstract:* The article refers to Catherine Belsey's analysis of "postmodern" desire and Rosemary Jackson's discussion of fantasy as transgressive mode of subversion in order to approach the intricate relationship between desire, sexuality and cultural conditions in Carter's analysis of desire. The postmodern patchwork that weaves the text of *The Infernal Desire Machines of Doctor Hoffman* provides a fruitful ground for interpretation.

*Keywords:* desire, memory, otherness, reason.

### 1. Introduction

As an over-determined force in the human psyche, desire in *The Infernal Desire Machines of Doctor Hoffman* (1972) is treated with an emphasis on the form it takes as well as the power that accompanies it. Carter's novel analyzes the desired version of reality with the sexual drive as its greatest determining force. In the display of various desired worlds, there looms an erotic force which is not only an egotistic "will to power" to shape the world as it desires, but a will to annihilate the female other.

Angela Carter problematizes the common-sense reality by subverting the long held demarcation between human reason and desire most of all by combining literary genres in her approach. Paradoxically, she uses the fantastic mode to subvert fantasy, both as a psychological activity and as a literary genre. In its multiple rewriting of, or overwriting on the existing narratives two texts come to the fore as we read the story of Dr Hoffman – Marcel Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past* and the *Tales* of E. T. A. Hoffmann. As Susan Rubin Suleiman points out, Hoffmann's *Tales* "are not only alluded to in the novel's title, but provide a structural model for the overall story", and "one finds, pell-mell, echoes of Proust' from the opening sentence "I remember everything" and "the beloved "lost object" is named Albertina" (Carter 1994: 104).

Analyzing the structural model for the novel in reference to Hoffmann's *Tales*, Suleiman sums up the model as follows:

a powerful father with magical powers keeps his beautiful but potentially deadly daughter tantalizingly out of the reach of the desiring young man, a situation that eventually leads to the death of the daughter... or of the young man (104).

## 2. Sources

In discussing *The Infernal Desire Machines of Doctor Hoffman's* intertexts with Hoffmann's *Tales*, Colin Manlove (1992: 149-150) considers Hoffmann's *The Golden Pot* to be the main story that serves as the overwritten narrative in the relationships among Desiderio, Albertina and Dr Hoffmann.

In *The Golden Pot* the structural model is slightly dissimilar and with a happy ending. It is a story of a young woman called Anselmus allured by a magician's daughter called Serpentina, who first reveals herself to the young men in the form of a golden green snake. The young man "forsakes his former empiricism and his bourgeois betrothed Veronica" (Manlove in Filmer 1992: 149-150), for the sake of Serpentina, but in the end he is rewarded with a happy union with her and lives forever in the magician's wonderland. It is interesting to note what signifying effects these palimpsest texts may contribute to the surface text of the novel. The story runs that Desiderio, the I-narrator and an aging hero/politician, looks back on his youthful adventures and writes down what he can remember of the past which is to become his country's official history. The 'Great War' he describes is a vehement struggle between two different worlds, one constructed and known to humans reason, the other projected by intense desire as a result of the force released from the 'unconscious'. Desiderio, then a young man with an extraordinary power of metaphysical intuition, works for the rational side represented by the 'Minister of Determination.' The enemy side is commanded by doctor Hoffman, apparently a magician-like figure but more of a crazed puppet master with the great knowledge of science and the power of human desire. His daughter Albertina is his lead puppet to wage the war for him, and a major part of her mission is to lure the prime agent of the Minister, Desiderio, to her father's camp. She comes to Desiderio's dreams in various alluring images and Desiderio, whose mission for the Minister is to annihilate the Doctor, embarks on a love quest for her. But before his final confrontation with her and her father in their high-tech castle home, he is involuntarily involved in a series of adventures in worlds projected under the influence of desire. These adventures have their separate intertextual allusions; one of the important connecting points they present in relation to the overall narrative is their relevance to Desiderio's experience of his own unconscious desire. Throughout his

picaresque journey Desiderio alleges his lack of desire for anything except for his beloved Albertina; however, when the ultimate moment comes for him to enter a perpetual sexual union with Albertina in the 'love pen' Dr Hoffman has prepared for them, he suddenly resists violently. In their fierce struggle Desiderio not only kills Dr Hoffman but ferociously bites Albertina on her neck, like a vampire, before he stabs her to death with the knife she carries in her bridal gown. With the death of father and daughter Desiderio easily destroys their 'infernal' machines of desire and ends the fantastic war between reason and desire. For his deeds he is rewarded by his country as a national hero who restored rational order to the world while he himself is tortured forever by his unfulfilled desire for Albertina.

Desire is the overwhelming force lying at the heart of the text, as Albertina's cry suggests: "Oh, Desiderio! Never underestimate the power of that desire for which you are named!" (167). Desire is everywhere: in the name of the protagonist, in the title of the novel, it is the motor of Desiderio's quest and each episode revolves around various degrees of desire, from love to aggression and obsessive compulsion. If in Proust's text memory functions as a magical light to illuminate the unseen meaning in the corridor of bygone time, then memory in the novel is deeply mixed up with personal and collective desire. Desiderio, "a man without desires" (211) at the onset of his quest, lets us know in his Introduction that Albertina is the product of his desire:

Rather, from beyond the grave, her father has gained a tactical victory over me and forced on me at least the apprehension of an alternate world in which all the objects are the emanations of a single desire. And my desire is, to see Albertina again before I die (13).

From the way in which he describes Albertina in the opening pages, "the heroine of my story, the daughter of the magician, the inexpressible woman to whose memory I dedicate these pages, the miraculous Albertina" (13), he makes it obvious that she is more a product of memory and desire than an objective woman:

I see her as a series of marvellous shapes formed at random in the kaleidoscope of desire (13).

Albertina clearly stands as illustration of the motif of the Muse as Beloved, a trope that Carter viewed as explicitly gendered, and commented on in a interview with Kerry Goldsworthy:

I think the Muse is a pretty fatuous person. The concept of the Muse is- it's another magic Other, isn't it, another way of keeping women out of the arena. There's a whole book by Robert Graves dedicated to the notion that poetic inspiration is female, which is why women don't have it. It's like haemophilia; they're the transmitters, you understand. But they don't suffer from it themselves (1985: 12).

Albertina is not only the artist's other, she is so enigmatic and fragmented that mutability becomes her definition. Angela Carter's irony takes the shape of literary excess and literalization in the representation of Albertina as human, inanimate, bestial, or androgynous, masculine or feminine. She appears first as a hallucination of a transparent woman with a heart of flames, then as a black swan; later Desiderio sees her in the eyes of Mary-Anne, the somnambulist and in the decapitated head from the peep-show samples. She then appears disguised as the masked Madam of the brothel and travels with Desiderio under the disguise of the sadistic Count's abused boy valet Lafleur. The most complex disguise, however, that which comprises Albertina's fluidity and triggers Desiderio's fascination, is her appearance as the Ambassador of the Doctor. Desiderio attributes the Ambassador's appeal to the ontological ambiguity and the sense of threat he exudes:

I think he was the most beautiful human being I have ever seen – considered, that is, solely as an object, a construction of flesh, skin, bone and fabric, and yet, for all his ambiguous sophistication, indeed, perhaps in its very nature, he hinted at a savagery which had been cunningly tailored to suit the drawing room. He was a manicured leopard patently in complicity with chaos.  
[...] Certainly I had never seen a phantom who looked at that moment more shimmeringly unreal than the Ambassador, nor one who seemed to throb with more erotic promise (32, 36).

The desire to penetrate the enigma of the Muse is one aspect of the theme of desire. Angela Carter's parodical approach surfaces as Desiderio's ambition to "rip away that ruffled shirt and find out whether the breasts of an authentic woman swelled beneath it" (40) reveals nothing but another layer of Albertina's enigma, a "language of signs which utterly bemused me because I could not read them" (25).

### **3. Memories and Memoirs**

Desiderio's memory is tainted both with his past desire and his present one. But the problem in his desired memory is his insistent claim of his lack of

desire until the appearance of the desirable Albertina in his dreams. He is unaware of his passion, “too sardonic...too disaffected” (12), which makes him the perfect agent to disintegrate the chaos generated by Doctor Hoffman’s illusions. The only illusion that does penetrate his indifference is the apparition of the Doctor’s daughter.

Critics have presented different readings concerning Desiderio’s role and his desire. He can be seen as a character functioning as a narrative device, as Elaine Jordan (1992: 161) explains:

Formally, Desiderio is not a realistic character, but kin to Gulliver, or the passive hero of Walter Scott’s novels, a double for author and reader in their passage through the story. The episodes he goes through in seeking to destroy Hoffman are also readable as his dream-wrestling with the problems posed, the possibilities of overcoming Reason and Desire as a battleground; dreams of Modern Man.

Colin Manlove notices that “the memories of his journey are his alone: no-one else from the ordered city accompanies him” (1992: 152). He questions the male subjective position adopted by Desiderio in the narrative of his heroic deed.

In his quest for Doctor Hoffman, Desiderio comes across “apparent objects that reveal themselves as mere images of the desirable” (Clark 1987: 156), but his libido is kept under control in view of completing his mission at first, and for fear of losing the rational side of himself later, when he understands the world of illusion feeds of eroto-energy. We can read him and his memoirs, as Colin Manlove (1992: 156) points out, in a deconstructive way in which his text subverts his own narrative:

we think that he is the detached narrator of all that he sees; the phenomena are outside him... Throughout the narrative he proclaims himself an appropriate hero because of his inherent boredom and indifference before the proliferation of sensible objects. Yet his very name, ‘Desiderio’ undercuts this; and the extraordinarily powerful desire he comes to feel for Albertina certainly calls it into question... It is perfectly possible to see his journey as one into his own unconscious, into a libido whose existence he strains to deny.

And my reading of Desiderio’s character comes closer to Manlove’s, for I see Desiderio’s denial of desire as actually a contradictory manifestation of his desire. It plays a crucial part in the texture of his narrative. Owing to his ethnic and social background – coming from the lowest stratum of society as the son of a white European prostitute-mother and an unknown Indian customer father

– he is doubly marginalized in his society. He is a “very disaffected young man” for he is not unaware of the “disinheritance” (16) which negates his existence. As an extremely intelligent young man and deprived of any desired object in his situation he can see things ‘objectively’ for what they are. Desiderio is a hero in the end because of his apathy.

The narrator’s own desire emerges unconsciously as a transparent screen between what he remembers and what actually happened in the past. Desiderio’s desire stands as an invisible bridge in his memory lane to the vanished past which is filled with flamboyant shows of other people’s desires. What he sees as others’ fantasies sometimes turns out to be his own or of his own collaboration in spite of strenuous denial of any involvement. As he observes the strange worlds in which he is plunged, worlds projected and brought into being by his and other peoples fantasies, he is caught in an even greater fantastic circle which is the realm of literary fantasy.

Placing Desiderio’s ambiguous desire as the implicit focal point of the struggle between a reality set by a reason and the reality desired by desire, I’m also connecting Carter’s fantastic text to Rosemary Jackson’s (1995: 3) theory of fantasy. Fantasy, as she observes, is a literary mode attempting “to compensate for a lack resulting from cultural constraints: it is the literature of desire which seeks that which is experienced as absence and loss”. The fantasy world Desiderio and other characters with strong desires find themselves in is not only a world projected by their desires but a world speaking of what has been kept the repressed, unsaid. This is also the fantastic element that has characterized Carter’s work as speculative fiction, as her fantastic style is also a serious intellectual exploration into the repressed other side of patriarchal Western culture. Moreover, Jackson employs Freud’s theories of the uncanny and the human subject to relate the unconscious desire predominant in ‘the modern fantastic’ (62-63) to the repressions and taboos in cultural order. Carter’s texts pursue the ‘strangeness’ of the given world, of the given terms that constitute one’s sexual identity, and the repressed desire that has arisen from the gap between what has been permitted and what has been forbidden culturally.

However, Carter’s fantastic texts are by no means subtle psychological novels. The use of Freudian discourse and fantasy is made with an effect of highlighting the artificiality of psychological activities while exploring the cultural forces that have pervaded, or in a sinister sense, animated all the characters. Almost all her characters are composite figures penetrated through

by various cultural narratives and forces, but the acute sense of ‘unnaturalness’ and strangeness is presented less in the characters’ consciousness than in the characterization itself. While the characters are treated as role-players who are not unaware of their own artifice, it is their performance of their artificial self that produces the uncanny effect.

The characters in *The Infernal Desire Machines of Doctor Hoffman* pursue their desires, enact their fantasies as if they were the most natural things to them. The characters find themselves already in a fantasy-like world, in which their desired fantasies do not shape the inner yearnings of their souls, they are but a re-play of what has been inscribed on them as desire for that they have experienced as a ‘lack’ in their existence. The estrangement of this lack is twofold, as exemplified in Desiderio’s adventures. And social disinheritance deprives him of his social identity, renders him passive and longing for a static life-form, which is a death-wish psychologically, all he is left is an intellectual power with which to analyze, and jeer at, the imperfect status of the existing world. This destructive death-wish also owes its existence to his prostitute-mother whose fierce female sexuality casts a frightening shadow on his unconscious and generates a blend of hatred and attraction to women in his libido. Almost as if deprived of an object to desire, before Albertina haunts his dreams, his desire is in such a dry, jeering state of negation that he even denies its existence. But several examples can be cited to challenge his assertion of lack of desire. Fantasies such as ‘a fat, white owl’ (26) purporting to be his mother and begging for his forgiveness or the turning of all the Opera House’s audience, except himself, into crowds of peacocks (16) are also likely to be his own instead of others’ as he claims.

Desiderio, who turns his desires into actualities, is continually transforming himself so as to accommodate to the desires of others, as Ricarda Schmidt notices (1989: 57) and he still sees himself as powerless. His dependence on others is so strong that each time he enters a new phase or flees, the experience is similar to a rebirth. The violence inherent in the process of becoming whole is revealed as he runs from the town of S. and he claims that “the moment when my head broke into the fresh air surprised me as much as I were a baby suddenly popped from the womb” (64-65).

Desiderio longs for unity and the end of his quest and his regression into the community of the river people is described as a loss of personality:



The limited range of feeling and the idea they expressed with such a meagre palette of gesture no longer oppressed me; it gave me, instead, a slight feeling of warm claustrophobia I had learned to identify with the notion, 'home'... Desiderio himself had disappeared because the river people had given him a new name... I was called Kiku (77).

In Hoffman's castle he looks in the mirror and claims: "I had been transformed again. Time and travel had changed me almost beyond my own recognition. Now I was entirely Albertina in the male aspect" (199).

In comparison with either the Minister's or the Doctor's intelligence in the reality war, Desiderio's mental vision, like theirs, seems untouched by emotional manipulation. But the Minister's and Doctor's mental power is actually the other side of the will to power. Desiderio's rationality is also in the service of an unconscious desire, different from theirs, one expressed in a negative form. Even if he desires, he lacks a desired object. Thus, until the alluring appearance of Albertina, he tends to negate the magical phenomenal display, no matter how fantastic, which does not answer his desired form categorically. His repressed desire is manifested in something he has in common with the minister, "an admiration for stasis" (12). His attraction to a perfected static form of existence, such as the one exhibited by "the Ancient Egyptians" who "arrived at and perfected an aesthetically entirely satisfactory pose" (12), reveals an unconscious wish to cast and freeze people in a tableau-like existence in which generations of individuals are constrained within and repeat the same stereotyped lives of their ancestors. This is a tendency the Indian river people, among whom Desiderio feels most at home, also exhibit and the ancient Indian earthen figurines have signified in their ruined amphitheatre-cemetery (201-202). Though his wish could be read as a longing to put an order or an end to the chaotic changing world, it is his unconscious desire to control that deserves more scrutiny.

#### **4. The Desired Woman**

Desiderio's narrative produces the image of Albertina as a collage of pre-established roles of femininity. She is the gypsy girl, the prostitute, the cross-dresser. Albertina is caught between two different wills all along: she is both her father's puppet and the object of Desiderio's desire. In the first role she becomes a sacrificial victim. She prostitutes herself as the Count's valet LaFleur, brings Desiderio to the castle and dresses up as a prototype daughter in Victorian lace while serving dinner. In Desiderio's life she occupies a space

already defined and framed for her. He has given her a name and shape in his dreams before he even sees her. She is a black swan, who is snakelike and emanates “mindless evil” (30). Even when she is disguised as the Doctor’s ambassador, Desiderio describes her movements as being of “reptilian liquidity so that she seemed to move in soft coils” (32). Albertina is defined as the *femme fatale*, animal-like and fatally seductive, a “luring siren” (33) who sings a “thrilling, erotic contralto” (ibid). Like the snake in the Garden of Eden, she intrudes on the Minister’s city, disrupting the masculine space of power and introducing him to intense emotions so that he ‘swayed as if he were about to faint’ (39).

His fear of Albertina’s desire is intertwined with his desire for a romantic script of love suicide in which the heroine’s passion consumes her in self-destructive flames, just as the first image of Albertina in his dreams anticipates. The power of Albertina’s desire is, nevertheless, greater than his, and she turns into a desiring Muse. When Albertina assumes ontological solidity as the Doctor’s daughter, both the reader and Desiderio face the problem of interpreting her desire. The incident that first poses it is Albertina’s rape by the Centaurs. When Albertina is raped almost to death by the Centaurs she is convinced that the whole event is a result of her desire. Ricarda Schmidt (1990: 59) draws attention to Desiderio who has just used *Gulliver’s Travels* to teach the river people how to read and write. The correlation between the Centaurs and the Houyhnhnms does not seem to be a coincidence. It implies that the rape scene emanates, on a subconscious level, from the way Desiderio’s desire cites Swift and generates a misogynistic variation of his text. Desiderio is convinced that he is the instigator of the horrific event, while Albertina is sure that “the beasts were still only emanations of her own desires, dredged up and objectively reified from the dark abysses of the unconscious” (186). Furthermore, the timely appearance of the Doctor’s helicopter saving them from the Centaurs silences Desiderio’s objections to the omnipotence of Albertina’s desires. Albertina becomes the seductress executing her father’s orders, when she initiates their sexual consummation. Desiderio no longer regards her as the lover who responds to the call of Eros. He is reluctant to enact his dream as if he knew the Doctor would win.

This can be corroborated in his final confrontation with Albertina. As she, having her father’s blessing, offers him the tableau-like pose of lovers’ perpetual copulation with her, he refuses to enter it, for Albertina occupies the more powerful position in their relationship. She is the ‘Generalissimo’, and he

is the manipulated puppet in her and her father's game. Another reason is of course her inadvertently showing her close ties with her father than with him. The social deprivation he suffers from his socio-ethnic background sensitizes him to various forms of domination, and the superior socio-economic status of Dr Hoffman and Albertina arouses in him a hostile response after reaching their citadel. The main point I am making is that, if he suffers social discrimination without resistance, since his response is sneer and detachment, he refuses to accept a submissive position in the sexual relationship. Where he suffers from his social 'disinheritance' here he unconsciously wishes to be consoled in his sexual relationship- he will not be disinherited of the dominant sexual role that men have inherited from their long historical traditions. If Albertina's images in his dreams offer his desire on objectified form, this form of desire is not neutral or equal in its power relationship. Its implication of domination and submission in the erotic relationship is not so different from the one displayed in the peep-show proprietor's huge stock of sample desire, though the latter is presented in a more savage way. It is the juxtaposing of the erotic with death, the emphasis of the female as the luring object, and the malicious potential associated with female sexuality projected by the male fear that underlie Desiderio's attraction to the swan-woman. While the two images delineate the form for Desiderio's unformed desire, they also presage the domination struggle that is bound to occur between the lovers. Desiderio kills Albertina to get rid of his desire, the part of himself that he finds difficult to cope with. His indifference is a shield meant to help him to avoid his fear of women.

In Desiderio's negative form of desire what is repressed is the recognition of the interpenetration and interchangeability between desire and reason in his supposedly rationalistic vision of the world; he sees no desire of his own manipulating his representation. He acknowledges the power of desire which could bend the world, but the overlapping of reason and desire escapes him. This cerebral desire figures in Carter's analysis of the intermingling of reason and desire, questioning Desiderio's account of a rational world order threatened by the chaotic forces of desire. He is a despised member of the oppressed, marginalized group in his society, so he seeks to address the world in rational terms, without noticing that his discourse has already been subverted by his desire, which is unresolved.

Albertina is exchanged for the possibility of becoming the subject of his own narrative. "If narrative is governed by an Oedipal logic, it is because it is situated within the system of exchange instituted by the incest prohibition,

where woman functions as both a sign and a value for that exchange” (de Lauretis 1984: 140). But the fulfilment of Desiderio’s life as narrative leaves him with a sense of disappointment, the text lets him down: “all I know is, I could not transcend myself sufficiently to inherit the universe...When I close my eyes I see her still” (197). Albertina remains only the object of his unconsummated desire, and Desiderio will end his days in absolute frustration: “there was once a young man named Desiderio who set out upon a journey and very soon lost himself completely. When he thought he had reached his destination, it turned out to be only the beginning of another journey infinitely more hazardous than the first.” (166). He had expected a heroic journey and he laments to the reader: “if you feel a certain sense of anti-climax, how do you think I felt?” (218). His own narrative traps him in a “coffin” (221).

The ending of the novel reinforces the motif of “desire as narrative thematic, desire as native motor, and desire as the very intention of narrative language and the act of telling all seem to stand in close interrelation” (Brooks 1984: 54).

The term desire appears in the title of the novel, evoking the desire to narrate life as meaning. It is “the very motive of narrative”, writes Brooks (1984: 47), and “once there is text, expression, writing, one becomes subject to the processes of desiring and dying” (1984: 53). Desiderio represents a ‘desiring machine’, as Brooks describes it, he is a

representation of the dynamics of the narrative text, connecting beginning and end across the middle and making of that middle – what we read through – a field of force...If the motor of narrative is desire..., the ultimate determinants of meaning lie at the end, and narrative desire is ultimately, inexorably, desire for the end (Brooks 1984: 52).

Is Albertina another projection of Desiderio’s unconscious desires? Is she raised from the dead only to die again with the final punctuation mark? Despite his only desire to see Albertina again, Desiderio writes, “I myself had only the one desire. And that was, for everything to stop” (11). For Desiderio, the desire to narrate life as meaning is countered by his experience of memory:

and sometimes, when I think of my journey, not only does everything seem to have happened all at once, in some kind of fugue of experience, just as Albertina’s father would have devised it, but everything in my life seems to have been of equal value, so that the rose which shook off its petals as if shuddering in ecstasy to hear her voice throws as long a shadow of significance as the extraordinary words she uttered (13).

The simultaneous existence of two opposite, even mutually exclusive experiences of history in narrative can be best explained by the insight that history is a product of our desire. Desiderio could tell his story differently. Robinson (1991: 116) states that Angela Carter

systematically disrupts the pleasure of the text by foregrounding the enunciative apparatus behind its inscriptions of desire. If the pleasure of the text is dependent on identification with Desiderio who, after all, has been produced as a 'war hero' by History, that pleasure is continuously disrupted by Angela Carter's insistence on what the official history leaves unspoken: the complicities between desire and domination.

Catherine Belsey (1994: 8-9) lays emphasis on tracing "the constraints and resistances of desire in their historical discontinuity" in her study of desire. Desire is no longer treated as a metaphysical category universal and unchanging in the human psyche, but rather as an experience subject to the changes of social conditions. The key concept in her discussion of desire as a psychosexual drive is derived from Lacan's theory, who regards desire as a structural lack caused by the lost object but refusing to be satisfied by the signifier. She highlights the differential elements of desire in her analysis. In its cultural representation, desire is represented through substitutes but left unsaid because its full presence is always delayed by its sliding, citational mode of speech (Belsey 1994: 16). What I found relevant to Carter's fictional study of desire is that in the writer's text, the deferring aspect of desire accounts for a major part of the driving force that urges the characters to go on their pursuit of the desired satisfaction which can never be fully achieved. According to Belsey (1994: 76), "desire is what is not said, what cannot be said...What is not able to be said is what presses to be given form". The form is where desire can be induced, manipulated and distorted to a different direction, where will to power and sexual domination reside and are invoked.

## **5. Conclusion**

All in all, Carter's analysis of desire differs from the poststructuralist discourse in an important aspect. She pays special attention to the effect of sexual politics on the formation of the erotic desire. As desire is elusive and metonymic in delineating itself and has to be formed with an object, it often happens that the form takes over the desiring force, with the patterns of male domination presiding over the circulated images of sexual relationships. On the

one hand, the importance of forming an object for desire cannot be more emphatically expressed than in the instructions the peep-show master gives the hero – “To express a desire authentically is to satisfy it categorically” and therefore ‘Objectify your desires!’ (110). On the other hand, the implied patterns of sexual domination embedded in the Doctor’s sample sets of desire give definite forms to the male desire in its predatory relationship with its female object. To the female are attributed images as prize objects to be hunted or pursued as the final reward for the male quest, while the male is represented as a huge phallus key (46) whose virility provides the ordering power to the chaotic world. The male is urged to enhance his desire for power while the female is encouraged to cultivate a self-destructive desire to die for love. The point where the libido is repressed makes room for desire to appear, but in its search for gratification, the object cannot be really found except in a series of substitutes. In Carter’s fiction the substitutes, the sample sets of desire, come to replace the authentic desire as desire artificial enough can become authentic itself.

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# THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE COLONIAL/COLONISED SUBJECT: A POSTCOLONIAL READING OF HENRY LAWSON'S *A DAUGHTER OF MAORILAND*

NATAŠA KARANFILOVIĆ  
University of Novi Sad

*Abstract:* In its reading of Henry Lawson's story "A Daughter of Maoriland" the paper draws on the body of postcolonial theory and criticism (chiefly the works of Edward Said, Homi K. Bhabha, and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak) and deals with the issues such as cultural and racial representation, hegemony, mimicry, the subaltern, othering, and construction of stereotypes in colonial discourse.

*Keywords:* colonial discourse, Henry Lawson, Maori, postcolonial reading.

## 1. Introduction

One of Australia's most loved and celebrated classics, Henry Lawson (1867-1922), the writer who applied himself wholeheartedly to the description of Australian outback and its inhabitants at the close of the nineteenth century, also produced sketches inspired by his New Zealand experience. His first visit to New Zealand in November 1893 was prompted by favourable reports of returning prosperity in New Zealand and as such it was an escape from depressed Sydney and its 'Streets of Strife' (*The Writer's Dream*, 1897). However, as he was to discover before returning to Australia in July 1874, he had left the Sydney unemployed only to spend time among the Auckland unemployed. He returned briefly to New Zealand in March 1896. In April 1897, he finally immigrated to New Zealand with his wife Bertha and the couple settled at Mangamaunu near Kaikoura, where Lawson took a teaching position in a Native School. Hopes for his marriage and enthusiasm about the literary prospects afforded by the first-hand experience of the Maori were gradually exhausted and turned into disillusionment so that March 1898 saw the Lawsons back in Australia.

What triggered the initial optimism and what produced the final disillusion tinged with bitterness is recorded in his story *A Daughter of Maoriland: A sketch of poor-class Maoris*, which Lawson intended as a realistic account of Maori life. In addition, as an account about the native population given by a member of the white settler society, the sketch lends itself to a postcolonial reading, which shows just how much the literary

production of the period was permeated by the assumptions of colonial discourse. A postcolonial reading of the story reveals its (unwittingly) colonialist ideologies and processes. The explication of colonial discourse, especially the issue of representation, first brought into currency by Edward Said (1993), the notions of ambivalence and mimicry as well as the role of stereotypes in the construction of the colonial subject examined in the work of Homi K. Bhabha, and the idea of the subaltern and the process of othering introduced by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak will be used in this paper to investigate causes and effects of Lawson's sobering New Zealand experience which resulted in a kind of negative epiphany about race.

## **2. Maoriland and Romantic Representations of the Maori**

The term Maoriland originated on the pages of the *Bulletin* (Williams-Stafford 2006: 89), an influential weekly magazine published in Sydney from 1880 whose contents were filled with nationalist, protectionist, insular, racist and republican material. It reflected the fact that in late colonial New Zealand settler culture accepted the name Maoriland and built Maori myth into its literature and art. However, it was not a recognition of the Maori presence, culture and tradition but rather an appropriation of the culture of the people the settlers had dispossessed. In the process, Maori were reinvented and consigned to a romantic past. As Stafford and Williams observe (2006: 91):

The willingness to adopt the name Maoriland in poetry and tourist advertising – both forms of colonial self-promotion – signified settler confidence about the fortunate disposition of the races in a land seen as especially suited to colonisation, possessing a native race especially suitable to be colonised, and settlers most suited to the business of colonising.

The term was used for at least four decades as a literary synonym for New Zealand but because of its strong colonial overtones, which evoke a period of smug paternalism and a world of heroic Maori warriors and seductive Maori maidens featuring in romantic portraits and tourist postcards of the period, nowadays the term is considered archaic and is frowned at as politically suspect in a postcolonial age.

Unlike the Australian Aborigine, described in an Australian school textbook as “amongst the lowest and most degraded to be found on the surface of the earth“ (Williams and Stafford 2006: 108), in the contemporary imperial hierarchy of colonised races the Maori ranked high and an aversion to



miscegenation was much less pronounced in New Zealand than in Australia. Sentimentalised descriptions of Maoris by Maoriland writers portrayed them as simple, unspoiled, honest, and amiable creatures displaying a childlike devotion to their superior whites whereas the photographs of Maori maidens in colonial newspapers invested them with romantic eroticism.

Influenced by the prevailing stereotypical benevolent attitudes towards Maoris, Lawson planned a major work, to be called *The Native School*, which would represent “quaint and queer” Maori life (Williams and Stafford 2006: 92). He never completed the work, but its most remarkable fragment is *A Daughter of Maoriland: A Sketch of Poor-Class Maori*. The story is autobiographical and records Lawson’s encounter with the actual Maori who failed to live up to his expectations, which resulted in the loss of faith in the romantic view of Maori and an attack on the sentimental and romantic representations of Maoris common in New Zealand and Australia at the time.

### **3. A Daughter of Maoriland**

The story, told retrospectively from a disillusioned distance, tells about an enthusiastic and inexperienced teacher (suggested by the adjectives ‘green’, ‘soft’ and ‘poetical’, ph. 1) who comes to a native village not only to teach but to fulfil his literary ambitions by “build[ing] a romance“ (ph. 1) on the character of one of his charges whom he takes special interest in. He names her “August”, probably in reflection of the girl’s increasingly morose disposition, so much at odds with the romantic ethnology traditionally applied to Maoris. Further on, in the same opening paragraph, it is said with some surprised astonishment that the idea of people’s ages does not have the slightest bearing in Maori community, that even mothers do not know how old their children are. So “the teacher had to guess the ages of all the new pupils” (ph. 1). The teacher’s position is suggestive of the coloniser’s position whose interpretation of the unfamiliar colonised revolves around the binary opposition of ‘us’ and ‘them,’ where what is presented as knowledge and fact about ‘them’ is frequently mere guessing. Moreover, what is different from ‘us’ and incomprehensible to ‘us’ is allotted the status of the ‘primitive’ and ‘inferior,’ which gives ‘us’ the right, indeed asserts the need, to improve and raise ‘them’ up through colonial contact.

The very first paragraph of the story, therefore, betrays the terms of the colonial encounter and the subsequent racial and cultural interpretation as well as the boundaries of what can be grasped about the other. A white settler is

eager to explore the native unknown that he often envisages in romantic terms and seeks to capture in his text. The textual inscription, the skill of writing, denotes his superiority over the object of his interest. The same dominance is established by the act of naming or, to be more precise, renaming of the girl. Her actual name is Sarah Moses.

The bubble of romanticised and seductive stereotypes bursts as the teacher meets Sarah Moses so that in the story he tells about her, he is “undermining the romantic mist cast over the indigenous” (Williams and Stafford 2006: 95). However, what he sees as a realist portrait is the elaboration of just another stereotype of the colonised. There are insults directed at August’s appearance, behaviour and intelligence, including the stereotypical comparison to animals: “August (...) was a big, ungainly, awkward girl, with a heavy negro type of Maori countenance, and about as much animation, mentally or physically, as a cow” (ph. 2); “no human stomach could have accounted for the quantity” (ph. 11); “[s]he had slept, as she always did, like a pig” (ph. 13). In addition, a series of narrative asides ironically intones the romantically positive views of Maori life: “a brutality which must have been greatly exaggerated ... seeing that unkindness of this description is, according to all the best authorities, altogether foreign to Maori nature” (ph. 2); “for falsehood and deceit are foreign to the simple natures of the modern Maori” (ph. 11); “[t]he other Maoris were out of the question; they were all strictly honest” (ph. 11); “[a]ll of which sounds strange, considering that Maoris are very kind to each other” (ph. 13). Benevolent stereotypes are invoked only to be undermined in the ironical overtones which make Maoris hostile, mean, cruel, dishonest, and cunning.

Stereotypes, as a reduction of images and ideas to a simple manageable form, do not necessarily spring from simple ignorance or lack of ‘real’ knowledge. Stereotyping is rather a method of processing information and functions as an instrument of colonial discourse used by coloniser in order to perpetuate an artificial sense of difference between ‘us’ and ‘them’ or self and ‘other.’ It is Bhabha’s contention (1994), however, that the stereotype is also an ambivalent mode of constructing the other and that it is not a simple assertion of difference but a complex articulation of a ‘contradictory belief’, which means that while the colonised are fixed as unchanging, known and predictable the stereotype they are identified with is often one of disorder, anarchy and licence.

The colonised subject is constructed as 'other' by imperial and colonial discourses and a binary separation of coloniser and colonised is established which asserts the naturalness and primacy of the colonising culture and world view. In addition, the process of 'othering,' as dubbed by Spivak (1985a; Ashcroft et al. 2002: 171-173), is fundamental to the construction of the self. The colonised other is the focus of desire or power in relation to which the colonising subject is produced. The other is the excluded or 'mastered' subject created by the discourse of power. The three major postcolonial theoreticians, Said, Bhabha and Spivak, share a preoccupation with relations between power and knowledge in the construction of 'otherness' and in the construction of the colonial/ colonised subject. The great project of European Enlightenment produced the binary split between European adulthood and its childish colonised other, which induced the colonial civilising mission and coloniser at its helm as the educator. Postcolonial theoreticians and critics have contributed to the discrediting of the project of the European Enlightenment. The central figure of Western humanist and Enlightenment discourses, the humane knowing subject, now stands revealed as white male colonist.

Mr Lorrens, the teacher in Lawson's story, is portrayed as a person who dutifully performs his task of extending the benefits of knowledge to the children of a primitive community and who is excited at the opportunity to take one of them into his home. Acting upon August's claim that her aunt has turned her out, which the aunt denied, the teacher and his wife invite her to stay with them. The teacher "regarded August in the light of copy" (ph. 6), as a source for his *Maori Sketches and Characters* but he never neglected his civilising mission either. The teacher is delighted to notice that "August brightened from the first day" (ph. 7), that the young schoolmistress "always thought she was a good girl if taken the right way; all she wanted was a change and kind treatment" (ph. 7), and what pleases him most is that August "was wonderfully quick in picking up English ways and housework" (ph. 8).

Nevertheless, the postcolonial reader is quick to recognise Bhabha's (1994: 86-88; Ashcroft et al. 2006: 139-142) concept of mimicry which includes the adoption of the coloniser's cultural habits, assumptions, institutions and values and in that way 'improves' colonised subjects. However, the advancement never elevates colonised subjects to the same level with their European masters, it only makes them acceptable as perfect servants. The teacher and his wife envisage exactly that kind of future for August: "It was a settled thing that they should take her back to the city with them, and have a

faithful and grateful retainer all their lives and a sort of Aunt Chloe for their children, when they had any” (ph. 8). The processes of mimicry and interpellation of the colonised subject by imperial discourse so that Euro-centric values, assumptions, beliefs and attitudes are accepted as a matter of course as the most natural and valuable induce hegemony and generate consent of colonised to be dominated and ruled by coloniser. Colonised is expected to recognise coloniser’s interests as his own and to internalise coloniser’s values, attitudes, practices, ideas etc. The practice of mimicry, however, as Bhabha (1994: 86) points out, is never far from mockery because it can appear to parody whatever it mimics. In his view, mimicry is an ambivalent relationship between coloniser and colonised, it is a ‘blurred copy’ of the coloniser that can be quite threatening.

The menacing nature of mimicry is revealed in Lawson’s story when the teacher and his wife start wondering about August’s increasingly frequent and prolonged absences from their household. On one such occasion, August was supposed to go to the pa (a Maori village) for milk and was absent past lunchtime.

The teacher put on his hat, and went up to the pa once more. He found August squatted in the midst of a circle of relations. She was entertaining them with one of a series of idealistic sketches of the teacher’s domestic life, in which she showed a very vivid imagination (...) Her intervals of absence had been occupied in this way from the first. The astounding slanders she had circulated concerning the teacher’s private life came back, bit by bit, to his ears for a year afterwards... (ph. 14).

As it turns out, August has seemingly become part of teacher’s household and adopted its ways only to mock them in her own community. Furthermore, the stories August tells about the teacher and his wife as well as various provisions she secretly takes from their house to the village speak against passive acceptance and in favour of the agency of colonised subjects, that is of their ability to initiate action in resisting imperial power.

A glimpse of August as a story-teller in her village is an indication that in addition to the teacher’s story there is also a narrative to be told from August’s point of view. In Lawson’s sketch, however, that voice of the native subject is muted or at best degraded to “straightforward and unscrupulous lying” (ph. 14). In her explication of the subaltern, the term first used in a non-military sense by Marxist Antonio Gramsci, Spivak (1985b) applies the term to those groups in society who are denied access to hegemonic power. She further insists that there is not an alternative history to be written from a subaltern

position and that postcolonial critics must learn not to seek for the subaltern's voice but to point to the silence. In her opinion, imperial history is "epistemic violence", an interested construction rather than "the disinterested production of facts". In *The Postcolonial Critic* (1990), Spivak argues that the Enlightenment bequeathed to the Europeans a belief that it is possible to have a direct and unmediated knowledge of reality, both of the reality of nature and the reality of our own nature. The process meant that the application of reason, knowledge of reality, would lead to the conquest of natural and social evils and the emancipation of humanity. Post-structuralists (such as Foucault, Derrida, Deleuze) have subjected many of the comfortable assumptions about humanity, knowledge, rationality and progress to disturbing interrogation, which lead to the deconstruction of *grand récits*. Post-structuralists point out the silences, the unspoken, undescribed others that are implied in each narrative; they are interested in the limits of narration. On the other hand, it is Bhabha's contention that the subaltern can speak and that it has spoken through mimicry and parody which represent both a strategy of colonial subjection through reform, regulation and discipline, which 'appropriates' the 'other', and the native's inappropriate imitations of this discourse, which has the effect of menacing colonial authority.

#### **4. Conclusion**

The relationship of the teacher and August is ultimately the one of ambivalence, as propounded by Bhabha (1994). In the complex mix of attraction and repulsion and the fluctuating relationship between mimicry and mockery, August's psychology remains elusive. It is what the teacher cannot read in her that troubles and haunts him, and his efforts to interpret her actions, words and silences are overdetermined, both by romantic expectations at the outset and by his disillusion later. The story records sympathy as well as growing antagonism and at times story evokes a sense of threat occasioned by August's unreadable but volatile character. The sense of threat culminates after August has been ordered to leave the teacher's house and return to the pa. Prospective Aunt Chloe relapses into a treacherously murderous savage.

But savage superstition must give way to savage hate. The girl's last „try-on“ was to come down to the school fence, and ostentatiously sharpen a table-knife on the wires, while she scowled murderously in the direction of the schoolmistress, who was hanging out her washing. August looked, in her dark, bushy, Maory hair, a

thoroughly wild savage. Her father had murdered her mother under particularly brutal circumstances, and the daughter took after her father (ph. 16).

What unsettles the teacher most is August's unalloyed aboriginality, and Lawson takes as his subject the role of sentimentality in interpreting racial character. He assumes that there is an opposing and more truthful form of representation but his corrective representation is distorted by a bitter disappointment. What Lawson intended as a realistic picture has as its source not objective assessment of the other but colonial discourse, that is, the system of knowledge and beliefs about the world within which acts of colonisation take place. In particular, colonial discourse hinges on notions of race that begin to emerge at the very advent of European imperialism. Such is the power of colonial discourse that individual colonising subjects are not often consciously aware of the duplicity of their position, for colonial discourse constructs the colonising subject as much as the colonised.

A postcolonial reading of *A Daughter of Maoriland* has shown Lawson's unwittingly colonial perspective in his purportedly realistic representation of Maori character. There is a pervasive scepticism in the story about all efforts at cultural interpretation and understanding. The teacher displays such exasperated misunderstanding of August pared down to stereotypical interpretations while at the same time he dimly and frustratedly recognises that she exists outside his ability to account for her actions. However, both the teacher and the author find it necessary to close down and suppress her side of the story. Ultimately, August is constructed and represented as the mysterious and duplicitous 'other' (representative of the colonised culture) and functions as a means of stabilizing and affirming the teacher's superior identity (the identity of the colonialist/ imperialist power), whose name "for years after he had gone (...) was spoken of with great respect by the Maoris" (ph. 22).

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# FORMAL AND AESTHETIC ASPECTS OF NADINE GORDIMER'S SHORT STORY

BRANISLAVA LIČEN  
University of Novi Sad

*Abstract:* This essay discusses the formal and aesthetic aspects of Nadine Gordimer's "Jump and Other Stories", published in 1991. The paper gives an account of short story studies such as Susane Lohafer's "Coming to Terms With the Short Story" and Suzanne C. Ferguson's "Defining the Short Story: Impressionism and Form", showing how these theories can be applied to Gordimer's short fiction.

*Keywords:* ellipsis, formal innovations, points of view, polyvalence, short story, temporal shifts.

## 1. Introduction

Over the last fifty years, Nadine Gordimer, an outstanding South African writer, the Booker and Nobel Prize winner, has, to date, published eight collections of short stories, ten novels, and two non-fiction works. Her South African background and the post-apartheid circumstances the country was facing in the 1990s have greatly determined the scope of her themes-violence, political instability, ethnic, racial and sexual discrepancies and conflicts which are the part of South Africa's everyday life. The author's latest collection *Jump and Other Stories* (1992) (hereafter *Jump*) consists of sixteen stories that shed light on the same themes and topics as her previous work. In this anthology, however, she introduces a number of formal innovations that characterize the modern short story-she transforms the plot by deletion and substitution, makes her language dense with meaning by using simile and metaphor, gives her reader different points of view within individual stories and, finally, makes her short fiction spatially rather than temporally organized. Therefore, the themes dealt with in these stories, which stress her strong interest in both the country's and global history and politics, are extremely hard to separate from the formal aspect and aesthetic complexity of her work.

Writing about short fiction theory in her essay *The Flash of Fireflies* published in *Short Story Theories* (Huggan 1976: 61) and expressing her views on the difference between novels and stories in a number of other critical works, Gordimer has proved herself over time to be a short story theoretician as well as one of the world's greatest short story writers. For that reason, in this



paper I will write about the formal and aesthetic aspects of *Jump* giving an account of short story studies such as Susan Lohafer's *Coming to Terms with the Short Story* and Suzanne C. Ferguson's *Defining the Short Story: Impressionism and Form* (Church 1982: 13-24), showing how these theories can be applied to Gordimer's short fiction.

## **2. Nadine Gordimer's Short Stories**

Nadine Gordimer started writing at the age of nine, which was a response to her extensive reading during a solitary childhood. She published her first story, *Come Again Tomorrow*, in November of 1939 in *The Forum*, a Johannesburg magazine. She notes that, over the years, her work on short stories has been influenced by many great short-story writers. Some of the main influences on her work involve Pauline Smith and Katherine Mansfield, who taught her how interesting a source of adventure and insight her 'colonial' experience might be. Other writers to whom she was indebted were D.H. Lawrence, who changed her way of looking at the natural world and Henry James, who made her aware of the importance of the specific use of language that distinguished the story from the novel. From Hemingway she learned to leave things out and pay attention to the hidden meaning in dialogue. Later in her writing she was influenced by E. M. Forster, Joseph Conrad, Camus and two South African writers, Uys Krige and William Plomer.

When talking about the short story in general, one of the most obvious characteristics that distinguishes it from the novel is its brevity. However, length is a highly elusive feature, since it is not determined how long a story must be to fall into this fictional category: can it be comprised of a single sentence, and is it too long for a short story to extend over a hundred pages? Most critics, thus, agree, that is not the length, but the coherence and the effect that the text produces upon a reader that will determine its category. According to Suzanne C. Ferguson (Church 1982: 14), although the formal characteristics of both the modern story and the modern novel are the same:

limited point of view, emphasis on inner experience, deletion or transformation of several elements of the traditional plot, reliance on metaphor and metonymy in the presentation of events, rejection of chronological time ordering and formal and stylistic economy, the best short stories, unlike novels, give us a sense of the inevitability of each sentence and persuade us that they are as complete as possible, that any addition or deletion would destroy their aesthetic wholeness.

Gordimer, accordingly, believes that it is “approach and method” (Huggan 1976: 62), and not some other formal feature, that distinguishes the short story from the longer forms. In novels, a great amount of text is dedicated to the description of place and to detailed character development. The story, however, must not focus on the “life-likeness” (Lohafer 1983: 25), as pointed out by William H. Gass, but seek to express “a moment of truth” (Huggan 1976: 62) compared by Gordimer to *the fire of fireflies*. She, therefore, believes that the story, although more limited in length and more fragmented, is better equipped to reflect the reality of human existence, because it does not give its readers descriptive details that can, by means of misrepresentation, only lead them to false assumptions, but attempts to give them an insight into something different from that denoted by the very words of the text.

However, some critics believe that the story is more self-referential than the novel, since it is, because of its use of figurative language, fragmentation and ellipsis, from the linguistic point of view, much closer and more similar to poetry than to longer fictional forms. Therefore, according to them, what the reader can see on paper is what he has to rely on, and grasp the effect, atmosphere and feeling of that particular composition of words and sentences, in which nothing is superficial, rather than transfer it to that which is outside the story. This essay will not state quite the opposite, but it seems that, at least with regard to Nadine Gordimer’s short stories, what is written on paper is not exactly what the author wants her reader to conceive. Like in Hemingway’s *Hills Like White Elephants*, in which the two characters, a young woman and a much older American man, are discussing the landscape they are looking at, while actually talking about the girl’s impending abortion without ever even mentioning the word, the meaning and essence of most Gordimer’s stories is concealed between the lines, and the ending is almost always open. What fascinates the reader is that, although being simple on the surface level, the stories reveal a ‘submerged’ world of added meaning.

In Gordimer’s short fiction, the hidden meaning that reaches far beyond her words has a very specific function: it allows the not easily comprehensible truth about people’s suppressed lives, dreams and wishes and about the nation’s unspoken of consciousness and realities to come to the surface and be understood by her audience. This, of course, requires a very active involvement and close reading of her stories. This profound quality of her work might be one of the reasons the Nobel committee regarded her as one of the authors who made a great contribution to humanity. Gordimer achieves

this by using a number of short story techniques one of which is, most certainly, ellipsis, or intentional omission of certain parts of the text, so that the reader gets the impression he has to fill numerous gaps as he advances through the story. Secondly, the author uses the metaphor and symbols, but not as much in the traditional sense of these words, since her symbols are not taken from a body of well established conventions, but are derived from the very context of her fiction. Finally, while keeping her audience interested and alert throughout the story, she most commonly chooses either some sort of epiphany or an unfinished paragraph to end her writing. This urges the reader to think about what actually happened beneath the words that have just been read, what could have happened, or what might happen in the future. Gordimer's specific use of language suppresses the plot to some extent, or makes it less important, but leaves space for numerous alternative plots which are left for the reader to conceive. This gives her work profundity and complexity which would otherwise be extremely hard to achieve.

Of the several stories from *Jump* which exemplify Gordimer's use of ellipsis, as a technique which seems to direct the reader towards the hidden meaning the author wishes to convey, one story in particular is the most effective. In *The Moment Before the Gun Went Off*, Gordimer brings together two situations which are typical of South Africa: the shooting of a black labourer on a conservative white farm, and the discovery that a white Afrikaner political leader, with high social status and connections, has 'illegitimate' black offspring. In this story Marais van der Vyfer is grief-stricken when he accidentally shoots dead his trusted black 'friend' and servant, Lucas, on a hunting trip. However, Lucas also turns out to be Marais' son. The reader only finds out about their actual relatedness in the very last sentence of the story which is preceded by a short funeral scene in which, again only in a single sentence, the writer gives an extremely vague clue with regard to the existence of some sort of relationship between the deceased boy's mother and Marais:

The dead man's mother and he stare at the grave in communication like that between the black man outside and the white man inside the cab the moment before the gun went off (Gordimer 1992: 116).

Throughout the story, the writer gives a more or less detailed account of Marais and Lucas' hunting trip and describes how the fatal accident happened, but not in a single sentence does she write about that which actually occupies the reader's mind at the end of the story: what sort of relationship was

there between Marias and the boy's mother, was it a long-lasting love affair or another incident of a white master-black female servant forced sex, what were the political and social implications of this interracial sexual relationship, how did Marias really feel about his son living in a shed in his yard as his servant, how did this affect Marias' family life, was his wife able to understand his grief? Stories that come to mind after the story is read are much more fascinating and complex than the very text that surfaces on paper. The word 'communication', for example, triggers particular interest. What was the nature of the communication between the father and son 'the moment before the gun went off' is a piece of information simply omitted by the author, and, therefore, left to the reader to think about it more thoroughly than he would, if he had been given the actual facts. The reader is, by these means, himself involved in the creation of art, and feels privileged. This quality of the story not only enriches him with knowledge, but makes him mature while reading, urging him to assume 'that which isn't, but could be.' Triggered into browsing the numerous alternatives to the story, the reader must be overwhelmed by the richness of this work of short fiction.

When talking about the necessity of the use of ellipses and about 'the power words hold' (Hanson 1989: 24) in the short story because of the length limit that acts as a frame imposed upon the genre, Clare Hanson (1989: 25) notes in *Things out of Words: Towards a Poetics of Short Fiction* that:

The frame acts as an aesthetic device, permitting ellipses (gaps and absences) and 'literary' language to remain in a story, which retains a necessary air of completeness and order because of the very existence of the frame.

To demonstrate how Gordimer's metaphors and symbols emerge directly from the context of her stories, and how she achieves polyvalence, which is one of the main characteristics of the short story that enables it to be fitted within a frame in the first place, this essay will examine the motif of the titular story in *Jump*. In this story, the protagonist's initiation into parachute-jumping in late adolescence is a metonym for his passage into manhood-a passage into violence and killing. The story's end brings back the jump motif. Making a rare trip to the window, the man sees what he cannot bear to see, the mutilation he once fostered:

the orphaned children running in packs round the rubbish dumps, the men without ears and women with a stump where there was an arm... Jump... Not now; not yet (20).

Manhood presented as courage, resonant in the word 'jump' throughout the story, has given way to the will to commit suicide. As in the case of jump which signifies domination giving way to self-disgust, a mere word in a story may often in Gordimer's stories be enough to signal a shift in power relations of some kind: between antagonists, sexual or political, or between what those antagonists stand for.

As in many other stories, the open-ended quality of the titular story leaves the reader in a dilemma as to whether the protagonist will eventually commit suicide, or continue to be the revolutionaries' informer and go through the same unbearably horrifying incidents of his past over and over again. Diverting her form and style from the traditional pattern of conflict and resolution, Gordimer rarely 'closes' her stories, by which she follows the concept characteristic for the modern story writers, such as Joyce, whose stories are seen as 'unplotted' and 'open' (Lohafer 1983: 82) in their nature. As Susan Lohafer further observes, the function of closure in the short story is to 'define its rhythm and make the reader end-conscious,' (Lohafer 1983: 94) which will make him curious about the closure of the story, and make the reading experience more interesting and pleasurable.

Gordimer insists that part of 'writing well' (Diala 2004: 5) is the ability to adapt one's forms-not for the sake of mere experimentalism, but so as to suit the demands of one's ideas. Keeping in mind the demanding and fluctuating politics of South Africa in the late 1980s and early 1990s, where the white minority had been ruling over the black majority for years, until Nelson Mandela's place in the country's history changed the situation for good-Gordimer has chosen to extend and diversify her use of the short story form. There are several notable formal changes in *Jump* which seem to reflect the quick changes in the country's fast changing political situation. First, shifts in tense and temporal dislocations are more frequent and a linear chronology in time now rarely appears to be the pattern of her narratives. She has used such temporal dislocations in her novels before, in *The Pickup* and *My Son's Story* for example, but not as extensively as in her short fiction. Examples in this anthology of stories where various time-schemes alternate with one another are *Jump*, *Amnesty* and *My Father Leaves Home*, to name just a few. The effect of interchanging narrative present with narrative past in all these stories is to suggest the intimate interconnectedness of history with the present.

Gordimer refuses to use a singular narrative viewpoint within individual stories. Numerous stories incorporate shifts in perspective: from first-person to third-person narration, or from one first-person voice to another. This technique emphasizes the relativity and multiplicity of 'truth' and vision, an aspect of her fiction that is highly appropriate to the complex historical content of the 1990s. Stories in which various viewpoints and perceptions are juxtaposed against each other to produce a very strong effect are *Journey*, *Spoils*, *What Were You Dreaming?*, *Teraloyna*, *Once Upon a Time* and *My Father Leaves Home*. In all of these stories, figures viewed as he/she/they through the more distant lens of history/someone else/the author, are then given the intimate chance of speaking as an 'I' - a fact which greatly contributes to complexity of each narrative. Not only does this technique contribute to its complexity, but it also adds to the subjectivity of the narrative, that is, again, seen as one of more modern qualities of fiction.

Furthermore, in this anthology, the author's own storytelling presence in the text can be felt in the majority of stories, which is in opposition to the traditional technique of controlled, detached 'omniscient' narration. Gordimer often points to the fabricated nature of the text in front of the reader, so as to highlight the numerous other fabrications that could have occurred, as in *A Journey*:

I don't know where they had been, why they had gone...I only know this was [the baby's] first journey. I continued mine; they have disappeared. They exist only in the alternate lives I invent (142).

In the same story Gordimer even invents herself as a peripheral character in the narrative, seen through the eyes of a thirteen-year-old boy:

The seat across the aisle was vacant, only a lady with grey hair in the window seat. We didn't speak to her (149).

What is interesting to note is that Gordimer uses the same words, namely 'the lady with grey hair', to describe her appearance in *What Were You Dreaming?*. Therefore, the author partially removes herself from the text as the central or authoritative source of knowledge. By demonstrating the inevitable limits of seeing and telling in the stories in *Jump*, Gordimer attempts to recognize the difficulties and partialities of representation.

In *Jump* Gordimer uses in the number of stories a black first-person narrator and takes a further step into speaking of/for the Other by making some

of these narrators children. Her method of attempting to depict the viewpoint of such characters is to keep her language consistently simple. At times this leads to a moving effect and is appropriate to the solemnity of the subject matter, as in *The Ultimate Safari*:

Our grandfather, walking a little behind some young men, went to look for our mother but didn't find her. Our grandmother cried with other women and I sang the hymns with them. They brought a little food - some beans - but after two days there was nothing again (35).

However, at times this method makes an effect of not so much simplicity, as if the author has forgotten to put energy of inferiority into the voice which speaks. There are several instances where her language is flat and unconvincing, as in *Amnesty* where the black rural woman waits for her absent man:

I am up with the clouds. The sun behind me is changing the colours of the sky and the clouds are changing themselves... There's a huge grey rat moving across the sky, eating the sky. I'm watching the rat... eating the sky, and I'm waiting. Waiting for him to come back (257).

Naming, describing and speaking for illiterate black people seems to be challenging for Gordimer at times, as if her background is proving to be a limiting factor at depicting a different class and culture.

### **3. Conclusion**

To summarize what has been discussed in this section of the essay, Gordimer's short fiction is characterized by a dense and intense linguistic expression, resulting in a variety of profoundly covered themes. Apart from using figurative language, lyric imagery and ellipses, and choosing to leave her stories open-ended, or rather epiphanic in nature, in order to achieve this sort of density of meaning, she also utilizes a number of modern short story techniques such as locational and temporal shifts, frequent changes of the narrative viewpoint and author dethronement. Therefore, her stories make a very strong impression upon the reader, making him think about the text long after the actual reading of the stories has taken place, rendering him restless and sleepless, for her ability to reach the depths of human personality and to expose people's hidden feelings that they dare not face give Gordimer's fiction richness and appeal rarely met elsewhere in literature.

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**“WHAT HAPPENED TO THE TRUTH IS NOT RECORDED”:  
NARRATION AND FOCALIZATION IN JULIAN BARNES’S *TALKING  
IT OVER***

**NINA MUŽDEKA**  
University of Novi Sad

**Abstract:** The absence of any type of overt narrator from Barnes’s 1990 novel *Talking It Over* entails the prominence of the protagonists’ subjective accounts of the events they all participated in. This paper explores the basic elements of narration and focalization as well as the implications of the chosen narrative technique in terms of diegesis and the position and the role of the reader, as well as the implications of the ideological framework underlying the textual and structural ones.

**Keywords:** focalization, Julian Barnes, narration, postmodernism, *Talking It Over*.

## **1. Introduction**

Upon its appearance, Julian Barnes’s 1991 novel *Talking It Over* did not quite re-ignite the some time ongoing debate on the controversy of generic classification of Barnes’s novels as much as draw attention to the narrative strategies deployed in the writing of the novel. The particular narrative approach in question serves to support the claim that Barnes’ novels exhibit a unique manner of intertwining the two levels of novel – the level of the technique and the level of the content supported and exhibited through this particular technique – thus technically re-enforcing and multiplying the message introduced on the textual level.

At the first look, the novel appears to be a fairly simple story on the ever present and ever interesting topic of a standard love triangle, constituted of one woman and two men who, understandably, happen to be the best of friends. However, soon enough the aforementioned simplicity and plainness start to fade away, making room for the confronting of the stories and case-study analysis of the events past and recent, retold from multiple perspectives. ‘Who did what to whom’, the element of the story, all the participants unanimously agree upon, appears to be straight enough: Stuart, a blunt, dullish and fairly successful epitome of a banker, meets Gillian, a beautiful art restorer, they fall in love and get married. Stuart’s best friend Oliver, a flamboyant and erudite teacher of English as a foreign language, falls in love with Gillian too, no less than on her wedding day precisely, and decides to court her and win her over. Things seem to be quite clear, at least in the way Oliver sees them: ‘What has to

happen is this. Gillian has to realise she loves me. Stuart has to step down. Oliver has to step up' (Barnes 1991: 75). And this precisely is the way it happens. After Oliver's relentless courting, implicit heavy soul-searching on the part of Gillian and Stuart's complete ignorance of the events that are going on behind his back, the reversal of the roles ensues: Stuart and Gillian get divorced, Oliver and Gillian get married.

What 'opens' the novel even before the official introduction to the story and the characters is the epigraph Barnes chose as a sort of an underlying leitmotif that will recurrently resurface and continue to echo in the mind of the readers throughout the depiction of the events of the novel. The Russian saying "He lies like an eye-witness" hints at the core of the problem the characters and the readers are faced with: although all the characters participate in the same set of events, their views and therefore interpretations of those events differ to a greater or smaller degree, signalling the typical postmodernist questioning of the notion of Truth.

## **2. Narration (*Who speaks?*)**

When it comes to the matter of narration in the novel, elicited by asking the question 'Who speaks?', it is obvious that *Talking It Over* lacks the single voice of a narrator, be it an omniscient or engaged one, who could function as a sort of mediator between the story, on one hand, and the readers, on the other. Instead, both the novel and the readers are left without this useful narrative convention, devoid of this presumed 'master puppeteer' and left with no one 'in between', hence forced to face the characters and the story on their own. The characters, thus, speak *directly* to the readers, while the whole text of the novel resembles a script or a drama. No one introduces us to the story, no one leads us away from it and back to our shared reality; narrators, if this term may at all be applied, are at the same time the characters in the story, thus equating, to use Jahn's narratological terms, the 'narrating I' with the 'experiencing I' (Jahn 2005: 35).

It soon becomes evident that the triangular form applies not only to the relations established among the three main participants in the novel's events (i.e. the love triangle), but also to the structure of the narrative itself. The structure of a triptych appears to be a very convenient and frequent mode of organizing the text in Barnes' novels, such as *Metroland* (1981) or *England, England* (1998). Although the three-partite structure is retained in this novel as well, it is not applied to the conventional level of the text that is separated into

three parts, organized in the appropriate positional and temporal sequence, as in *Metroland* (Part One, Metroland, 1963; Part Two, Paris, 1968; Part Three, Metroland II, 1977) or *England, England* (whose middle section is itself organized in three subsections). Instead, the three-part structure is found on the less conventional level of the dominant narrative voices. With no designated official narrator, it is left to the three prominent characters to present the story and their voices turn into the focal point of the novel.

The reality established in the novel rounds up not only the three main characters, however. It includes some minor characters as well, such as Mme Wyatt, Gillian's mother, or Val, a girl from Stuart's and Oliver's past, who serve to provide some additional insight into the events of the novel. But the characters form just one side of the relationship existing in the undertext of the novel, which needs, in order to be completed, the figure of the listener who actually never speaks openly in the novel, but whose implicit reactions to the characters' stories and the implied questions that he/ she poses determine the flow of these confessions. The protagonists are not talking things over with one another; they are doing so with the listener. The establishing of such a relationship between the reader and the characters leads to an interactive narrative situation, thus contributing to the proper understanding of the novel's title.

The basic unit of the text organization, therefore, is not the chapter but a narrative segment 'told' by a certain character at a certain moment. Writing in a series of such segments builds up a novel constituted as a series of monologues, whose length varies depending on the situation and the character's willingness to share his/her personal moments with the reader. Although Gillian, for example, appears extremely reluctant to share her personal life with the reader ("Gillian: Look, I just don't particularly think it's anyone's business. I really don't. I'm an ordinary, private person. I haven't got anything to say", 7), soon enough even she is enticed to provide her own angle to this triangular modelling of their shared life.

In this specific narrative situation, the attitude of the characters towards the reader is varied. It can be argued with certainty that the characters are well aware of the reader's presence, but this presence is not limited to an imaginary *textual* situation. Instead, it appears that the reader and the characters are present at the same place at the same time, *sharing* the same reality, within the boundaries of which the reader functions as a silent listener, a narrative audience ("Oliver: Stuart... No, wait a minute. You've been talking to him,

haven't you? You've been talking to Stuart", 11). On the other hand, the implied reader might not be that silent after all; it might be argued that he/ she is in turn *interviewing* all the characters about the events that took place ("Oliver: Have a cigarette? You don't? I know you don't – you've told me that before", 72). From this, another possible interpretation of the narrative situation might be derived, determining it not as a series of *monologues* but as a particular form of a *dialogue*. It should not be neglected, however, that the 'other side' in this dialogue is never voiced and that the reactions of this implied 'presence' are known only because they are repeated by the main characters ("... (female, between 25 and 35): What? What did you say? You want my credentials? ... You'd *believe* me more?", 173).

Through their account, the characters are not merely presenting their version of events, expecting nothing from the reader in return. The narrative situation is not neutral in this respect, nor is the reader as the implicit element of the situation expected to remain neutral. Each of the characters is aware that the others are also talking things over with the reader. The characters are appealing to the reader for help, sympathy, understanding; they are battling over his/ her support, cooperation, collaboration even.

Gillian: What should I do? (143).

Stuart: Of course, *you* know if they're really fucking, don't you? *You* know. So tell me. Go on, tell me (156).

Oliver: Oh, *please* take that disapproving look off your face. Put yourself in my *pantoufles* (131).

In order to present themselves in a particular way or to convey a desired message, the attitude of the characters must be such that they are trying to contest one another, to argue among themselves, even to blatantly compete for their goals in the attempt to win the reader over, to assure the much needed approval or support.

Stuart: ... You'll be a witness to that, won't you?

Gillian: Now listen to me. To *me*.

Oliver: She *what?* She said *that?* It's outrageous, ... (176).

The attitude towards the story, on the other hand, appears to be shared by all the participants in the events and serves as a literary summing-up of the narrative situation imposed on both the characters and the reader:

Oliver: We're stuck with it. ... We're stuck in this car on this motorway, and someone (the driver! – me!) has leant the elbow on the button of the central locking system. So the three of us are in here till it's resolved. *You're* in here too! Sorry, I've clunked the doors, you can't get out, we're all in this together (76).

While this conversational story-telling situation consisting of the first-person narratives with such appellative elements might be interpreted in terms of the *skaz* narrative, the question of the identity of this tacit addressee, however, remains open: can it be that the listener is anyone of the potential readers, or are they actually addressing one particular listener, the author, who will, in his turn, transform this talking-over into a proper novel?

### 3. Focalization (*Who Sees?*)

As opposed to the question that opens the previous section ('Who speaks?'), the answer to the question of 'Who sees?' provides us with the focalization as "the angle via which things are seen in the narrative world" (Hessami 2008: 12). According to Jahn (Hessami 2008: 12), focalization offers means of selecting and restricting narrative information, of seeing events and states of affairs from somebody's point of view. The point of view in question in this novel belongs primarily to the three main voices, that is to say, the three main characters. Since there is no single narrator, the focalizer as the character through whose eyes the events are seen is not a constant one; such change of perspective implies the shifting focalizer.

As a result of this, the version of events the reader is faced with cannot be one official version agreed upon by all the participants. On the contrary, the poetics of postmodernism is invoked precisely through this topic of the plurality of truths and multiplicity of versions. For example, for Stuart on his wedding day "the ring I'd bought was placed on a plum-coloured cushion made of velvet" (6), for Gillian on the same day her wedding ring was "sitting on a fat burgundy cushion" (7), while for the final element of this triangle, Oliver, "the ring glittered on its damson *pouffe* like some intra-uterine device" (10). While the very choice of words and images obviously reflects the nature of each one of the protagonists, focalization here completes the circle in its finding of the common ground with the means of characterization.

The absence of a unique narrative voice in this case entails the presence of many characterial voices within the very text and belonging to the established narrative situation, making theoretical distinction between 'internal' and 'external' focalizers not applicable in its strictest sense. According to

Manfred Jahn (Jahn 2005: 33), external focaliers are usually defined as narrators of the given story ('narrator-focalizers'), whereas internal focalizers typically present characters ('focal characters'). It might be argued, in relation to this novel, that the characters are at the same time narrators, or otherwise that there is no narration in the traditional sense.

In any case, intra-textual voices, resounding throughout the novel, make up the polyphonic text with multiple focalization, meaning that the same episodes from the lives of characters are presented repeatedly, but each time through the eyes of a different focalizer (as illustrated by the episode with the wedding ring, for example). Since the experience presented in this way does not transcend the focalizer's knowledge of the situation, or the boundaries imposed on the focalizer by his/her perception and point of view, it might be argued that the pattern of focalization in this novel is consistent with the one of multiple internal focalization.

#### 4. Conclusion

Finally, it would only be fair to ask the question of the motivation and purpose of multiple focalization deployed in this novel. And it is precisely here that one must go back to the epigraph of the novel and once again reach the full circle. They are all eyewitness to their own lives, to the shared episodes, and they are all lying about it. Or, as Oliver in particular clearly admits, "I don't remember. I won't remember. Memory is an act of will, and so is forgetting" (9).

After all, it might not be about different characters' view of the same events, but about each character telling us only what they *choose* to tell. The old Russian saying now brings to light the caution with which one must approach the protagonists and their respective accounts. It might not be the matter of *interpreting* the same events differently, but consciously *creating* different versions of events. And with such a caution in mind, from the sum of Barnes's writings echoes one particular sentence, the leitmotif repeated throughout his controversial 1984 novel, *Flaubert's Parrot: What happened to the truth is not recorded*.

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## BYRON'S DON JUAN: VICTIM OR VICTIMIZER?

DAN NEGRUȚ  
University of Oradea

*Abstract: The present paper aims at analyzing Byron's character Don Juan from a biographical, Christian and psychoanalytical perspective, considering him to be the victim of social circumstances, personal complexes, family background and predatory female characters, and not the traditional victimizer or the ruthless seducer.*

*Keywords: abuse, Don Juan, seduction, victim, victimizer.*

*"I have no further claim on your young heart."  
Dona Julia to Don Juan, (Don Juan, I. CXCII).*

### 1. Introduction

Traditionally, Tirso de Molina's Don Juan means an irresponsible and irresistible lover, who brings the promise of momentary happiness and his vitality, his arrogant courage, and his sense of humour heighten the dramatic value of the catastrophe.

This fictitious character has become the symbol of libertinism and seems to be irritating only the men, because, through his frivolousness he destroys all the lies men tell about fidelity. Don Juan encounters willing victims who fall prey not to him, but to their own dreams, hopes and expectations. Each woman Don Juan encounters hopes to tame him and be able to give him what no other woman was able to offer before her. Without exception, they end up disappointed, as they had unconsciously expected from the very beginning. Don Juan offers a momentary happiness, consumes a moment of pure love, and then disappears.

The traditional Don Juan is the ultimate emotional vampire, feeding on the illusions and emotions of the women he deceives. Don Juan seeks pleasure, totally disregards the codes imposed by religion, God or society and perceives women as passive and subservient objects. He is the perfect misogynist and his techniques of seduction need only physical acceptance, while the whole process of misleading demonstrates a total disrespect for women. Don Juan believes in sin, God, damnation, and in God's infinite mercy. Tirso de Molina's character represents a heresy that is meant to test the limits of God's mercy: if God's



mercy is infinite, damnation becomes impossible. Don Juan never thinks about death, punishment or afterlife, and this “freedom of mind” gives him liberty of action and courage. Don Juan is simply not aware of fear.

Don Juan practises this type of existence-as-seduction, for ever starting from the beginning, rejecting two great things: loyalty and death. Don Juan proves to be superior in controlling himself and his feelings. He seduces but never falls in love, thus demonstrating the victory of the lucid mind over the body. Don Juan reinvents love and seduction with every woman he conquers, remaining cold and calculated, a victim of his own passion for life and fear of death. He experiences a double pleasure both exhibitionist and voyeuristic, passing through his life and through the lives of the unhappy women, never being able to stop and rest, in an eternal search of himself.

## **2. Don Juan – “A work never intended to be serious”**

### **2.1. Starting Point**

*Don Juan* is a poem that translates personal life into fiction, baffling the reader into continuous questioning which is which. His biography, the events and circumstances in Byron’s life, his loves, hates, sexual relationships, friendships, journeys and opinions are all integral parts to the poem, forcing us to constantly remember personal details about Byron’s life. As Truman Guy Steffan (1957: 7) states:

the impulses that started Byron on *Don Juan* came from many sources: temperament, reading, personal circumstance, his past and present social environment and what he thought and felt about them.

Byron started writing *Don Juan* without a plan, without a clear intention with regard to the total number of the cantos he was going to write, but having his genius, a lot of material and, as he confessed in 1821 in a letter to John Murray, the best source of inspiration: “real life, either my own or from people I know”.

### **2.2. Dona Inez – The First Victimizer**

Don Juan is raised solely by his mother and benefits from a totally *desexualizing education* from expurgated editions, meant to neutralize all the bodily impulses of the young male; an education that offers no answers to his ontological questions when he needs them.

But that which *Donna Inez* most desired, (...)  
Was, *that his breeding should be strictly moral*; (...)  
Arts, sciences, no branch was made a mystery  
To Juan's eyes, *excepting natural history*. (...)  
But not a page of any thing that's loose,  
Or *hints continuation of the species*,  
*Was ever suffer'd, lest he should grow vicious*. (*Don Juan*, I. XXXIX, XL).

His mother believes that this type of education will lead to a total *mortification* of her son's natural desires and will turn him into a respectable young man who will make her proud. But unconsciously and unwillingly Don Juan will provide her and everybody else with a great surprise.

Kierkegaard mentions in his book *Either/ Or* that Byron was the most appropriate poet to present Don Juan because he dared to bring Don Juan into existence for us, to give us details of his childhood and youth and reconstruct him from a context of finite life circumstances. As a result Don Juan became a reflective personality who loses the ideality that characterises him in the traditional conception. By giving Don Juan a childhood and history Byron destroys the myth and the archetypal power of his character. An archetype acts driven by the energy it represents, and is not able to reflect on the consequences, because reflection involves a dialogue between different parts of the personality. Byron deconstructs the archetypal character of Don Juan by presenting him as a reflective, multidimensional character.

### **2.3. Don Juan – Dona Julia, or the Abused Seducer**

Regardless of the strict education that he receives and severe rules that he has to obey, his mother cannot destroy his natural spirit, nor can she tame his wild side.

Don Juan's true nature starts surfacing at the age of 16 when unconsciously he feels strangely attracted to his mother's young friend, the beautiful 23-year old Dona Julia, married to the 50-year old Don Alfonso. Byron also provides us with indelicate details about a possible intimate relationship that had taken place between Don Alfonso and Dona Inez:

Some people whisper (...)  
That Inez had, ere Don Alfonso's marriage,  
*Forgot with him her very prudent carriage*; (*Don Juan*, I, LXVI).

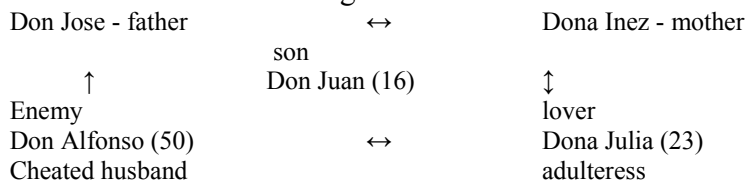
Regardless of the fact that the young Don Juan desperately tries to find answers in nature and philosophy for the strange feelings that he has for Dona Julia, and despite her noblest efforts to maintain respectability and her virtue as a married woman, the two of them fall completely in love and start an affair that ends tragically. The jealous husband suspects his wife and one night, after a ridiculous scene in which he is scolded by his wife for having suspected her of infidelity, finds the young lover in her bedroom and public scandal is inevitable. The young Don Juan is sent by his mother:

To mend his former morals, and get new,  
Especially in France and Italy (*Don Juan*, I, CXCI)

and Dona Julia is sent to a convent wherefrom she sends Don Juan a tearful letter in which she more or less accuses him of her fall.

### 2.3.1. The Biographical Perspective

Let us consider the following scheme:



Let us interpret the scheme from a biographical perspective:

- Don Juan's character could be a direct personification of Byron himself who has grown older and wiser than his young subject, a supposition which is reinforced by the episode in which Dona Inez brings doctors to prove that Don Jose is mad.
- the figure of the adventurous and indiscreet Don Jose could very well be Byron's unconscious attack at his father, the profligate Captain John "Mad Jack" Byron, also famous for his affairs.
- The cold philosopher and mathematician Dona Inez is clearly an attack directed against his pious and balanced wife (The Princess of Parallelograms) Anne Isabelle Milbanke.
- The cold philosopher and mathematician Dona Inez could very well be just a literary attack (conscious or unconscious) directed against his mother, Catherine Gordon of Gight, who was also famous for her mood swings and bouts of melancholy.

- The beautiful 23 year old Dona Julia could be a literary projection of Countess Teresa Guiccioli – 19 years old married to a man almost three times her age, who had been previously married twice and was suspected of having poisoned at least one of his former spouses.
- The 23 year old Dona Julia could very well be a literary projection of his half sister Augusta Leigh (also some years his senior, just like Dona Julia is older than Don Juan), whom with he formed a close relationship that has been interpreted as incestuous by some, and as innocent by others.
- Dona Julia could be an unconscious literary projection of May Grey, although Dona Julia is not as vicious as May Grey.
- Don Alfonso – could very well stand for Count Guiccioli.  
Consciously or unconsciously, Byron might have been influenced by details in his personal life when he wrote the poem.

### **2.3.2. The Christian Perspective**

If we analyse the same scheme from a Biblical perspective, bearing in mind the primordial Fall from Innocence, we might say, in perfect accord with George M. Ridenour (1960) that Canto I deals with Don Juan's fall from sexual innocence. Although it is morally condemnable, Don Juan's first seduction (?) marks a clear development in his evolution from childhood to maturity. The first fall has several consequences: the adulteress is punished; the young lover who has been raised in a sterile world of philosophy now returns to the Natural World. Byron's first fall is a descent from a psychologically unknown region into the Natural World.

As McGann (1976: 143-45) states:

What is lost in the first fall is a sense of security, peace, and coherence between one's inner life and its actual circumstances. Juan suffers the fall in his encounter with Julia, which results in his exile from Spain and his enforced encounter with a world of trying experiences. Thus, in Canto 1, puberty becomes Byron's analytic joke for revealing the human meaning of the first fall, a meaning which has always been sublimated by the religious myths of biblical tradition.

Canto I portrays the encounter between an innocent, sexually inactive Adam - the 16-year old Don Juan desperately seeking answers in philosophy, poetry and nature for the unknown impulses that are tormenting him – and the more mature, sexually active and experienced Eve – the 23-year old Dona Julia

who is married to a man of fifty although “*T were better to have two of five-and-twenty* and she would have preferred a “*spouse whose age is short of thirty.*”

In Canto I we deal with the *seduced seducer*: whereas Donny Johnny does not know what ails him and cannot find an answer because he does not know the right question, Dona Julia vacillates between morality, responsibility and adultery, between private satisfaction and public humiliation. Don Juan does not know what sex is, first of all because of the way in which he was educated by his mother, whereas Dona Julia knows exactly what this romantic infatuation will lead to and makes a conscious choice. In terms of victims and victimizers, Don Juan is actually victimized by an older predatory woman, yet he is not completely innocent, as he plays the role of the willing victim.

### **2.3.3. The Psychoanalytical Perspective – the Oedipus Complex**

According to psychoanalytic theory, the Oedipus complex is a group of largely unconscious (dynamically repressed) ideas and feelings which centre on the desire to establish a relationship (possess) the parent of the opposite sex and eliminate the parent of the same sex. According to Freud, the Oedipus complex is a universal phenomenon, built in phylogenetically, and is responsible for much unconscious guilt because, he says, there is a sense of identification in his destiny.

Let us suppose only for a moment that the young Don Juan undergoes Oedipal fantasies and feels fatally attracted to his mother.

- the father would then obviously step in as an *obstacle* in Don Juan’s establishing a relationship with his mother, a relationship that is first of all taboo, secondly, morally, socially and religiously inconceivable. Luckily for Don Juan, his father’s demise should be enough to provide the young male with a perfectly acceptable solution. Apparently, after his father’s death, there is nothing to prevent him from solving his personal dilemma.
- Don Alfonso takes on a double quality: 1. taking into account the fact that Byron indelicately points that Don Alfonso and Dona Inez (have) had an intimate relationship, there is a very good chance for Don Alfonso to be Don Juan’s *actual father*. 2. Being old enough (50) Don Alfonso doubles as a *father figure* to both Juan and Julia, making the *incest implication* obvious (brother-sister)

- Dona Julia also steps in with a double quality: 1. given the fact that she is best friends with Don Juan's mother, she might be interpreted as a possible *surrogate mother figure*. 2. taking into account the fact that she is closer to him in terms of age (23 to 16), Dona Julia might be perceived as an *older sister figure* (Augusta Leigh), contributing to the incest implication.

If, because of his relationship with Dona Inez, Don Alfonso falls in as *substitute father figure*, then Dona Julia acquires the qualities of a possible *substitute mother figure* with whom a taboo incest relationship is not only desirable, but also possible and socially acceptable. Consequently the duel that takes place between Don Alfonso and Don Juan is only a re-enactment of the Oedipal conflict between father and son for the affection of the mother.

#### **2.4. Don Juan – Haidee, or The Punishment of Love**

Here we will refer to the most beautiful episode in the narrative of *Don Juan*, the truly romantic idyll between Don Juan and Haidee. According to <http://www.behindthename.com/name/haidee>, the name Haidee was perhaps intended to derive from Greek αἰδοῖος (*aidoios*) "modest, reverent". Everything is in their favour from the very beginning. Don Juan comes from death, comes out of the sea as a young god of love whose sins have been washed away by the sea water, to be expected on the shore by the Haidee, the beautiful noble savage, waiting for him as a priestess awaits her god. The island is paradisiacal, away from the false sophistication of civilization; they are young and pure and their love is natural, being based on pure attraction, not on words, as they do not speak each other's language. The young nobleman and the pure child of Nature reiterate the Edenic couple, through the purity of their primordial love. Although Byron declared that he would not add anything romantic in his description of Haidee, her portrait, uncorrupted by society's hypocrisy, is highly symbolical of the poet's aspirations for purity. Away from people and the conventions of society, Don Juan and Haidee live the purest kind of love Byron ever depicted in his work. The Don Juan-Haidee episode is the only true romantic episode in the poem. But, regardless of the innocence and purity of his love for Haidee, Don Juan is actually the young amoral male, a thief of love, social rank and wealth, who brings chaos in Lambro's family and house. Lambro, Haidee's father, returns home only to find out that Haidee, the person whom he loves the most in the world and whom he sacrifices everything for, lives in sin with a young intruder. Much to his surprise, Lambro finds out that

he has been replaced not only in terms of affection in his daughter's heart (Haidee now loves somebody else), but also in social terms, by the new male:

"Our mistress!" quoth a third: "Our mistress! - pooh! -  
You mean our master -- not the old, but new" (*Don Juan*, III, XLIII).

Lambro now steps in as the figure of the experienced father, the punisher, symbolizing the law of the people. He is the one who must bring back order and morality on the island, at the same time punishing the intruder. The Don Juan-Haidee episode is the only true romantic episode in the poem but it is also the only affair that ends tragically: Haidee and their unborn baby die,

She died, but not alone; she held within  
A second principle of life, which might  
Have dawn'd a fair and sinless child of sin; (*Don Juan*, IV, LXX)

and Don Juan is sent to be sold into slavery.

## **2.5. Don Juan – Gulbeyaz, or The Manly Woman and the Womanly Man**

The true victimization of the demonic sensualist appears in Canto the fifth, in which Don Juan undergoes his oriental adventure in the seraglio, obviously a satirical pastiche of the numerous adventures described in picturesque details by Byron himself in his Oriental tales. Although the process of victimization started a long time ago, it is reinforced now first of all by the fact that the "greatest lover of all times" *now lies in chains* in a slave market in Constantinople, waiting to be bought. Don Juan, the innocent adventurer, the constantly surprised victim of female aggressiveness, deconstructs the legend of the illustrious seducer whom Byron reduces to his right proportions. Don Juan is bought by Baba, *a black old neutral personage of the third sex* (*Don Juan*, V, XXVI), brought to the Sultan's palace and forced to dress as a lady. The moment he refuses, he is threatened with *castration*

"What, sir!" said Juan, "shall it e'er be told  
That I unsex'd my dress?" But Baba, stroking  
The things down, said, "Incense me, and I call  
Those who will leave you of no sex at all" (*Don Juan*, V, LXXV).

Through this travesty, Don Juan enters the sphere of the fourth sex; anatomically, he does not belong to the female sex; physically, he is femininely

arrayed, so he does not belong to the male sex; he is not a eunuch, hence he does not belong to the third sex. The next step in the process of victimization appears when Baba prompts Don Juan to behave more femininely, telling him that

And you and I may chance, ere morning rise,  
To find our way to Marmora without boats,  
Stitch'd up in sacks -- a mode of navigation  
A good deal practised here upon occasion (*Don Juan*, V, XCII).

Don Juan is brought before the Sultana Gulbeyaz, one of the best portrayals of the masculinized, determined, self-assertive woman. Don Juan feels humiliated the moment he is required to kiss the sultana's foot; nevertheless he makes a compromise by kissing her hand. Gulbeyaz assumes a very masculine stance and asks him directly

"Christian, canst thou love?" (*Don Juan*, V, CXVI),

thus transforming Don Juan into the object of her desire.

Byron carries on the process of victimization by transforming Don Juan (by now Juana) into not only *a sexual object for women*, but also into *a sexual object for men*. The Sultan finds the Sultana's new purchase quite attractive:

"I see you've bought another girl; 't is pity  
That a mere Christian should be half so pretty" (*Don Juan* V, CLV).

In the narrative of the fourth and the fifth cantos, Don Juan is *sold* and *bought* as a *slave*, *threatened*, *humiliated*, forced to *compromise*, treated as a *sexual object* (not only by women, but also by men). By forcing Don Juan to undergo all these, Byron actually completely deconstructs the fame of the ruthless victimizer (?), making him to go through exactly what womankind went through throughout history.

## **2.6. Don Juan – Catherine II**

Don Juan has reached the court of Queen Catherine II who lusts after the handsome "war hero". The youngman is smart enough to quickly understand that it would be to his advantage to become one of the Queen's favorites:



He, on the other hand, if not in love,  
Fell into that no less imperious passion,  
Self-love -- which, when some sort of thing above  
Ourselves, a singer, dancer, much in fashion,  
Or duchess, princess, empress, "deigns to prove"  
(T is Pope's phrase) a great longing, though a rash one,  
For one especial person out of many,  
Makes us believe ourselves as good as any (*Don Juan*, IX, LXVIII).

### 2.7. Don Juan – Duchess of Fitz-Fulke, or the Phantom at the Castle

From the very first moment they meet, the Duchess of Fitz-Fulke starts chasing the young Don Juan, reiterating the Dona Julia-Don Juan episode at a different age and in a different country. Taking advantage of the legend of the Black Friar, the Duchess of Fitz-Fulke completes her elaborate plan of seducing Don Juan. Even the end of the poem is invested with an ironical significance: instead of confronting the stone commander, Juan is visited by a nice-smelling ghostly friar: Lady Grace Fitz-Fulke.

The ghost, if ghost it were, seem'd a sweet soul  
As ever lurk'd beneath a holy hood:  
A dimpled chin, a neck of ivory, stole  
Forth into something much like flesh and blood;  
Back fell the sable frock and dreary cowl,  
And they reveal'd -- alas! that e'er they should!  
In full, voluptuous, but not o'ergrown bulk,  
The phantom of her frolic Grace -- Fitz-Fulke! (*Don Juan*, XVI, CXXIII)

### 3. Conclusion

The traditional Don Juan is a terrible seducer of women and an adventurer either because of his own way of being an emotional predator or, more rarely, because a cruel disappointment urges him to take revenge against all women, or because he wanders in search of the ideal woman. But Byron's hero does not have any of these attributes. Being the hero of a heroic-comical poem, he is a mediocre, not innocent character who is taken by surprise by the adventures that happen around and to him.

*Don Juan* marks the virtual disappearance of the Byronic hero as the symbolic protagonist. "Donny Johnny" is a burlesque equivalent of the pilgrim figure of *Childe Harold*. Don Juan is neither a satanic figure, nor a wild seducer, nor even an imaginative projection of Byron, although the poet plays with the readers' expectations. The surprised adventurer Don Juan is *a lover by*

*chance and a hero by chance*; caught up in the middle of events he finds that simply, there's nothing he can do about it, but go on with it. Things happen to Don Juan, he is not the one who causes things to happen. Don Juan is rather *the seducer seduced* deconstructing the legend of the famous seducer. As Malcolm Kelsall (1994: 306) puts it:

The sexual politics of this poem invert notions of freedom by focusing upon the predatory and hypocritical women who seduce and use the helpless male libertine, Donny Johnny.

Don Juan is an anti-hero meant to neutralize the extraordinary actions of the Romantic Byronic heroes. He holds a false reputation and Byron ironically reduces him to his right proportions.

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# TURNING THE TRADITIONAL ENGLISH BUTLER INTO A ZEN-BUDDHIST ADEPT

ABA-CARINA PÂRLOG

University of Timișoara

***Abstract:** The article x-rays Kazuo Ishiguro's novel, *The Remains of the Day*, in an attempt to explain the transformations that the English have gone through as a result of their changed mentality. The protagonist, Stevens, appears as a relic of the past when the new American owner of Darlington Hall comes to take over the mansion. As a result, the butler understands that he has to adjust his traditional English manner of thinking to the present tendency, i.e. to substitute his Samurai role for that of a Zen-Buddhist adept. The character is, to a certain extent, similar to his creator, who was forced to move together with his family to The United Kingdom at a very early age, thus being compelled to adapt to a mixture of foreign cultures and customs.*

***Keywords:** Confucianism, English(ness), Japanese(ness), Samurai, transformation, Zen-Buddhism.*

## 1. Introduction

Under the umbrella term of post-modernism, a New Internationalist or post-colonial literary direction has developed, as writers born in the former British colonies explored such topics as the difficulty of preserving one's identity in imaginary lands, under changing political circumstances, in new cultural environments; the religious, historical and political problems of the post-colonial countries they used to live in; the vicissitudes of lives lived in harsh conditions, etc. They are migrants who make an attempt at recreating their lost centre in their imaginary worlds of fiction:

Entering the realm of 'as if', they were free to re-territorialize their geography and resolve the actual contradictions of a frustrated life. For such people, literature (...) established a Utopian space where one was not forced to capitulate and could lead a fuller and happier life. Moreover, when accepted by the new culture as an author of undoubted importance, the writer discovered the saving centre, the vindication which rewarded the upsetting pains of being uprooted (Brînzeu 2001: 78).

## 2. The Writer

Although not a native of any of the territories that belonged to the British Empire, Kazuo Ishiguro is generally considered to be one of the post-

colonial British writers, as he mirrors characters “experiencing the conflict of living between the old, native world and the invasive forces of hegemony from new, dominant cultures” (*Wikipedia* 1, 2009). His source of inspiration is his own life; he was born in Nagasaki, Japan, in 1954 and, at the age of six, moved to England together with his family (Lewis 2000: 1) and had to adapt to a new set of rules imposed by the new country that he lived in – an issue, which left its mark on his personality for the rest of his life.

Thus, he was compelled to face the sadness of having abandoned the beautiful house inhabited by his grandparents as well, and to experience the strangeness of a new culture that differed so much from what he had learnt during the early years of his childhood. As he “disclosed in several interviews (...), leaving his home in Japan was a wrench for him as a child. He lived in a three-storey house in Nagasaki (still owned by Ishiguro’s father), with a large garden. The paternal grandparents occupied the ground floor whilst, Ishiguro and his sister had the run of the second floor, where his parents slept. This traditional extended family provided Ishiguro with a secure and stable infancy. When he left for Britain in 1961, he was suddenly exiled from this safe haven, an exile made even more unsettling by the uncertainty about when or whether his family would return” (Lewis 2000: 8).

Throughout the years, he was forced to turn into what Kate Kellaway called a “chameleon” (Lewis 2000: 4) in order to be able to stay on top of the changing waves of his life. This inspired him in creating Stevens, the main character in *The Remains of the Day*.

Written under the form of a diary, the book switches from present to past, as butler Stevens remembers what it was like to work for Lord Darlington, the English owner of the house, Darlington Hall, around the Second World War. The year set as the beginning of the diary, 1956, marks the loss of the Suez Canal and, at the same time, signals that Great Britain has lost its imperial grip upon the world.

Notwithstanding the importance of the event, Ishiguro chooses to overlook it, as several critics have noticed (Lewis 2000: 99; Westerman 2004). In an interview he gave Cynthia F. Wong (2009), on the occasion of the world tour during which he promoted his novel *When We Were Orphans*, Ishiguro explained the reason for which he avoided including such events as the loss of the Suez Canal in his work:

Historians have to go about things in a certain disciplined way; they have to present evidence, they have to argue for their particular view of what happened in an

academically disciplined environment. I'm under no such obligation; I can read history as a kind of location for my stories. Often, I feel that is what I'm doing. I look at a certain time in history, because I think it would help to bring out certain themes. In the end, I want people to read my books not because they might learn something about the period in which these things happened, but because I might be able to share some more abstract vision of life and the world with them.

### **3. The Main Character**

Consequently, instead of focusing on detailing historical events, Ishiguro's protagonist recounts the changing of the mansion owner: the present master of Darlington Hall is Mr. Farraday, an American who had bought it because it represented a piece of the past, with the butler as a living witness of an age that had set some time ago. A transformation of mentality now takes place slowly, as Stevens – a parody of Jeeves, P. G. Wodehouse's amusing English butler (Lewis 2000: 12) – the embodiment of a melange of Japanese and English traditional features, a "Victorian Samurai" as Rothfork (1996: 91) unskilfully puts it, has to undergo a change of his manner of being and reacting to various situations, in order to be able to adequately respond to his new American master's needs. This, in a way, echoes the situation of the whole country, which adopted new values under the American influence.

The topic of the post-war societal transformations, that took place either in Japan or in United Kingdom, appears to have been deeply ingrained in Ishiguro's heart. Although he lived in both countries, Ishiguro admits to being a "homeless writer" and to not having had "any obvious social role", as he was neither "a very English Englishman", nor "a very Japanese Japanese" (Lewis 2000: 4).

In *The Remains of the Day*, Stevens, just like the writer, does not really belong anywhere. He is stuck in a big residence where he puts his life at the feet of his employer (Lewis 2000: 7) and which he never leaves in order either to explore the surrounding area, or to admire the English landscape that he later on describes with a feeling of exhilaration; he lives in a state of total isolation from the outside world. Thus, he shuns any chance of growing emotionally. He avoids living his life in a natural manner. Consequently, he rejects Miss Kenton – the housekeeper – who was in love with him, only to feel regret many decades afterwards for having irredeemably lost her.

As opposed to Ishiguro, who worked at both ends of the hierarchical ladder, helping the needy, but also Her Royal Highness, as a grouse beater at Balmoral Castle (Lewis 2000: 3), Stevens avoids thinking of himself as a

person with feelings and emotions, in need of balance and harmony. He only functions as a faithful subordinate, acting under orders and bringing his tasks to a successful end. He appears as a stern, dignified and reliable butler – a Confucian adept, whom Ishiguro himself despises.

#### **4. Englishness, Confucianism and (Zen-)Buddhism**

According to John Rothfork, *The Remains of the Day* “expresses a Buddhist criticism of Confucian ethics” (1996: 82). There are many types of Buddhism, but the two most important ones are: *Mahayana*, specific to Nepal, China and other neighbouring countries, and *Theravada*, which is more conservative, encountered especially in Thailand, Laos, Cambodia and Sri Lanka (Blackburn 1999: 54). In Japan, Confucianism and Buddhism were embraced much later than in China and India, after having been repeatedly rejected in favour of Shinto (Eliade, Culianu 1993: 78-79), which is a “nature-worshipping religion” (Smith, Young 1998 : 406).

Confucianism derives from Confucius, i.e. the Latin name of Kong Fu-zi (Master Kong) who was the founder of this form of faith. When he was quite old he taught a small group of disciples using modest means, in an attempt to transform them into *jun-zi*, i.e. perfect men. The paradigm that one should have in mind in order to get an idea about *jun* is not that of the medieval knight, but that of the gentleman that excels in all circumstances by making use of formal correctness. The Confucian moral is not aristocratic, but rather bourgeois, favouring the clerk’s patience (Eliade, Culianu 1993: 93-94).

Stevens seems to have been thought out according to this religious-philosophical frame. He is always calm, patient, understanding, austere, and serious. He relies upon a set of rules which suggest possible reactions that he may allow himself to have in all cases, rules which are supposed to prevent him from making any error. “In Japanese culture, the whole point of Confucian ethics is security: to provide safety from embarrassment by meticulously following etiquette” (Rothfork 1996: 96).

Thus, Stevens plays a role all the time, acting formally, helping his master’s guests to his own father’s disadvantage – who is lying on his death bed and could use a comforting word and an embrace from a member of his family at the end of his life. Instead, Stevens continues to carry out his duties that are far less important at that moment, as if nothing happened. He is seemingly unable to distinguish between essential and insignificant matters, and neglects his own happiness as a result, failing to take the chances that life offers him. He

plays the role of a Confucian pawn in the hands of an ignorant master, who, in his turn, allows himself to be manipulated by the Nazis.

The rules of Confucianism appear to be almost the same as the main features of Englishness – one must be formal, calm, serious, austere, dignified under all circumstances. As Joseph Coates puts it, Englishness “signifies a certain emotional repression, a love of hierarchy, a complacent self-belief and a respect for the country’s history” (qtd. in Lewis 2000: 78). It means much more than that, as Stevens succeeds in revealing while standing in front of the charming English landscape:

... the English landscape at its finest – such as I saw it this morning – possesses a quality that the landscapes of other nations, however more superficially dramatic, inevitably fail to possess. It is, I believe, a quality that will mark out the English landscape to any objective observer as the most deeply satisfying in the world, and this quality is probably best summed up by the term ‘greatness’. (...) And yet what precisely is this ‘greatness’? Just where, or in what, does it lie? I am quite aware it would take a far wiser head than mine to answer such a question, but if I were forced to hazard a guess, I would say that it is the very *lack* of obvious drama or spectacle that sets the beauty of our land apart. What is pertinent is the calmness of that beauty, its sense of restraint. It is as though the land knows of its own beauty, of its own greatness, and feels no need to shout it. In comparison, the sorts of sights offered in such places as Africa and America, though undoubtedly very exciting, would, I am sure, strike the objective viewer as inferior on account of their unseemly demonstrativeness (Ishiguro 1989: 28-29).

Thus, Stevens takes a transnational perspective in comparing the typical landscape of his country to that of other countries and comes to the conclusion that the English one is unique. He is unable to change perspectives and discover the beauty of each of the landscapes he mentions. Shintoism would be beyond his power of understanding in any way, because he cannot take in the various forms of beauty that nature displays. Consequently, he cannot be considered to have been constructed according to a Shinto standpoint. He lacks the sensitivity of a nature worshipper and acts according to the features of the Confucian faith.

His Confucian/ English path leads to a dissatisfying cul-de-sac. As a result, he can only use what remains of his ‘day’ in order to change into a new person, able to adapt to the new modern environment, to the new society that cherishes distinct values, opposed to those of the past. “In identifying with the house that is both his workplace and his home, Stevens objectifies himself and internalises a deep divide” (Westerman 2004). Just as George Orwell saw

England as “too culturally isolated for its own good” (Bowker 2003: 114) or as Shakespeare noticed that “Home-keeping youth have ever homely wits” (Duțescu, Levițchi 1964: 144), Stevens grasps the truth of the urgency of his transformation – he has to internalise the core of distinct cultures and to leave Darlington Hall in order to wise up.

Under the American influence, the butlering institution that used to lie at the basis of Englishness – every great mansion had butlers, who possessed answers to all problems, were quite well read and thus were even able to aid with cultural issues sometimes – slowly crumbles, to leave room for the modern servant, who is treated in a friendly way by the house owner. Mr Farraday encourages Stevens to engage in friendly banter, to joke, to loosen up, in order to change their cold formal relation into a warm, informal one. This is quite strange to Stevens, who has lived all his life in respect of the Confucian/English values. Suffering secretly for the lost time during which he did not realise that he had to change his attitude will not be enough to regain a long lost balance.

In Buddhism, the only actors present in the universe are Suffering and Extinction, the person is not so important as the process in itself is. There are three evils that affect human beings: old age, disease and death – the remedy for all these is to stop being ignorant (Eliade, Culianu 1993: 66-69). Ergo, Stevens takes a motoring trip that helps him grow into a new man, who sheds his faulty Confucian system of beliefs and embraces Zen-Buddhism. As a result Stevens must internalise the fact that he ought to judge each situation according to his knowledge about the world and that he ought to try and act spontaneously (Rothfork 1996: 84).

According to Stewart W. Holmes (2002), one of the *Zen Tenets* is:

In emptiness, forms are born. When one becomes empty of the assumptions, inferences, and judgments he has acquired over the years, he comes close to his original nature and is capable of conceiving original ideas and reacting freshly.

It is, of course, difficult for Stevens to react spontaneously and respond properly to Mr. Farraday’s bantering at first, but he reports having registered progress and being quite pleased about it. Learning how to joke transforms his position from a secure Confucian one, in which he could offer pre-digested answers, to a volatile Zen-Buddhist one, in which he has to prove his wit, to use his own intellectual abilities and not act according to a pre-established code of behaviour.



This is the new path that the butler has to follow so that he may be able to attain the same goal as the English society which has switched from traditionalism to modernism, under American influence. Although a welcoming change, there are some who believe that renouncing one's specific national features is wrong. In an interview, Toru Kuroiwa, author of *The English Way of Life* (1997), encouraged the British, to continue cherishing the values which had set them apart from the rest of the world: "I am obliged to say to the British: more tea, more butlers, more gentlemanly golf" (qtd. In Lewis 2000: 72).

Nevertheless, the protagonist cannot oppose the mainstream, as he

... takes his trip through an England facing change and anxiety, and an increasing discomfort with its own and the United States's roles in the world. (...) this discomfort becomes apparent through Stevens's repetition, contradiction, and excessive explanation as he attempts to cover up challenges to the systems, values, and rules by which he lives (Westerman 2004).

He continues his charade, posing as master of any situation and succeeds in fooling the people he encounters, because he has acquired a very good level of formal English from the books he had read and the gatherings he had served at. He is specialised in deceit and treasures it as if it were some special quality that he possesses.

The protagonist uses "butlerspeak", i.e. a style "completely lacking in wit, sensuousness and originality" (Lodge 1992: 155). He is stiff, false and, at the same time, very pleased with his own performance. Stevens considers dignity – one of Confucian precepts regarding contrived behaviour – of utmost importance and crassly mistakes it for his incapacity of being honest. He is unable to be sincere either with himself or with the people around him.

During a conference in 1923, when some of the important political personalities of Europe crossed Lord Darlington's threshold, as stated earlier, Stevens neglected his father's illness which had grown worse and never found time to sit by his bed-side. Still, he brags about his intense activity during the event and focuses on its bright side, thus manipulating the reader into ignoring the real issue. He believes to have been dignified on this special occasion, as he tended to some minor matters concerning his guests, instead of taking care of his suffering parent. He thus proves to be acquainted only with one connotation of the lexeme 'dignity', i.e. "calm and serious manner or style", as it is explained in the *The Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English*. The

butler ignores the basic meaning of the word 'dignity', which is "the quality that earns or deserves respect" (Hornby 1967: 275).

The butler is unable to present the circumstances of the conference objectively or to give a veridical, complete picture of himself and employs the same unreliable style that he uses as narrator. He is excessively pleased with himself and seems to be describing his performance as one of the highest quality ever, because he sacrificed his personal life in order to permanently tend to his duties.

Furthermore, Stevens is ambivalent and thus unfaithful to his former master. He is hardly a Samurai, if analysed in depth – as he is incapable of making up his mind whether his English master represents a figure that deserves support or not. On the one hand, he cherishes his master's memory and believes him to have acted to the best of his faith; on the other hand, he avoids disclosing to Mr Farraday's guests, that he was a part of Lord Darlington's household.

A true Samurai would have laid down his life for his master. According to the "Bushido Shoshinshu (the Code of the Samurai), a Samurai was supposed to commit *oibara seppuku* (also 'hara kiri' – ritual suicide) upon the loss of his master. One who chose not to honour the code was 'on his own' and was meant to suffer great shame" (Wikipedia 2, 2009).

Consequently, Stevens becomes a type of *ronin*, i.e. a Samurai that "became masterless from the ruin or fall of his master (as in the case of death in a war), or after the loss of his master's favour or privilege" (Wikipedia 2, 2009). The status of *ronin* was not very desirable, as he was seen as a degraded serf and sometimes, the *ronin* even turned into a thief. "Not having the status or power of employed Samurai, ronin were often disreputable, and the group was a target of humiliation or satire" (Wikipedia 2, 2009).

## 5. Conclusion

Stevens can be seen as a redeemed *ronin* as he is able to find a new master in the person of Mr. Farraday, whom he decides to serve by shedding his traditional Japanese mask. He is no longer required to act as any kind of Samurai, but rather as a common modern Japanese/ Englishman who has found new employment. The change from a traditional English butler to a Zen-Buddhist adept is done gradually, as Stevens becomes used to bantering.

The process of adapting takes time, practice and much will. It is long and difficult, and less successful when one has reached old age. According to a

saying 'the wolf may lose his teeth but never his nature'. Thus, although Stevens might appear a new person, able to joke with his master, he is probably unable to truly renounce the acquired harmful habit of pretending and stifling his feelings and private life, after a lifetime of practising it. The remains of his day suggest that he still has a chance to make amends, while for some critics it is a metaphor for the end of a lost life.

Kazuo Ishiguro succeeds in creating a wonderful series of English/Japanese engravings which manage to enrich the international audience with a few more glimpses into the life of both a traditional and a modern English/Japanese man. He manages to prove how close the two cultures really were, thus innovating cultural anthropology and opening the readers' eyes as to the similarities of empires. A transcultural personality, the writer is an emblem of the international success of post-colonial literature. *The Remains of the Day* will remain a book enclosing one of the most cherished microcosms of a lost world that had to give way to the rampant modernity that stretches to our times.

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## POSTMODERN MYTHOLOGIES. PENELOPE AND GERTRUDE TALK BACK

DANA PERCEC and ANDREEA ȘERBAN  
University of Timișoara

***Abstract:** Many writers nowadays focus on certain classical myths with a view to questioning, undermining, catalyzing them. One such example is Margaret Atwood's attempt to rewrite two of the most powerful stories of western literary canon – Homer's "The Odyssey" and Shakespeare's "Hamlet". The paper will look at "The Penelopiad" and the short story "Gertrude Talks Back" in terms of the way in which two heroic products of patriarchy are revisited by a prominent representative of contemporary feminist thinking and retold from the heroine's point of view.*

***Keywords:** myth, power, retelling/ rewriting, women.*

### 1. Introduction

The search for the marvellous and strange lies behind many modern legends. People around the world continue to create new myths and to embroider or rework existing ones. Modern technologies such as publishing, movies, telecommunications, and the Internet allow folktales, rumours, and newly minted myths to travel faster and reach more people than ever before. One distinctive feature of many modern legends is that they originated as artistic creations, although their creators may have drawn on earlier themes. The present paper tries to investigate how and why a contemporary author, Margaret Atwood, has embarked on the task of rewriting an ancient myth and an episode extracted from canonical literature.

The best attempts to define what myth is in the modern world and what part it plays in the collective imagination have been made by Roland Barthes (2002), in his interrogation of the meanings of the cultural artefacts and practices that surround us. Barthes describes mythology as part both of semiology – as a formal science – , and of ideology – as a historical science: it studies ideas-in-form. Mythology can be understood, then, to be the study of man-made (and thus manipulated) sensory cues presented for popular consumption. Barthes often claimed to be fascinated by the meanings of the things that surround us in our everyday lives and was determined to challenge the innocence and naturalness of cultural texts and practices which were capable of producing all sorts of supplementary meanings, or connotations to

use Barthes' term. We inhabit a world of signs which support existing power structures and which pretend to be natural. The role of the mythologist, as Barthes sees it (2002: 63), is to expose these signs as artificial constructs, to reveal their workings and show that what appears to be natural is, in fact, determined by history. The same argument is offered by Terry Eagleton (1991: 5-6), who, in his study about ideology, considers that:

[a] dominant power may legitimate itself by promoting beliefs and values congenial to it; naturalizing and universalizing such beliefs so as to render them self-evident and apparently inevitable; denigrating ideas which might challenge it; excluding rival forms of thought, perhaps by some unspoken but systematic logic; and obscuring social reality in ways convenient to itself. Such 'mystification', as it is commonly known, frequently takes the form of masking or suppressing social conflicts, from which arises the conception of ideology as an imaginary resolution of real contradictions.

For Eagleton, thus, ideology means false societal beliefs that become institutionalized so they can serve the interests of a ruling class. Unlike propaganda, ideological beliefs are much more deeply embedded in how a person thinks about the society he or she lives in.

## **2. Women's "Mythologies"**

The sexual politics of the post-modernist (post-war) western society fit in this conceptual framework quite successfully. For Barthes, the years following the end of the war were those of a *retour au foyer*, a return to the domestic values, a period in which women – both the English and American ones, who had joined the workforce occupying posts previously held by men, and the French ones, who hadn't – were more or less overtly confined to the roles of a mother and a housewife. The amended legislation, meant to increase the birth rate, as well as an ideological pressure, coming from the traditional institutions (the church), and, more powerfully, from the new media, were all very influential in re-establishing a passive feminine model, in accordance with the archetypal pattern, rather than the newer one, which had emerged in the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Barthes discusses the popularity and development of weekly and monthly magazines aimed at a predominantly female readership, considering this type of printed media an influential institution, which legitimates a certain social organization – that of family and married life, for example (Barthes 2002: 47) – and offers an endless source of modern "mythologies" (2002: 128). Modesty and restraint, discretion and gentleness

are the ultimate female qualities identified by Barthes in women's magazines, rhyming well with the comfortable anonymousness that had always been recommended – in books, sermons, and social practices – to the weaker sex. Barthes is also one of the first ideologues to study the way in which toys encourage children to adopt pre-determined gender and class positions. Children are encouraged to become owners rather than creative users of toys, which appear to be productive but which, Barthes (2002: 58) claims, encourage passivity.

Re-writing a myth in general and, in particular, re-writing a myth related to women's roles or feminine production is an endeavour taken on by Margaret Atwood when she decides to tell two male stories from a female character's point of view – one man's voyage, from the perspective of the wife waiting for him to return home, and another man's revenge, from the perspective of the mother trying to prevent this revenge from taking place. The Canadian author practically voices two prototypical women (the wife and the mother), who had been silenced by the male authors of the fictional texts which featured them, just as wives and mothers had been silenced in general. Atwood's fictional interventions, in which the feminine counterparts of male heroes are cast as protagonists, point out the intensity of women's traditional struggle to acquire a voice and a degree of visibility in areas that were available to them: domestic creativity, private relations, story-telling, letter/diary-writing.

Although public prominence was restrictive for women, the sphere of daily life, sharing and sensitiveness were rewarding channels for female voices throughout western history (Kenyon 1995: 3). When women had a voice, they used it to offer stable role models to their peers and offspring, to give comfort to others and to themselves, to provide tangible evidence of their creativity and utility. Devoting a study to anonymous artistic feminine productions in pre-modern European societies, Danielle Régnier-Bohler (1995: 45-49) notices, for example, that the 'weaving' songs or the riddles and the stories, played or told during casual meetings and visits, give a certain female group a distinct specificity. They build a frontier willingly constructed under shelter from the male community, marking at the same time a virtual revolt against the institution of marriage, seen as the very embodiment of male dominance. Silenced in the public, as well as in the private sphere, women transform an ordinary afternoon spent together sewing and embroidering into a potential site of subversion.

### 3. Women Take the Lead

Since, according to Barthes (2001: 1119), “myth is a type of speech chosen by history”, Atwood’s revisiting of two such powerful products of patriarchy may be read as tracking down unrecorded ‘herstories’, i.e. of the women behind the heroic male figures. Both narratives under discussion give the floor to the female characters who, in the traditional discourse, were pushed into the background, marginalized and neglected.

Rewriting Homer’s *The Odyssey*, and the closet scene of Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, Margaret Atwood’s *The Penelopiad* and *Gertrude Talks Back* function as confessions, which, by claiming to set history straight, exercise a narrative kind of justice. Thus, storytelling becomes politically important. Both protagonists subvert their traditional representations as passive, submissive and silent, and become Atwoodian versions of the “spotty-handed villainess” (Atwood 1994), an allusion to Shakespeare’s character of Lady Macbeth. In Atwood’s view, such ‘bad’ women – whether in disguise or not – disrupt the static order and challenge the idea that all women are essentially good, virtuous and victims of (intrinsically) bad men. Moreover, the two women’s claim of revealing the truth conveys them the authority position of judges with a new perspective on what is good/ right, or bad/ wrong.

On the one hand, Queen Gertrude’s account not only discloses her complicity in the murder of old Hamlet, but downright assumes the initiative for the whole plot. She is thus turned into an “action woman”, no longer under strict surveillance by Claudius or Polonius, as in the Shakespearean play, but as a fully developed and rather selfish individual. Her reasons for committing murder seem frivolous, yet somehow understandable from a married woman’s perspective: “your Dad wasn’t a whole lot of fun. Noble, sure, I grant you. But Claudius, well, he likes a drink now and then. He appreciates a decent meal. He enjoys a laugh” (Atwood 1993: 16). Unlike Shakespeare, whose focus is on Claudius’s ambition, Atwood centres her narrative on Gertrude’s villainy, which stems from her discontent with married life. Simultaneously, however, Atwood also confirms the woman’s “frailty” and obedience to sexual impulses.

On the other hand, Penelope tells her story aiming to do justice and punish the vain cousin Helen, “the root cause of all [her] misfortunes” (Atwood 2005: 131). But this is not the whole truth. On a deeper level, she actually wants to exonerate herself of involvement in the maids’ murder. Abandoned by her husband and besieged by a cohort of suitors, Penelope reveals a



mischievous plan: she has asked twelve of her maids to befriend (and even to sexually lure) the suitors in order to find out about their moves:

I told my twelve young maids – the loveliest, the most beguiling – to hang around the Suitors and spy on them, using whatever enticing arts they could invent. [...] I even instructed them to say rude and disrespectful things about me and Telemachus, and about Odysseus as well, in order to further the illusion (115, 117).

She shamelessly uses the girls in the name of love and loyalty, all the while comforting them that their master will reward them for their service once he returns. Yet, when Odysseus does come back home, his revenge knows no mercy to those who were ‘loyal’; he punishes by death both the greedy suitors and the treacherous maids. Although, in Penelope’s view, the maids were only guilty of helping by obeying her own orders, she does not find the courage to speak in their defence for fear that her angry “Action Man” of a husband might kill her too. It is Penelope’s silence that sentences the young maids to death at the hands of the authority figure returned to (re)establish order.

Both Penelope and Gertrude associate with men in power in order to empower themselves. Penelope, for instance, needs to please the suitors enough to be able to manipulate them and thus delay any abrupt action from their part: either a forced marriage to one of them, or any harm done to Telemachus, her son. To defend herself against slanderous gossip, Penelope eventually relies on her husband’s power and physical strength to intimidate any enemy: “If my husband had learned of the slanders during our lifetimes, he certainly would have ripped out a few tongues. But there’s no sense brooding over lost opportunities” (145). However, although the opportunity has been regretfully lost, Penelope seems to have now taken justice into her own hands. Her narrative is meant to present readers with the true variant of what happened and cast herself primarily as an ‘ingénue’.

Queen Gertrude, on the other hand, not only defends her new husband, but actually claims responsibility for the whole murder plot against old Hamlet.

Oh! You think *what?* You think Claudius murdered your Dad? Well, no wonder you’ve been so rude to him at the dinner table! If I’d known *that*, I could have put you straight in no time flat. It wasn’t Claudius, darling. It was me (Atwood 1993: 18, italics in the original).

The reason behind the murder seems to have been Hamlet’s sexual rejection of his wife, whose sexuality is revealed as her dominant trait. What

Atwood emphasizes in her revision of the classical story is the woman Gertrude's right to choose. Shakespeare's wanton and submissive queen now thinks for herself, knows what is good for her and acts accordingly, re-appropriating her sexuality. Since hers is the only voice we hear/ read, Gertrude is now endowed with "the articulateness she lacks in the play" (Cuder Dominguez 2003). Nevertheless, even if the Atwoodian text confirms the queen's lustfulness, it also reverses – as Cuder Dominguez argues – notions of normality, consequently, rendering irrelevant Gertrude's admission to her guilt.

Comparatively, Penelope constructs herself in contrast to Helen. Unlike her goddess-like beautiful but vain and mean cousin, whose power is given by her ability to seduce men (Carpenter Collins 2006: 58-59), Penelope has to rely on her wits.

I was nothing special to look at. I was smart, though: considering the times, very smart. That seems to be what I was known for: being smart. That, and my weaving, and my devotion to my husband, and my discretion (21).

Despite not being as beautiful as Helen, Penelope stresses her patience, defining herself as a Naiad's daughter, who eventually gets what she wants: "Water does not resist. Water flows. [...] Water is patient. Dripping water wears away a stone" (43). Aware of the advantages of patience and diplomacy, – since, soon after getting married, Penelope learns that she has two other competitors in her husband's life (his mother and his nurse) – she manages to retain Odysseus's attention, approval and affection by listening to his stories carefully.

Yet the peripheral interventions of the maids, who appear as a collective character, revise once more the patriarchal myth by commenting on the truthfulness of Penelope's own account. With wit and irony typical of her writing style, Atwood has the maids challenge Penelope's long-praised loyalty and faithfulness to her husband.

As we approach the climax, grim ad gory,  
Let us just say: There is another story.  
Or several, as befits the goddess Rumour,  
Who's sometimes in a good, or else bad humour.  
Word has it that Penelope the Prissy  
Was – when it came to sex – no shrinking sissy! (147)

Gradually, the maids reveal that Penelope was the real ‘mastermind’ behind their deaths, because their knowledge of her extramarital affairs was dangerous to her after Odysseus’ return. She seems to have been the one who asked Eurycleia to point them out to Odysseus, the male judge and executioner, as treacherous and lustful servants. Kapuscinski (2007) accurately observes that, by claiming to do justice to the innocent maids – as well as to the wrongly idealized cousin Helen –, Penelope’s narrative simultaneously places her in the traditionally male authority position and gradually reveals her involvement in the murders of both the suitors and the maids. As Penelope’s discourse marginalizes the maids’ version of the story, claiming authority, it exposes the falsity of the justice act as exercised by powerful persons.

Perhaps the most important feature of the two texts under scrutiny here is that both female protagonists deconstruct idealized images of not only womanhood in a male-dominated society, but also of idealized manhood. For example, Gertrude’s discourse provides alternative constructions of both her first husband and her son. Set in the lady’s boudoir, the only place where women can exercise total power and control, the Atwoodian text gives Gertrude much more freedom of speech and action. Although Hamlet is muted, he is very much present in the pauses Gertrude makes, while her utterances seem to be answers to the accusations Hamlet makes in the original text.

Beginning her account with the issue of Hamlet’s name, Gertrude de-sacralizes Hamlet’s traditional portrayal and humorously replaces him in the mundane everyday life:

I always thought it was a mistake, calling you Hamlet. I mean, what kind of a name is that for a young boy? It was your father’s idea. Nothing would do but that you had to be called after him. Selfish. The other kids at school used to tease the life out of you. The nicknames! And those terrible jokes about pork. I wanted to call you George (Atwood 1993: 15).

The de-sacralization of the son also reflects on the father. Bearing the same name, the two men share – in Cuder Dominguez’s (2003) view – the same flaw, namely a masculinist code, which Atwood (1993: 16) mockingly calls the “holier-than-thou principle”, “that constrains women’s actions and would particularly control their sexuality.”

Playing with his mother’s mirror, young Hamlet forces her into his ideal of womanhood, but Gertrude’s mention of his having broken two so far

clearly points that she refuses to enter the mould, and is determined to choose what is best for her. Moreover, she parodically reduces his sombre aspect and preference for dark clothes to “black socks” (Atwood 1993: 17), which reflects a rather contemporary fashion trend rather than the character’s depression caused by his father’s untimely death.

Moreover, advising his son on matters of (physical) love, whose lack is, in her opinion, the cause of his distemper, Gertrude not only calls him a prude – like his father – but also encourages him to have sexual intercourse as a way of relieving tension: “A real girlfriend would do you a heap of good” (Atwood 1993: 17). Her speech also de-names Ophelia: “that pasty-faced what’s-her-name, all trussed up like a prize turkey in those tough-me-not corsets of hers. If you ask me, there’s something off about that girl. Borderline. Any little shock could push her right over the edge” (Atwood 1993: 17). Drawing attention to Ophelia’s ordinariness, prudishness (or rather frigidity), and mental instability, Gertrude marginalizes the girl, setting her in strong opposition to herself, and casting her as the image of femininity to be avoided.

Similarly, Penelope’s narrative sets to deconstruct Helen, wrongly idealized as the image of femininity, but a selfish and vain woman, who delights in hurting others: “The part of the story she enjoyed the most was the number of men who’d died in the Athenian war: she took their deaths as a tribute to herself” (75). All of Helen’s acts are meant to make her stand out. Carpenter Collins (2006: 62) contends that Helen’s ambitious desires do not seem a woman’s, but rather appear to be those of a Greek male hero: “She wanted to make a name for herself. She longed to stand out from the herd” (76). Yet her ‘battlefield’ is her own boudoir because, as for Gertrude, this is the only place she has total control on. Always followed by a retinue of drooling men, Helen has her identity constructed as dependent on others, especially men, whose gaze is essential to her feeling of power. When Penelope and Helen meet in the asphodel meadows, their initially pleasant exchange reveals Helen’s psychological abuse of her cousin. Attacking Penelope’s sense of self-worth is another way for Helen to gain and maintain power, this time in relation to other women:

You wouldn’t have any idea of how exhausting it is, having such vast numbers of men quarrelling over you, year after year. Divine beauty is such a burden. At least you’ve been spared that! (154).

Furthermore, Odysseus himself, the patriarchal hero, who proves his virility and valour in war, has his masculinity reconstructed, although not as radically as Hamlet. Referring to her “eminent husband”, Penelope highlights his manipulative skills as dominant to his personality: “It was a specialty of his, making fools. He got away with everything, which was another of his specialties: getting away. He was always so plausible” (2). His stories seduce his listeners into believing him, while he has traditionally been admired and looked up to as a hero.

On the other hand, the maids’ choral interruptions also disrupt Odysseus’s heroic image, depicting him rather as an unfair judge, who has ‘rewarded’ their loyal service with murder. Their consorting with the suitors was, in Odysseus’ eyes, an offence to his masculine honour; therefore, the maids’ deaths were ‘an honour killing’, necessary for his honour to be cleansed and redeemed. Consequently, as the only ones who “can see through all [his] disguises” (192), the twelve maids turn into fury-figures that will forever haunt his spirit, never allowing him to find peace.

#### **4. Conclusion**

Both works analyzed here rewrite two of the myths lying at the core of canonical literature. Claiming to set the stories straight, both Penelope and Gertrude not only reinvent themselves, but they also reconstruct the traditional images of femininity and masculinity. Voicing the two women behind the powerful men of Homer’s and Shakespeare’s tales, Margaret Atwood provides us with counter-narratives that ultimately highlight the ambivalence of power. Closely connected to the act of storytelling, power is revealed to be negotiable and multiple, as the narrator embodies the judge, whose authority is manifested in what and how s/he narrates.

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# EAST VERSUS WEST: LATIN AND BYZANTINE CIVILISATION CONTRASTED IN EVELYN WAUGH'S *HELENA*

MARTIN POTTER  
University of Bucharest

*Abstract:* Evelyn Waugh's novel "Helena" portrays a fictional life of Constantine's mother. In the preface Waugh warns the reader that he will deliberately use anachronisms, thus hinting at a topical level to the novel's significance. I shall discuss the cultural phenomenon of the split between the Eastern and Western Roman Empires, as represented by Waugh, and consider the philosophical point Waugh is making, and the extent to which he is intending the tensions and contrasts to be found in the late antique world to represent the continuing division between the Latin and Byzantine worlds, and the Catholic and Orthodox Churches.

*Keywords:* anachronism, Catholic Church, Orthodox Church, Roman Empire, sacramentality.

## 1. Introduction

Evelyn Waugh's historical novel *Helena*, which is one of his later works, is a fictional life of the legendary mother of the Roman Emperor Constantine, in which Waugh explores his religious philosophy, transposing his ideas from the present into the antique past. While, for a relatively short novel, *Helena* is invested with a wide variety of themes, relating not only to Waugh's religious ideas, but also to issues of national and cultural identity, personal vocation, and even art criticism, I shall here concentrate on the way Waugh contrasts the cultures of the Eastern and Western Roman Empires in the novel, and shall argue that this contrast is, on the one hand, relevant to Waugh's understanding of his own, Catholic, religious tradition, as well as, on the other, being interpretable as a commentary on the differences between the Eastern and Western Churches as they are still discernible in Waugh's time, and after.

The technique that Waugh (1963: 9) uses in order to speak of his contemporary cultural situation through a novel set more than a millennium and a half earlier is that of anachronism, and he draws attention to his intention of using this technique during his preface to the novel:

... but there is nothing, I believe, contrary to authentic history (save for certain wilful, obvious anachronisms which are introduced as a literary device) ...

Despite his mentioning his anachronisms as an aside, they are of central importance as the subject matter of the novel is not primarily of antiquarian, historical interest to Waugh, but as a carrier of meanings relevant to Waugh's experience and environment. The function of the obvious anachronisms is to indicate to readers that they are meant to seek contemporary significance in the whole story, rather than understanding it as mainly an investigation or portrayal of late antique life. Examples of obvious anachronisms include showing Helena using twentieth-century British slang (cf. Patey 1998: 294-5), especially early in the novel, when she appears as a teenager, as well as giving the teenaged, and, according to the novel, British-born, princess, the interests that a modern British princess might be likely to have, such as horses and horse-related sports, as well as a disinclination to the study of Latin literature, which would also have been a core, but not universally popular, activity in twentieth-century British public schools.

## **2. East Versus West**

Waugh, a convert to Catholicism, was keen in his later work, from *Brideshead Revisited* onwards, to espouse Catholic principles explicitly, whereas his satirical earlier novels had contained a critique of modern society, deprived, as he saw it, of commitment to ethical values, or even of a sense of purpose, but had not proposed any positive programme, at least directly. While his portrayal of a spiritually and ethically directionless society during the interwar period is similar in emphasis to that of some other modernist writers, for example, T. S. Eliot (1999), in works such as *The Waste Land*, his post-war writing, in its striving to present an apology for orthodox Catholic thinking, is more reminiscent of the earlier twentieth-century writer, G. K. Chesterton (2007). In *Helena*, the aspect of Catholic thinking which Waugh is most concerned to emphasise and defend is the philosophical position which insists on the reality and goodness of both the spiritual and material worlds. This position is explicit in Thomism, and can be seen as combining the spiritual emphasis of Platonism, with the more material focus of Aristotelianism. From a Catholic point of view, modern non-religious philosophical approaches, from the Enlightenment onwards, are characterisable by a tendency to recognise only the spiritual world (as in idealism) or the only the material world (as in materialism) as really existing. For a Catholic writer, to put forward the material world and the spiritual world as different from each other, but both real, is to lay a foundation for a sense of purpose and legitimacy in the material



world, through its being in a relationship to a Creator who is something different from it. It is this sense of purpose through relationship which, from a Catholic viewpoint, would seem to be lacking if the creation is unreal and already part of the Creator, or if there is no Creator to relate to. While Chesterton (2007) argues for this Thomist doctrine in such apologetic works as, for example, *The Everlasting Man*, Waugh in *Helena* attempts the task of transposing the argument into fiction.

If Waugh's concern throughout his career as a writer is the critique of modern secular society and ways of thought, and the recommendation, especially in his later works, of the religious, and, in particular, Catholic philosophy as the solution to modern society's discontents, then transferring the argument to a late antique setting poses the potential problem of a different set of philosophies being current at the time. Waugh, similarly to other twentieth-century writers, such as David Jones, the Catholic poet, for whom this is a major theme, saw a parallel between the late antique period and the late to mid twentieth century – the antique period was a time when a world order, in which the Roman Empire played an important part, was about to collapse and be replaced by a new world order, the Christian one, whereas the early to mid twentieth century period was characterised, at its beginning, by the dominant role of the British Empire, which was, along with other empires, breaking up amid war and rapid social change. Following Newman (1989), in his *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, Waugh sees later Catholic philosophy as implicit in the thinking of earlier Christians, and can thus make *Helena* the representative of a Catholic position consistent with Thomism, even though Christian philosophy at its time would have been worked out in much less explicit detail. Waugh, however, attributes *Helena's* faith in the reality of the material world, not just to her Christianity, but also to her Westernness, and even Britishness – since he has for fictional purposes followed the legends according to which she was born in Britain, in preference to those according to which she was born near Byzantium. As her opponents, however, to represent the monist position (in the sense that the universe is either fundamentally spiritual or material, but not both), standing in for modern secular thinkers, Waugh brings in pagan mystical philosophers and devotees as well as Eastern Christians (McCartney 2005: 67). Waugh suggests that the Neo-Platonism of the pagan mystery cults, which denies the reality and goodness of the material world, has had at least an influence on Eastern Christian attitudes as well. Here Waugh is touching on controversial ground, as the relations between Catholic

and Eastern Churches in recent centuries have suffered due to Catholics suspecting the Eastern Churches of a neo-Platonic lack of pragmatism, and the Eastern Churches suspecting Catholic Thomism of being legalistic and tending towards materialism.

Waugh's main intervention in the controversy between the Eastern and Western Churches outside *Helena* takes place in the travel book *Remote People* (Davis 1989: 161-163), when he compares the Ethiopian liturgy, which he observes at Debra Libanos during one of his several journeys to Ethiopia, unfavourably with the Roman liturgy, particularly extolling the openness to view of the sanctuary in Western churches compared to the veiledness of the Ethiopian sanctuary. However, he does not take a sustained interest in the East versus West ecclesiastical controversy in his oeuvre as a whole, and is usually much more concerned with the contrast between Catholics and non-Catholics in English society, or with what he sees as decadence in English society more generally. Thus the Eastern Christians represented in *Helena* are likely to be there to fulfil a role in the argument Waugh is presenting to his English-speaking and mainly non-Catholic audience, in his making an apology for Catholic thinking especially to his compatriots.

*Helena* is initially portrayed in the novel, the author making use of anachronistic techniques, as a typically British, or even English, girl, despite the fact that the Anglo-Saxons were yet to arrive in Britain at the time the novel is set. As well as her sporty interests and twentieth-century British slang, more importantly, she has an attachment to material facts, a kind of empirical attitude, from her girlhood, as illustrated by her wanting to know from her tutor Marcias whether there are any physical remains of Troy, which they have been reading about in her Latin class, and following up this enquiry with a resolution to go and dig for the remains one day (15). How far back empirical tendencies can be traced in British culture is a matter of dispute, but at least from the times of Francis Bacon, Hobbes and Locke, and onwards, British thinking has tended to be characterised by empiricism, and Britain has also acquired a reputation for scientific achievement, and practical skills and inventions. The importance of linking this empirical temperament to *Helena* for the purposes of the novel's implicit philosophical argument is that *Helena*'s practical bent is not inconsistent with, and actually predisposes her to, the Catholic version of Christianity, with its emphasis on the importance of the material world and the interaction of the material world with the spiritual world. Given his British, mainly non-Catholic readership, he may also be indirectly recommending the

Catholic approach to them, suggesting that they should find that their empirical turn of mind has an affinity to the Catholic thinking which they may not have realised, and countering view they may have to the effect that it is characterised only by mysticism.

Helena's conversion to Christianity as an older woman is presented as founded on her favourable impression on asking Lactantius, a poet and member of her household, where and when the main events happened, and receiving a plain answer (84-85), whereas on previous occasions, on asking the same question with reference to mystery cults of the kind widespread in the late Roman empire, she receives no answer and is rebuked for asking: the first case occurs when she asks her husband Constantius about Mithraism (66-67), of which he has become a devotee, and the second, the occasion of her asking Lactantius about Christianity, when, after her son Constantine has become Emperor, and she is living in Trèves (Trier), she attends a lecture by her former tutor, Marcias, who has become a prominent Neo-Platonist (83-84). Her actual conversion occurs some time after her conversation with Lactantius, and is not described in detail by Waugh, but by the time that, as an old lady, she travels to Rome, and meets her son the Emperor, it has already happened, and concern for the time and place when the foundational events of Christianity happened, as well as her youthful notion of digging to find remains of Troy, combine to predispose her for that major task which is still in front of her, the search for and finding of the Cross.

Waugh confronts Helena with what he sees as Eastern Christian influences as soon as she arrives in Rome. Her first visitor in her Roman house is Fausta, wife of Constantine, who is later eliminated as part of palace intrigues, and she is shown as an enthusiast for heresies, which Waugh is careful to show as coming from the East. She is under the influence of the Bishop of Nicomedia, Eusebius, and brings him to visit Helena, keen to secure her support. Eusebius, based on a historical supporter of Arianism, is sophisticated and dishonest as he appears in the novel, much to the disapproval of the matter-of-fact Helena. He criticises Western poets for being 'backwoodsmen' (98) and implies that Rome is also provincial, and that this is why the move of the imperial court to the East is desirable. He also suggests that Romans are not really Christian and will always be pagan at heart (99). He is echoing the tone of Fausta, who has spoken on the same lines earlier, complaining that the Pope, Sylvester, is holy, but too simple (95). They also both complain of the outcome of the Council of Nicaea, deeming the decision

of the council conservative and regrettable, and blaming the pope and the Western bishops for resistance to change. Fausta claims that Constantine was disappointed with the result when he understood it (95-96) and Eusebius implies that he voted with the majority only under pressure (99). Helena aligns herself with the Western conservatives. So in these two exchanges, while Waugh in passing mentions the core of the theological controversy at Nicaea, he concentrates on portraying the Eastern bishops as having a tendency towards innovation, due to their sense of their high level of education and sophistication, in contrast to a conservative and stubborn opposition to innovation in the West.

Helena's conversations with Fausta and Eusebius take place in the eighth chapter ('Constantine's Great Treat') and Waugh develops the themes introduced in them further in the ninth chapter ('Recessional') during which Helen at last, after much delay, manages to meet Constantine himself. Waugh, in line with the Catholic view but in contrast with the Orthodox view, portrays Constantine as not at all a saintly figure. "Power without grace" (122), is Helena's, and, by extension, Waugh's, diagnosis for his failings, the implication being that his delay in being baptised is denying him grace. Constantine himself hints at a differing evaluation of him in East and West when he complains that he is being compared to Nero in Rome, while in Nicomedia he is called "the Thirteenth Apostle" (121). During the interview Constantine a number of times reveals a disdain for physical facts and a wish to ignore worldly imperfections and rewrite history. He proudly displays to his mother the standard which he claims he carried into battle at the Milvian Bridge, elaborate and covered with Christian symbols, even though, as Helena points out, the vision exhorting him to adopt the Sign of the Cross, the cause of his conversion, was supposed to have happened on the eve of the battle, and the standard he is showing her seems to be the result of months of work, and to include portraits of some of his children who weren't yet born (124). He admits that he is hoping to avoid "all that degrading business of getting ill and dying and decaying" and be taken up to heaven bodily like Elijah (125). He also explains his motivations for planning a new capital in the East, which will be Constantinople, although the name is not mentioned, and these motivations conform to the themes already established. Rome, according to Waugh's Constantine, is considered holy only because of the tombs of the martyrs, especially of Peter and Paul, and the tombs are there – "Simply because the Romans murdered them" (125).

His new capital, the New Rome, by contrast, will be free of “unpleasant associations” (125) and will be built round two churches representing ideas (rather than martyrs), Wisdom and Peace. He will gladly leave the old Rome to Pope Sylvester, who is present at the interview.

Helena and Pope Sylvester’s later discussion of the idea of the New Rome, taking place after Constantine has already departed in order to found it, is the occasion when it occurs to her to set out to find the Cross in the Holy Land, the quest which is the culmination of the novel. Two themes emerge from this discussion. One is the idea of the conservatism of Helena (associated with her British background) – ‘I don’t like new things,’ said Helena. ‘No one does in the land I come from’ (126) – and the Pope: “I never try to be original”.

The conservatism and lack of innovation is presented as the defence against heresy, and as being Western rather than Eastern, at least at this time. The second theme is the importance of accepting physical facts, and the idea that a history of conflict can be the foundation of a grace-filled future. Thus Helena objects to the “empty and clean” (126) sound of the New Rome, and to the idea of dedicating churches to Wisdom and Peace, rather than to people who can embody them (cf. Davis 1981: 230): “Give me real bones every time” (126). The old Rome is imperfect, but really exists, unlike ideal “holy cities in Asia” which Helena remembers hearing about from her tutor Marcias when a girl (127). A chain of thought lead from this to Helena wondering where the Cross is, and resolving to set out to find it, on the basis that three hundred years is not too long for a piece of wood to survive. Of the objections made to the Eastern Christianity here, that of innovation is unlikely to be meant by Waugh to apply via anachronism to the modern Orthodox Church, at least, which is more likely to be understood as having been highly conservative in during the second millennium, although other Eastern Churches incorporate doctrines classified as heretical during the early centuries. Equally, the modern Orthodox Church regards relics in very much the same way that the Catholic Church does. So to the extent that these criticisms are aimed at the modern Orthodox Church, it is likely to be the idea that it lacks a certain salutary pragmatism, basing itself in a city in which it no longer has a substantial following, and perhaps enjoying less independence from secular authority, that Waugh is attacking.

A late confrontation between Helena and Eastern Christians occurs in the Holy Land, when Helena calls on various authorities in order to gather information to help her locate the Cross. The Copts, in this case, much to

Helena's annoyance, tell her far-fetched symbolic stories, about the Cross having been made from every type of wood "so that all the vegetable world could participate in the act of redemption" (140) (to which an Italian priest objects that the vegetable world did not need to be redeemed), or that each arm was made from a different type of wood, or even more fanciful explanation. This episode simply confirms the theme that Helena embodies Western realism and empiricism, which is part of the Catholic attitude, combined with a recognition of the spiritual. The Copts here may be a softer target for Waugh than Byzantine clergy would be, given that the Coptic Church at Waugh's time would still be regarded as heretical, representing the doctrine of Monophysitism, according to which, at least in its extreme form, Jesus only had a divine nature, not a human nature. The orthodox doctrine that Jesus had a divine and human nature parallels the philosophy Waugh is propounding that the material and the spiritual world are both real and good, and interact with each other.

### **3. Conclusion**

As I have suggested above, in recommending the matter-and-spirit philosophy of Catholicism by embodying it in Helena, and having her confront various representatives of the Eastern Christian world whose commitment to this principle is not equal to hers, Waugh is probably not only, or even principally, targeting the Eastern Orthodox Churches, especially as the main Eastern Orthodox Church has maintained, despite the heresies of the first millennium, a position similar to the Catholic position, with slight differences of emphasis, including a disinclination to define positions in the starkly practical Thomist terms the Catholic Church has made use of. The Churches associated with Monophysitism would be slightly more vulnerable to criticism on the basis of not acknowledging the material world's full value, if the Divine and human natures are viewed as not capable of coexisting in Jesus. Waugh is likely to see the refusal to subscribe to the sacramental principle (i.e. the idea that matter and spirit can interact, and that matter can be sanctified) as a characteristic of his compatriots in England, who either recognise the material world and deny the spiritual one, as in the case of positivists, or recognise both but not their interaction, the position Catholics attribute to Protestants. Thus the modern equivalents, via the anachronistic principle, of the ancient sectarians who deny sacramentality are the British non-Catholics, and it is to their

traditional respect for empiricism that Waugh is trying to appeal in making Helena the Catholic also Helena the practical, no-nonsense British woman.

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SECTION FOUR:  
**LANGUAGE STUDIES**



# LEXICAL GAPS AND TROPONYMY: HUMAN LOCOMOTION VERBS IN ENGLISH AND ROMANIAN

OCTAVIAN COSTE  
University of Timișoara

*Abstract:* The paper focuses on the lexical field of human locomotion verbs in English and Romanian. The troponyms/ manner-of-motion verbs which belong to the three basic human locomotion categories/ motor patterns are described and analysed. The analysis aims to find out which semantic features are encoded or lexicalised in one-word verbs and which ones lead to lexical gaps.

*Keywords:* human locomotion, lexical field, lexical gap, manner-of-motion, troponymy.

## 1. Introduction

*Lexical gaps* have been approached by various linguists such as Chomsky (1965), Lehrer (1974), Lyons (1984), Cruse (2004), Proost (2007), etc. All of them defined lexical gaps as empty slots which occur in the structure of a lexical/ semantic field. The structure of the field is provided by a certain type and number of semantic characteristics/ features which are lexicalized by the lexical items belonging to that field. Thus, the meaning of a lexical item is given by a combination of semantic features. Some possible combinations of semantic features are not lexicalized; this situation leads to the occurrence of lexical gaps. Proost (2007: 114-115) states that a combination of features which fails to get lexicalized is considered a lexical gap if:

- it corresponds to a concept; (Combinations of features which are logically inconceivable do not correspond to concepts. Gaps resulting from such combinations may not be filled in principle, i.e. by possible lexical items. Such combinations of features do not have the status of lexical gaps but are mere matrix products.)
- it represents a pattern of behaviour which is compatible with what is considered to be common human practice; (Combinations of features representing patterns of behaviour which deviate from common human practice may not be lexicalized in principle, even if they are conceptually conceivable.)
- there is no special item whose meaning covers all of the relevant semantic features. (A less specific lexical item does not fill a gap caused by the absence of a more specific one.)

To these three constraints Proost (2007: 115) adds the idea that lexicalization is a three-place predicate (An expression x lexicalizes a concept y in a conceptual system z); thus her definition of lexical gaps reads:

A lexical gap is an empty slot in the structure of a lexical field resulting from the absence of a special lexical item x for a concept y which is part of a conceptual system z and corresponds to an event, action or state of affairs which is practically conceivable.

Our analysis focuses on the lexical gaps occurring in the lexical field of human locomotion verbs in English and Romanian. This field is part of the large field of motion verbs. Motion verbs were used by Talmy (1985, 2000) in order to describe the motion event typology of verb-framed and satellite-framed languages. The basic Motion event

consists of one object (the Figure) moving or located with respect to another object (the reference object or Ground) [...] The Figure is a moving or conceptually movable object whose Path or Site is at issue; the Ground is a reference frame, or a reference object stationary within a reference frame, with respect to which the Figure's path or site is characterized (Talmy 2000: 25-26 qtd. in Cifuentes Ferez 2007: 119).

A link may be established between a motion event and an external event which expresses *manner-of-motion*, i.e. the way a figure moves. Talmy (1985, 2000) made the difference between verb-framed languages (which lexicalize the path-of-motion in the main verb but express manner-of-motion by adjuncts) and satellite-framed languages (which encode manner-of-motion in the main verb and express path-of-motion by means of adjuncts). English is said to be a prototypical example of the satellite-framed type of languages, while Romance languages are said to belong to the other type. It is one of the aims of this paper to find out whether Romanian as a member of the Romance family is really a verb-framed language.

## **2. Human locomotion troponyms and lexical gaps in English and Romanian**

In order to find lexical gaps in the field of human locomotion I am going to focus on the manner-of-motion verbs. Such verbs are also called *troponyms* by Miller and Fellbaum (1991) who consider that a troponym or a verb hyponym is defined by the relation: 'a verb X is a way/ manner of verb Y'.

There are three basic human locomotion categories (called *motor patterns*) in English and Romanian, i.e. 1. 'use one's feet to advance; advance by steps', 2. 'move fast by using one's feet, with one foot off the ground at any given time', and 3. 'move forward by propelling oneself off the ground'. These categories are named by three specific verbs in English (1. *Walk*, 2. *Run*, and 3. *Jump*). Romanian uses specific verbs only for the last two categories (2. *a fugi/ a alerga* and 3. *a sări*). The first motor pattern reveals a first lexical gap: it is named by a hyperonym (a more general verb, i.e. *a umbla/ merge* 'go, move, travel') or by a hyperonym modified by an adjunct (*a umbla/ merge pe jos*, 'go on foot'). When mentioning the type of motor pattern I will use only the English terms.

Cifuentes Ferez (2007: 120) provides the manner categories which apply to some or to all the three motor patterns. These categories, which could be easily considered (classes of) semantic features, were already used by some other linguists (such as Slobin, 2000) or were added by Cifuentes Ferez herself: Forced motion (*drag, trudge*); Furtive motion (*stalk<sub>1</sub>, sidle*); Obstructed motion (*stumble, trip*); No aim in motion (*roam, saunter*); Joyful, playful motion (*scamper, frolic*); Violent motion (*charge, dash*); Unsteady motion (*totter, stagger*); Rate/ Speed of motion (*hurry, dash*); State of figure (*limp, stroll, swagger*); Steps (*stride, inch*); and Use of figure's hands (*crawl, vault*). Several of these manner categories occur together in certain verbs, e.g. (slow) Rate and (regular) Steps in *jog*.

## 2.1. Manners of Walking

The motor pattern which implies the largest number of troponyms in both English and Romanian is *Walk*. This situation is normal since walking is the basic motor pattern of humans. I have come across and analysed about 70 English and 25 Romanian one-word basic verbs. The troponyms will be grouped according to the dominant manner of walking.

2.1.1. *No aim in motion*. This manner feature is encoded in the English verbs *roam, wander, rove, stray, ramble, range, tramp, maunder, meander<sub>2</sub> gad, and gallivant*. Romanian has several verbs encoding this feature, such as *a cutreiera, a colinda, a hoinări, a rătăci<sub>2</sub>, a pribegi, a flana, a vagabonda, and a peregrina*. The number of verbs conflating this manner feature is similar in both languages. There occurs no lexical gap in this group in neither of the two languages.

2.1.2. *Psychological state of the figure*. This is the feature which leads to many lexical gaps in Romanian. There are several subfeatures naming various states of the figure, i.e. *Relaxation*, *Pride*, and *Tiredness and/ or Boredom*.

2.1.2.1. *Relaxation* or *Relaxed activity* is related to the aforementioned *No aim in motion*. English has several verbs to lexicalize the feature, such as *walk<sub>2</sub>*, *stroll*, *amble*, *saunter*, *mosey*, *perambulate*, *promenade*, *hike* and *backpack*. Some of these verbs encode additional semantic features which I am discussing below. Romanian seems to have only one verb, the reflexive *a se plimba*, which is the actual equivalent of *walk<sub>2</sub>* ‘to move about or travel on foot for exercise or pleasure’. When the feature of ‘pleasure’ is emphasized, as in *stroll*, Romanian uses the verb *a se plimba* accompanied by certain adverbial or prepositional phrases such as *în tihnă/ tacticos*, i.e. ‘leisurely’. The meaning of *promenade* is rendered in Romanian as a verbal expression *a face o promenadă*, i.e. ‘take a promenade’, literally ‘make a promenade’. Such an expression is made up according to the pattern ‘light verb + noun naming the action’. The feature ‘extended (walk for pleasure)’ encoded in *hike* is rendered into Romanian as *a face o drumeție*, i.e. ‘take a hike’, literally ‘make a hike’, a verbal expression built according to the same pattern mentioned above. *Backpack*, a hyponym of *hike*, i.e. ‘to hike while carrying a backpack’ may imply a corresponding Romanian verbal expression such as *a face o drumeție cu rucsacul în spate* which literally renders the meaning of the English lexical item.

2.1.2.2. *Pride* or *Proud attitude* implies verbs such as *prance*, *strut*, *swagger*, *parade*, *stalk<sub>2</sub>*, *tittup*, and *sashay*. Romanian has no verb to render such a psychological state of the Figure. The lexical gaps are usually avoided by using verbal expressions where a hyperonym is accompanied by an adverbial phrase, such as *a umbla/ merge/ păși țințoș/ mândru/ maiestuos/ fălos*, i.e. ‘walk proudly/ haughtily’. For *sashay* the expression *a umbla/ merge/ păși provocator*, i.e. ‘walk provocatively’ could also be used.

2.1.2.3. *Tiredness and/ or Boredom* are features rendered by very few verbs such as *traipse* and *schlep*. Romanian has no specific verb to name such a manner-of-motion; however, it makes use of a verb which names a secondary motor pattern to fill in the lexical gap, i.e. *a se târi*, literally ‘to creep, crawl’. Verbal expressions made up according to the usual pattern (hyperonym modified by an adverbial) are also used, e.g. *a umbla/ merge cu greu(tate)/ plictisit/ obosit*, i.e. ‘walk heavily/ tiredly’.

2.1.3. *Physical state of the figure.* This category is poorly represented in both languages. *Limp*, *gimp*, and *hobble* imply that the figure is injured or physically impaired (as far as the legs/ feet are concerned); the same information is encoded by the Romanian verbs *a șchiopăta*, *șontăcăi*, *șovâlcăi*. The verbs *somnambulate* and *sleepwalk* point to a lexical gap in Romanian; the feature ‘while sleeping/ asleep’ is again rendered as an adverbial modifier to a hyperonym: *a umbla în somn*, ‘walk while asleep’.

2.1.4. *Information about the figure’s steps/ toes/ hands.* As far as the *steps* are concerned, English has verbs which encode information regarding the manner features *small*, *large*, and *heavy*. Romanian lexicalizes in a verb only the *heavy steps* manner.

Thus, for *small steps* English has the verbs *edge*, *inch*, and *mince*. Romanian lexical gaps are usually filled by means of the recurring pattern hyperonym + modifier (*a merge/ umbla cu pași mici/ mărunți*) or, in order to render the idea of advancing gradually, by *a înainta pas cu pas/ centimetru cu centimetru*, ‘move forward step by step/ inch by inch’. *Mince* may be rendered as *a merge/ umbla exagerat de grațios*, ‘walk with exaggerated primness’. For *large steps*, English has the verb *stride*, while Romanian encodes the manner in a modifier: *a merge/ umbla cu pași mari*, ‘walk with large steps’. For *heavy steps*, English uses verbs such as *stamp*, *stomp*, *tramp*, *trample*, *clamp*, *lumber*, and *plod*. Romanian has two verbs, *tropăi* and *tropoti*, the latter being usually associated with a kind of dance step. As a rule, Romanian uses verbal expressions in order to render the idea of *heavy steps*: *a merge/ umbla cu pași greoi/ apăsați*, ‘to walk with heavy steps’.

The other two parts of the human body which may be involved in walking, the *toes* and the *hands*, lead to very few verbs in English and to lexical gaps in Romanian. Thus, English uses verbs such as *toe*, *tiptoe*, and *crawl*; a verb such as *tiptoe* also expresses *furtive manner-of-motion*. Romanian makes frequent use of expressions referring to these manners of motion, but has no verb to cover them, only verbal syntagms such as *a merge/ umbla tiptil*; *a merge/ umbla în vârful picioarelor/ degetelor*, ‘to walk furtively/ on tiptoe’; *a merge/ umbla cu degetele picioarelor înspre interior/ exterior*, ‘to walk with the toes pointed in/ out’; and *a merge/ umbla în patru labe/ de-a bușilea*, ‘to walk on all fours’.

2.1.5. *Unsteady motion.* This manner-of-motion is very much related to the physical state of the figure as it mainly refers to instability due to frailty or immaturity of the figure or to instability through loss of control. For

instability due to frailty or immaturity of the figure English has such verbs as *totter*, *toddle*, *dodder*, and *wobble*, while for instability through loss of control it uses verbs such as *stagger* and *reel*. Romanian does not discriminate between the two subfeatures; it has *a se împletici*, *a se a se bălăbăni*, *a se bălăngăni* and the more general verbs *a se clătina*, *a se legăna*. Lexical gaps occur in Romanian when certain additional information about the figure is encoded in the English verb; *dodder*, for instance, encodes the feature *old age*; Romanian will encode the information as a modifier to one of the aforementioned verbs, e.g.: *a se clătina/ împletici din cauza bătrâneții*, ‘to totter from old age’. *Toddle* will be in Romanian *a merge șovăitor/ a se împletici (despre un copilăș)*, ‘to walk unsteadily/ to totter’ (of a young child).

2.1.6. *Obstructed motion*. This manner-of-motion implies two basic verbs in English: *trip* and *stumble*. They have two basic meanings: ‘to lose your balance after knocking your foot against something when you are walking’ and ‘to walk unsteadily, often hitting things with your feet and almost falling’. Romanian has two verbs to render the first of the above meanings: *a se împiedica* and *a se poticni*. The other meaning, which is the actual troponym, manner of walking is rendered by means of expressions made up according to the frequent pattern modified hyperonym: *a merge poticnindu-se/ împiedicându-se*.

2.1.7. *Forced motion*. This category implies verbs which denote that the figure moves slowly without lifting the feet from the ground (*shuffle*, *shamble*) or that the figure moves with difficulty and with great effort, at a slow pace, usually with heavy steps (*trudge*, *plod*, *lumber*, *tramp*, *slog*); some of these verbs were mentioned while talking about *heavy steps*. The second type is even further detailed by adding the feature ‘through water/ mud/ snow’ in verbs such as *wade*, *squelch*, and *squish*. Romanian has a verb to express the first subfeature: *a(-și) târșâi*; this is a transitive verb and is always followed by a direct object (usually *picioarele*, ‘feet’). A verbal expression is frequently used in this case: *a merge târșâindu-și/ târându-și picioarele*, ‘walk shuffling one’s feet’. The second subfeature leads to lexical gaps in Romanian, which uses expressions such as *a merge/ păși cu greu/ cu dificultate*, *a merge cu pași greoi*, ‘walk/ step with difficulty, walk with heavy steps’. The additional feature ‘through water/ mud/ snow’ is rendered literally by means of an adjunct: *a merge/ păși cu greu/ cu dificultate prin noroi/ apă/ zăpadă*.

2.1.8. *Furtive motion*. Some verbs in this category such as *creep*<sub>1</sub>, *sneak*, *pussyfoot* have equivalent verbs in Romanian: *a se furișa*, *a se strecura*,

*a se fofila*. *Sidle* points to a lexical gap in Romanian; the features of ‘moving with one side foremost in a furtive or coy way’ are rendered in Romanian by adjuncts: *a merge înclinat (într-o parte)*, *a merge rușinos/ sfios*. The verb *tiptoe* has already been analysed.

## 2.2. Manners of Running

English has one verb to name this motor pattern, Romanian has two: *a fugi* and *a alerga*. Even if the latter is more formal and neological, they should be both considered as prototypical verbs for this motor pattern. There are fewer troponyms for this motor pattern in both languages: around 35 English and 15 Romanian basic one-word verbs. The most important feature to take into account here is *rate*; it combines with various other manner details.

2.2.1. *Increased walking rate*. This category covers the semantic area between walking and running. The typical English verbs are *hurry* and *hasten* and their Romanian counterparts are *a se grăbi*, *a zori*.

2.2.2. *Slow running rate*. There is an additional manner detail: regular steps. The verb *jog* encodes this combination of features. Romanian has no verb in this category; the lexical gap is filled by an expression which follows a different pattern from the one seen so far: *a face jogging*, ‘to practice jogging’. A general verb is used (not a motion hyperonym) and an English borrowing to name the action.

2.2.3. *Increased/ Decreased running rate*. This category includes such verbs as *accelerate*, *speed*, *sprint*, and *decelerate*. Romanian displays no lexical gaps; all the subfeatures are covered by verbs: *a accelera*, *a iuți*, *a sprinta*, and *a încetini*.

2.2.4.1. *Fast running rate*. There are several English verbs which encode this feature. Some also encode an additional and salient feature and will be listed separately; only those verbs whose basic feature is fast running rate have been included here: *clip*, *race*, and *hare*. Romanian has a general verb to denote fast rate, *a goni*, but also uses expressions such as *a fugi ca un iepure*, ‘to run like a hare/ rabbit’, *a fugi mâncând pământul*, ‘to burn the earth’.

2.2.4.2. *Fast running rate + starting point*. English has several verbs to lexicalize the feature: *bolt*, *dash*, *dart*; Romanian has only two: *a țâșni* and *(o) zbughi*.

2.2.4.3. *Fast running rate + violent motion*. English verbs to mention here: *hurtle*, *hurl*, *rush*. Romanian displays no lexical gaps: *a se năpusti*, *a se repezi*, *a se arunca (asupra)*, *a tăbări*.

2.2.4.4. *Fast running rate +noisy motion*. This is one of the very few categories where Romanian has no specific verb, while English has two: *whiz* and *zoom*. Romanian uses expressions such as *a trece val-vârtej/ vâjâind*, where the adjuncts encode the idea of noise.

2.2.5. *Information about steps*. English has several verbs which denote that the figure takes short/ small steps (*scurry, scuttle*) or long steps (*lope*) while running. Romanian does not have verbs to encode such manner details. Such features can only be rendered by adjuncts in Romanian: (?) *a fugi cu pași mici/ mari*.

2.2.6. *Joyful/ Playful motion*. This category combines characteristics of two motor patterns: running and jumping. I decided to list it under *ways of running* since the verbs seem to encode more features characteristic of this category. English has several verbs to name this feature: *frollic, frisk, caper, cavort, gambol*; Romanian has two: *a se zbengui* and *a zburda*.

### 2.3. Manners of Jumping

This category includes very few verbs in both languages. English has 7 verbs (*bound, hop, leap, leap-frog, skip, somersault, vault*); Romanian has 2 verbs (*a sălta* and *a țopăi*). *Bound* and *leap* denote that the figure takes large and/ or high jumps; this is the meaning of the Romanian *a sălta*. *Skip* implies that the Figure jumps after each step, on alternating feet; this is the meaning of the Romanian *a țopăi*.

The remaining English verbs show the lexical gaps in the Romanian field of manners of jumping. *Hop* denotes the manner of jumping on one leg; this is sometimes covered by the same *a țopăi* in Romanian, but an expression is most frequently used: *a sări într-un picior*, ‘jump on one leg’. The manner detail encoded by *leap-frog*, i.e. that a person bends down and someone else jumps over them, points to another lexical gap in Romanian. The gap is filled by the expression *a sări capra*, ‘capra’ being the Romanian name of the same game. *Somersault* is rendered by the expressions *a face o tumbă, a se da peste cap*, which describe the actual action. *Vault* is rendered by another expression describing the manner of jumping *a sări cu voltă*, ‘jump with a vault’.

### 3. Conclusion

The analysis of the troponyms of the three basic human locomotion categories/ motor patterns of walking, running, and jumping has revealed a huge number of lexical gaps in Romanian (There are about 120 English verbs



and only about 40 Romanian verbs which match my criteria). The category of walking is not named by a specific verb in Romanian. There is no evidence for lexical gaps in the English field from the perspective of Romanian, while an analysis of the lexical gaps which might occur in both languages is to be carried out in a forthcoming paper.

About two thirds of each motor pattern manner details are covered by expressions in Romanian. This result proves that Romanian is a verb-framed language, i.e. that it expresses manner-of-action by means of adjuncts. The manners which are never or rarely encoded in a Romanian verb are *psychological state of the figure*, and *information about the figure's steps/ toes/ hands*. The most frequent pattern of the Romanian expressions which fill in the lexical gaps in the field of human locomotion implies one of the basic human locomotion verbs and an adjunct which encodes manner-of-motion details.

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# APPROACHING THE INFORMATION UNIVERSE FOR TRANSLATION PURPOSES: THE ATOMISTIC PERSPECTIVE

DANIEL DEJICA

Polytechnical University of Timișoara

*Abstract:* This paper puts forward a methodology for source text analysis from an atomistic perspective. In the first part, the major concepts and their application for the identification and analysis of individual information units is presented. In the second part, the analysis is exemplified on a text, and in the third part, it is shown how this approach can be integrated into a translation process. The advantages of using this methodology are presented in the concluding part.

*Keywords:* source-text analysis, text perspectives, translation methodology, translation process.

## 1. Introduction

Recent studies claim that the more translators know about the structure and the dynamics of discourse, the more readily and accurately they can translate both the content and the spirit of a text (Nida 1997: 42; Dejica 2009a). Similarly, international research projects highlight directions of research which aim at helping translators make reasonable and consistent decisions as to the relevance and reliability of source text features in the target text (Gerzymisch-Arbogast 2005: 7). This paper is in line with such directions of research and presents a methodology for identifying and analysing salient text features for translation purposes.

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 2009b: 59). The translation process is seen as a series of three phases, i.e., reception, transfer, and reproduction (Nida 1964; Gerzymisch-Arbogast 2005), divided into a sequence of successive steps (Dejica 2009b: 152-167).

The first part of the paper introduces a series of new concepts and presents a suggested approach to the identification and analysis of individual information units in source texts. In the second part, the analysis is exemplified on a text and, in the last part, its possible integration into the translation process is presented. The methodology presented here has been developed for and is applicable to the translation of pragmatic, i.e. non-literary, texts.

## 2. The atomistic perspective to information universe analysis

All the constituents expressed in the source text and taken individually or relationally form what I call the *information universe* (IU) of the text (Dejica 2009b: 59). 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 this approach is formed of Themes and Rhemes (Dejica 2009b: 60-66).

In a recent paper, Gerzymisch-Arbogast (2006) introduces a theory of text perspectives, i.e. atomistic, hol-atomistic, holistic, and uses semantic parameters to analyse thematic and rhematic information in texts. In my interpretation of the text perspectives (Dejica 2009b: 68-70), I use the *atomistic perspective* to analyse the constituents of the Information Universe, i.e., Themes and Rhemes, taken individually, the *hol-atomistic perspective* to analyse different relations e.g. syntactic, semantic, cognitive, lexical, etc., between them at text level, and the *holistic perspective* to analyse the relations that can be established between them and other constituents from different information universes, e.g., cultural relations, above text levels.

In more detailed terms, the atomistic perspective presented here implies identification and analysis of individual information units from the thematic or rhematic information identified using a pragmatic Theme-Rheme model (Dejica 2009b: 60-66). I use the notion of ‘information unit’ (IUt) to refer to the smallest, atom-like constituents of the Information Universe, such as terms, neologisms, idiomatic expressions, multiword expressions, etc., which are analysed individually. The atomistic analysis does not consider the potential development of IU units into more complex textual dimensions as the text progresses. Such relations between the IU constituents represent the object of the hol-atomistic and holistic analyses.

The main aim of the atomistic analysis is to identify, and where necessary, disambiguate atom-like IU constituents embedded in the thematic and rhematic information, thus making text understanding possible and facilitating the production of the hol-atomistic analysis. The smallest, atom-like unit of construction in which information can be embedded in English is the phrase. Even if the word ‘phrase’ may suggest ‘more than word’, for reasons of simplicity, I take Ballard’s view (2001) according to which phrases may consist

of a single lexical item. Ballard justifies this treatment of phrases based on two principles:

The first is that, given the basic principle that words group together to form phrases, then we would not wish to have any words unaccounted for on that level of a clause's structure. This would not make for a very watertight or cohesive set of semantic rules. Secondly, all phrases have the potential to be expanded: the head word may stand alone, or it may be *premodified* or *postmodified* by other elements (Ballard 2001: 87).

Excellent approaches to phrases in English exist (Emonds 1985; Pârlog 1995; Dixon 1999; Koopman 2000; etc.), and a comprehensive presentation of them would exceed the aim of the present article. I shall only exemplify here the five types of phrases in English—noun phrase (NP), verb phrase (VP), adjective phrase (AdjP), adverb phrase (AdvP), and prepositional phrase (PP)—without going into further details:

Type of phrase	Examples
NP	(2.1.) No bank uses <i>retail money market mutual funds</i> any longer. (2.2.) <i>Doughnuts</i> are really fattening. (2.3.) <i>Cysive</i> and <i>Dreamery</i> are neologisms. (2.4.) Grandpa is <i>the best student</i> in the house. (2.5.) This is <i>so Zen!</i> (2.6.) <i>The beautiful house</i> has burned down. (2.7.) The rejection has made him <i>a cat's paw</i> .
VP	(2.8.) Sara <i>is helping her sister</i> . (2.9.) Mike <i>could have been skating</i> . (2.10.) Another one <i>bit the dust</i> .
AdjP	(2.11.) The hungry cat was feeling <i>extremely aggressive</i> .
AdvP	(2.12.) My new shoes <i>pinch me so uncomfortably</i> .
PP	(2.13.) Jack was searching <i>in the cupboard</i> .

**Table 2.1.** Exemplification of phrases in English

As the examples in Table 2.1. show, phrases can be used to introduce terms or terminological units, e.g., *mutual funds*, newly and deliberately coined words, e.g., *Cysive*, *Dreamery*, multiword expressions, e.g., *retail money market funds*, to express non-literal meanings, e.g., *student*, or cultural characteristics, e.g., *Zen*, etc. The examples also show that there are simple or multiword phrases which do not pose a problem as far as their interpretation is concerned, i.e., *doughnuts*, *retail money market funds*, *is helping*, but at the

same time, there are phrases whose meaning cannot be inferred from the meanings of the words that make them up, i.e., *a cat's paw* ('a person used by another to serve his purposes') or *to bite the dust* ('to die'). These latter examples are known under various terminologies, i.e., set phrases, fixed expressions or idioms, and like other aspects mentioned before, are generally considered to pose problems for translators.

The following presentation includes an overview of atomistic aspects, i.e., terms, proper names, multiword expressions, neologisms, and idioms, which I assume are most likely to occur in pragmatic texts and which can cause translation problems, with the aim of familiarizing the translator with the possible ways in which the IU constituents can be embedded.

## 2.1. Terms

Wright and Budin (2001) and Bowker and Pearson (2002) provide excellent and comprehensive overviews on terminology and LSP. This short introduction to the notion of 'term' follows their presentations. From an atomistic perspective, I am interested to show how to distinguish 'words' from 'terms' and specialized language from general language. LSP stands for *language for special purposes*, and according to Browker and Pearson,

... the easiest way to describe LSP is to put it in opposition to LGP, which refers to *language for general purposes*. LGP is the language that we use every day to talk about ordinary things in a variety of common situations. In contrast, LSP is the language to discuss specialized fields of knowledge (Browker and Pearson 2002: 25).

Browker and Pearson make it clear that every language has both LGP and LSP and that the discipline which is concerned with collecting and describing the vocabulary of specialized subject fields is called terminology. This specialized vocabulary is generally known as consisting of 'terms'.

Another clear-cut distinction between general vocabulary and specialized vocabulary is given by Wright and Budin (2001) in terms of lexicography and terminology. The following table synthesizes this distinction:

Lexicography ...	Terminology ...
deals with words (usually in isolation)	deals with terms and concepts
provides all grammatical information	provides only relevant grammatical information
describes, or at most, recommends usage	prescribes usage

treats words as a universal set taken from general language	treats terms belonging to a domain-specific special language
is arranged in strict alphabetical order	may be arranged according to a systematic concept structure, with alphabetical cross-listing ("grouping")

**Table 2.2.** Lexicography vs. Terminology

Wright and Budin (2001) state that sometimes the difference between a ‘word’ and a ‘term’ is misunderstood. A distinguishing feature of a term is that it is assigned to a single concept, e.g., the term *quality assurance*. Other indications which signal the existence of terms in texts are the frequency of use and typological enhancements, e.g., italics, quotation marks, etc. A characteristic of terms is that they have a rather limited set of morphological and lexical structures: generally, terms are nouns (simple, derived, or compound), but sometimes a verb, adjective, noun phrase, verb phrase, or adjective phrase may also be terms. A term may be a word (simple term), an expression (complex term), a chemical or mathematical formula, a scientific name in Latin, an acronym, an initialism, or the official title of a position, organization or administrative unit:

<b>Term type</b>	<b>Example</b>
Simple term	display
Complex term	liquid crystal display
Chemical formula	H <sub>2</sub> O
Scientific name in Latin	labyrinthus ethmoidalis (a mass of air cells with thin bony walls forming part of the lateral wall of the nasal cavity)
Acronym	GUI (graphical user interface)
Official title	Dominion of Canada

**Table 2.3.** Exemplification of term types

The same characteristics which distinguish a term from a word apply between a complex term and a multiword expression, compound, or complex phrase. For instance, *stylish beautiful apartment* in example 2.14. is a complex nominal phrase, an atomistic feature in itself, which constitutes the object of the atomistic analysis, as well, but which is to be distinguished from *marginal factor costs* in example 2.15., which is a term in economics.

- (2.14.) They have just visited a *stylish beautiful apartment*.  
(2.15.) The report did not reflect *marginal factor costs*.

Other multiword expressions which are not terms in themselves, e.g., *techniques supporting heterogeneous modelling*, but which contain terms, in this example, *heterogeneous modelling*, will be treated in this approach as multiword terminological expressions; they are phrases and will also be treated atomistically, but they are to be differentiated from complex terms, e.g., *liquid crystal display*, which are terms per se. Economic terms, technical terms, cultural terms, institutional terms, are just some examples of terms which make the object of study of LSP.

## 2.2. Proper names

Proper names are nouns representing unique entities, e.g., *Paris*, *Universe* or *Bob*, as distinguished from common nouns which describe a class of entities, e.g., *city*, *planet* or *person*. I see proper names as atoms which should also be analysed individually; due to cultural differences between languages, translating proper names has constituted a constant reason of debate among translators. Newmark (1988) identified a series of such proper names which can be problematic in translation; it includes historical figures, literary proper names, geographical names, forms of address, names of institutions, and names of newspapers.

## 2.3. Neologisms

Crystal (1995: 455) defines *neologism* as “the creation of a new word out of existing elements”. A wider definition of the concept appears in Wikipedia, where *neologism* is defined as a word, term, or phrase that has been recently created (or “coined”), often to apply to new concepts, to synthesize pre-existing concepts, or to make older terminology sound more contemporary. What is to be noted in this Wikipedia definition is that neologisms are seen as words, terms, or phrases: this viewpoint will be preserved in the atomistic analysis, and neologisms will be seen as *new* ways of expressing concepts which have not been accepted into a mainstream language, regardless of their linguistic occurrence, e.g., word, term, or phrase. Famous examples of neologisms include *misunderestimate* (George W. Bush) or the famous i-series from Apple, e.g., *iTunes*, *iPhone*, *iPod*, etc:

(2.16.) They underestimated me.

<http://grammar.about.com/od/mo/g/neologismterm.htm>

(2.17.) iTunes, which is currently only available in the US, has had over 4 million paying customers in its first six weeks of operation and sparked hopes among record companies and web distributors that users can be tempted away from illegal download sites such as Kazaa and WinMX.

(<http://rdues.uce.ac.uk/newwds/2003.html>)

## 2.4. Idiomatic expressions

The term *idiom* is usually used to refer to an expression whose meanings cannot be inferred from the meanings of the words that make it up (Princeton.edu). There are many extensive presentations and classifications of idioms in English (Makkai 1972; Hockett 1958). Idioms can be phrasal verbs, e.g., *make away with*, *play up to*, tournures, e.g., *let the cat out of the bag*, *miss the boat*, irreversible binomials, e.g., *clock and dagger*, *hammer and tongues*, phrasal compounds, e.g., *big shot*, *catwalk*, incorporating verb idioms, e.g., *to apple-polish*, *to blacklist*, and pseudo-idioms, e.g., *hankey-pankey*, *knick-knacks*, which Makkai calls lexemic, but also proverbs, e.g., *don't count your chickens before they're hatched*, familiar quotations, e.g., *not a mouse stirring*, idioms of institutionalized politeness, e.g., *may I...x?* and idioms of institutionalized understatement and detachment, e.g., *I wasn't too crazy about him*, which he calls sememic.

Hockett's (1958: 172) definition and expanded treatment of the term idiom includes proverbial phrases, quotations, literary allusions, unfinished allusions, abbreviations, but also proper names like *Castor and Pollux*, *Adam and Eve*, *Romeo and Juliet*, etc. These are considered to be idioms in Hockett's approach because they share the feature of idiomatic irreversibility. This means that an irreversible binomial like *Venus and Adonis* is no longer an idiom if it is used in reverse order, *Adonis and Venus*. Nor are *Venus* or *Adonis* if they occur separately in a text.

Knowledge of idiomatic expressions can help translators differentiate between phrases in the form of multiword expressions with non-idiomatic meaning, e.g., 'retail money market mutual funds', and phrases whose meaning cannot be inferred from the sum of the individual meanings of their words, e.g., 'black bottom' (a dance popular in the late 1920's). Such differentiations are of importance since idiomatic expressions are considered language- and culture-specific and therefore constitute possible translation problems.

The relevance of the atomistic analysis of the IU constituents which display term, idiomatic, etc., behaviour resides in the importance of identifying a source text feature, analyzing it, and finding the correct equivalent in the



target language. This last aspect will be discussed in Section 4, where the reproduction phase of translation is presented.

### 3. Explication and exemplification of the atomistic analysis

As I stated before, the atomistic analysis of the information universe constituents facilitates text understanding and contributes to the production of the hol-atomistic analysis. It is suggested here that in the translation process, identified atomistic aspects, e.g., neologisms, fixed expressions, geographical names, terms, etc., be classified into an aspective matrix which can allow for transparency of an individual reading and interpretation in terms of explicitly answering the question of which aspects are relevant in the (source and target) text.

Table 3.1. presents a synthesis of text features or aspects as discussed in the previous section and their possible representation into an aspective matrix. I do not see it as a pre-defined or as a pre-established aspective matrix which will be applied on all texts. It constitutes a prerequisite of knowledge needed for the analysis of atomistic information in texts. Each text will display its own atomistic features which will be identified and integrated into a matrix progressively while reading the text. The atomistic aspects are by far more comprehensive in this approach; other aspects, i.e., metaphor, etc., which are not likely to occur in pragmatic texts, were not accounted for:

Aspects	Terms (LSP)	Multiword terminological expressions (LSP)	Multiword expressions (LGP)	Proper names	Neologisms	Idiomatic Expressions
IU constituents at sentence level						
Text segments						

**Table 3.1.** General aspective matrix

I see the atomistic analysis as a two-step process consisting of the identification of IU constituents and of the analysis of atomistic features of the identified IU constituents. These two steps are to be performed in the reception phase of the translation process. For exemplification, I will use example 3.1., a sample of a text taken from a project objectives' section (Project Ptolemy):

#### (3.1.) Ptolemy Project 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 (<http://ptolemy.eecs.berkeley.edu>).

The identification of IU constituents is based on a suggested Theme-Rheme model presented in detail in DeJica (2009: 60-66). For space reasons only the so-identified Themes and Rhemes are presented here:

1. Theme – given information, already mentioned in the TT: ‘*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.

Applied to the thematic and rhematic information identified in the Ptolemy Project example, the atomistic analysis (Table 3.2.) reveals that the text is highly specialized and that it contains numerous terms and multiword terminological expressions.

Aspects	Terms	Multiword terminological expressions	Neologisms
<b>IU constituents at sentence level</b>			
<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	dataflow, process, network, systems, languages	dataflow and process networks, discrete-event systems, synchronous/	-

processes.		reactive languages, finite-state machines, communicating sequential processes	
<i>It will make contributions ranging from fundamental semantics to synthesis of embedded software and custom hardware.</i>	fundamental semantics, software, hardware	embedded software, custom hardware	-

**Table 3.2.** Exemplification of an aspective matrix on a text

The relevance for translation of the atomistic analysis and the aspective matrix so-created is that they help to identify, visualize, and draw the attention on such phrases, which may be a single term in one language, but a complex phrase in the other or vice versa. The atomistic perspective facilitates text understanding and raises awareness about the fact that individual atom-like IU constituents may generate translation problems.

#### 4. The atomistic analysis and translation

Once the translator has atomistically identified and analysed the salient source text features in the reception phase of translation, s/he continues with the transfer phase. In this phase, the translator uses the aspective matrix which resulted from the atomistic analysis and which displays the salient features of the source text in order to identify possible corresponding IU constituents in the target language. Once the translator identifies such constituents, s/he introduces them in an extended matrix. This new matrix contains the salient text features in the source text (ST) together with all of their possible equivalents in the target language (TL).

Table 4.1. presents the extended aspective matrix for the first text segment in the analysed example (Project Ptolemy):

<b>As pects</b>	<b>Terms ST</b>	<b>Terms TL*</b>	<b>Multiword terminological expressions ST</b>	<b>Multiword terminologic al expressions TL</b>	<b>Neologis ms ST</b>	<b>Neologisms TL</b>
<b>IU constituents at sentence level</b>						

<i>The project aims to develop techniques supporting heterogeneous modeling, including both formal "meta-models" and a software laboratory for experimenting with heterogeneous modeling.</i>	modelling	1. modelare 2. modeling 3. utilizarea calculatoarelor pentru a descrie comportamentul unui sistem	techniques supporting heterogeneous modelling	1. tehnici care accepta modelare eterogena 2. tehnici care accepta modeling eterogen	meta-models	1. metamodele
	software	1. software 2. program 3. programe de calculator 4. programme control	formal "meta-models"	1. metamodele formale		
			software laboratory	1. laborator software 2. laborator de programe		

**Table 4.1.** Extended aspective matrix

Based on the extended matrix and using the most appropriate translation strategies, the translator decides upon a final matrix which will be used as a basis for translation in the reproduction phase. The final matrix is built taking into account the purpose of the text, the writer's intention and/ or the client expectations. Tables 4.2. and 4.3. present two possible final matrices, one for a source-oriented and another one for a target-oriented version of the original text (language pair: English-Romanian):

<b>Aspects</b>	<b>Terms ST</b>	<b>Terms TL</b>	<b>Multword terminological expressions ST</b>	<b>Multword terminological expressions TL</b>	<b>Neologisms ST</b>	<b>Neologisms TL</b>
<b>IU constituents at sentence level</b>						
<i>The project aims to develop techniques supporting heterogeneous modeling, including both formal "meta-models" and a software laboratory for</i>	modelling	2. modelling	techniques supporting heterogeneous modelling	2. tehnici care accepta modeling eterogen	meta-models	1. meta-modele
	software	1. software	formal "meta-models"	1. meta-modele formale		
			software laboratory	1. laborator software		

experimenting with heterogeneous modeling.						
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**Table 4.2.** Final aspective matrix: source-oriented

<b>Aspects</b>	<b>Terms ST</b>	<b>Terms TL</b>	<b>Multiword terminological expressions ST</b>	<b>Multiword terminological expressions TL</b>	<b>Neologisms ST</b>	<b>Neologisms TL</b>
<b>IU constituents at sentence level</b>						
<i>The project aims to develop techniques supporting heterogeneous modeling, including both formal "meta-models" and a software laboratory for experimenting with heterogeneous modeling.</i>	modelling	1. modelare	techniques supporting heterogeneous modelling	2. tehnici care accepta modeling eterogen	meta-models	1. meta-modele
	software	2. program	formal "meta-models"	1. metamodele formale		
			software laboratory	2. laborator de programe		

**Table 4.3.** Final aspective matrix: target-oriented

## 5. Conclusion

The atomistic analysis is only one phase in the process of source text analysis for translation. It should be used in conjunction with the hol-atomistic and holistic analyses (Dejica 2008; 2009b) so as to create a complete image of the text to be translated. The major advantages of the atomistic analysis when applied to translation are that it offers a transparent view of the salient features of the source text, it ensures consistent identification and use of these features in the target language and text, and last but not least, it helps the translator create source- or target oriented versions of the text to be translated, depending on the intention of the writer, purpose of the text, or client's expectations and requirements. Besides its practical applicability, the methodology presented here can be used as didactic material in translation classes, as well.

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## SEMANTIC RELATIONS

GORDANA DIMKOVIĆ-TELEBAKOVIĆ

University of Belgrade

***Abstract:** In this article, I report on a research into how some verbs of motion are used in general English and specialized contexts. Verb meanings are considered with regard to a set of distinctive features. The comparison of verb meanings in different settings results in certain semantic relations. The semantic relations - correspondence, reflexive marking and the shift of meaning, as well as their combinations – are analysed here in detail.*

***Keywords:** correspondence, reflexive marking, semantic relations, shift of meaning.*

### 1. Introduction

The componential method is employed here to reveal the lexical structure of six verbs of motion used in both general and specialized contexts, particularly in waterways traffic field, although the study incorporated fifty-four verbs of motion (see Dimković-Telebaković 2003). To establish semantic relations, six ‘distinctive features’ (‘oppositions’) are discussed: ‘+/- under control’, ‘+/- own energy’, ‘+/- telic’, ‘+/- directional movement’, ‘↑/↓ dangerous’ and ‘↑/↓ non-movement to movement transition or movement to non-movement transition’. The following ‘distinctive features’, found in dictionary definitions of the analysed verbs, are not considered here: ‘+/- water contact’, ‘+/- movement from one place to another’, ‘+/- disrupted movement’, and ‘↑/↓ speed’ (cf. Dimković-Telebaković 2007). The opposition ‘↑/↓ dangerous’ is introduced to indicate that movements can be performed with a certain risk. If there is a high risk in movement, the feature ‘↑ dangerous’ is used, and if there is a low risk in movement, the feature ‘↓ dangerous’ is needed. Hüllen (1981), for example, uses ‘+/- normal’ for ‘↑/↓ dangerous’. Nida (1975: 229), however, prefers the term ‘diagnostic components’ to ‘distinctive features’. Other terms are also used in the literature such as ‘distinctive components’ or ‘contrastive components’, but they all serve to distinguish one meaning from another, whether the meanings belong to one word or several words.

## 2. Semantic relations obtained from the analysis

Three main semantic relations are established with regard to the above mentioned distinctive features. They are as follows: 'correspondence', 'reflexive marking' and 'the shift of meaning'. This section of the article contains examples demonstrating these relations as well as their combinations.

### 2.1. Correspondence

The semantic relation 'correspondence' is established between verbs used in general and specialized settings in cases when verbal meanings correspond to one another. The subjects, agentives, can be either animate beings or inanimate beings in the two uses, which also signals correspondence.

- (1) W: Foot-passengers will disembark from C deck on the starboard side.  
G: Tom and Jane have just disembarked.  
(‘W’ indicates verbal usage in waterways traffic, while ‘G’ designates general use of the verbs under consideration).

The verb *disembark* has the meaning of ‘to go on shore (from a ship)’, ‘to put on shore (people)’ in example (1) W, and the meaning of ‘to leave a vessel/ craft’ in example (1) G. With regard to ‘+ *under control*’, the verb establishes the semantic relation ‘correspondence’, since the subjects, agentives, in both sentences ((1) W and G) are animate beings, and the meanings correspond to each other. The verb *disembark* shows that some verbs of motion in English are more often used in specialized contexts than in general use.

### 2.2. Reflexive marking

The semantic relation ‘reflexive marking’ occurs in cases when the subject, agentive of a sentence, in general use is an animate being, and when the agentive/ instrument and objective/ indirect objective (dative) of a sentence in specialist use are identical. Any ‘+’ feature is called ‘marking’ and ‘reflexive’ is related to an identity of agentive/ instrument and objective/ indirect objective (dative).

- (2) G: He dived from the bridge.  
W: The submarine dived quickly.



The verb *dive* shows that in regard to the distinctive feature ‘+ *own energy*’ the semantic relation ‘reflexive marking’ is established between the two sentences (in (2) G and W). The meaning of the verb *dive* in sentence (2) G is even more specified by the use of ‘from the bridge’, so that it is clear that the movement is performed from the bridge, through the air, and into the water. The verb *dive* has therefore the following meanings in the two sentences: ‘to go head first into water’ or ‘to move sth quickly and suddenly downwards (into sth)’ in sentence (2) G, and ‘(of a submarine) to go under water’ in sentence (2) W. It is also of importance to say that in the language of sailors the difference between agentive/ instrument disappears, so as the person who causes the movement is not the cause of movement. This person is usually the sailor/ captain, and that is why there is the semantic relation: the sailor/ captain uses engines as instruments to produce energy which makes the submarine/ ship with engines and the sailor/ captain move.

### **2.3. The shift of meaning**

Any change in meaning between verbs used in general and specific contexts demonstrates the semantic relation ‘the shift of meaning’.

- (3) G: The search was abandoned when night came, even though the child had not been found.  
W: The sailors abandoned the burning ship.

If we look at the verb *abandon* with regard to the feature ‘+ *telic*’, it is obvious that there is the semantic relation ‘the shift of meaning’ between sentence (3) G and sentence (3) W. The verb has the following meanings: ‘to give up, esp. without finishing’ in sentence (3) G, and ‘to leave without intending to return’ in sentence (3) W. The agentives in both sentences are animate beings.

### **2.4. Possible combinations of the three main semantic relations**

This section of the paper is intended to show that the three main semantic relations can have two combinations: ‘correspondence and reflexive marking’, and ‘reflexive marking and the shift of meaning’.

#### **2.4.1. Correspondence and reflexive marking**

Based on the analysis carried out in this paper up to now, we can say that this combination – ‘correspondence and reflexive marking’ – seems to be

paradoxical. Sentences in example (4) illustrate how semantic and grammatical elements combine to produce unexpected effects. It is interesting that this combination is possible in use.

- (4) G: Where are you bound (for)?  
W: This ship is bound for Bar.  
Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. On behalf of our captain, we would like to welcome you on board *Viking* bound for Amsterdam.

The verb *to be bound for* conveys the same meaning ‘to be ready to start’, ‘to go to’ in both general English (in sentence (4) G) and in ESP waterways traffic field (in sentences (4) W). It establishes the relationship ‘correspondence and reflexive marking’ regarding the distinctive feature ‘+ *directional movement*’.

#### **2.4.2. Reflexive marking and the shift of meaning**

The combination ‘reflexive marking and the shift of meaning’ does not seem to be odd at all. However, it reveals that certain verbs of motion in English can have different distinctive features for meanings carried in general and specific use, as shown by example (5).

- (5) W: The ship heeled to port.  
G: The dog heeled the master.

The use of the verb *heel* demonstrates the relations ‘reflexive marking and the shift of meaning’, established between the two sentences (in (5) W and G). The shift of meaning goes from ‘to incline or be inclined to one side’ in example (5) W to ‘to move along at the heels of someone’ in example (5) G. The semantic relations established here are obtained based on the distinctive feature ‘ $\uparrow$ *dangerous*’ in regard to waterways traffic usage of the verb *heel*, since the ship can turn and possibly sink. The use of the verb *heel* in general English (sentence (5) G) shows that there is no risk. The distinctive feature relevant to the verbal meaning in sentence (5) G is ‘+ *under control*’.

#### **2.4.3. Reflexive marking and the shift of meaning, and correspondence and reflexive marking**

We can sometimes find English verbs of motion having both combinations: ‘reflexive marking and the shift of meaning’, and

‘correspondence and reflexive marking’ when used in general English and specialized fields, that is, waterways traffic.

- (6) G: Are they still calling?  
I have broken my leg, call the doctor.  
Tom called on me yesterday.  
Did John call?  
W: Does the steamer call at Belgrade?

With regard to the distinctive feature ‘ $\downarrow$  transition from movement to non-movement’, the verb *call* demonstrates the relation ‘the shift of meaning’ when the first sentence and the second sentence in example (6) G and sentence (6) W are under discussion. The meaning changes from ‘to shout’, ‘to telephone’ in the above mentioned sentences (6) G to ‘to visit a port by a vessel’ in sentence (6) W. The verb *call* in this case is not a verb of motion in general use, but the sentences show that there is also the semantic relation ‘reflexive marking’ established between the verb *call* used in general and specialist context.

If we now take up the third sentence and the fourth sentence in example (6) G in relation to sentence (6) W, it is possible to notice that the verb *call* sets up the combination of semantic relations ‘correspondence and reflexive marking’.

### 3. Conclusion

The analysis shows that there are three main relations which can be established between the verbs of motion used in general and specific use. Apart from the semantic relations ‘correspondence’, ‘reflexive marking’ and ‘the shift of meaning’, their combinations also proved to be possible. These relations are obtained from verbal meanings with regard to six distinctive features. Lexical structure of the verbs is identified by means of componential method.

It has been found that some verbs of motion have the same meaning when used in waterway traffic and in general English. Sometimes certain verbs of motion used in specialist contexts do not behave as such in general usage. Some examples in the article also illustrate that the verbs of motion can have different distinctive features for meanings conveyed in general and specific use. The results indicate that pragmatics and semantics are interrelated.

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# AM I A 'FEMEIE IOANA' OR A 'COSMO GIRL'? A CASE STUDY OF TWO WOMEN MAGAZINES IN ROMANIA

CODRUȚA GOȘA and LUMINIȚA FRENȚIU

University of Timișoara

*Abstract:* Our paper presents an exploratory study on a comparison between two women's magazines available on the Romanian market: the local version of the international Cosmopolitan and the local Ioana. The purpose of our analysis was to identify the values, beliefs and practices these magazines instantiate and how the female target readers are constructed.

*Key words:* discourse analysis, construction of identity, gender roles,

## 1. Introductory remarks

The reason why we have chosen the topic of our study is that we take the view that language is used in the mass media in order to shape values and beliefs. We also believe that no media genre only reports facts which are an objective representation of real social phenomena. However, our main concern in the present case study of Romanian female magazines is the way in which identity is constructed, as well as the 'profiles' of the targeted readership put forward in the magazines under scrutiny. We aim to identify, compare and document the predominant gender role(s) instantiated in two different women magazines available on the Romanian market. Our analysis will draw on discourse analysis as an umbrella theoretical framework and will be based on both content and linguistic analysis tools. Our endeavour seeks to join in a trend which has become more and more prominent and relevant these past few years (see, for example, Fowler 1991, Scollon 1998, Fairclough 2003 and 2006): the analysis of the media, as one of the most potent, influential and manipulative social phenomena of our times.

First we will clarify the theoretical concepts our study is going to operate with, then we will discuss the most important methodological issues underlying it, finally we will present the findings of our analysis and discuss the implications.

## 2. Theoretical underpinnings

As mentioned previously, the purpose of our analysis is to identify the gender roles that are constructed and what shapes they take as instantiated by a

case study. To this end, concepts such as construction of identity as an instrument pertaining to discourse analysis, gender roles and the issues they entail have to be discussed and clarified.

### **2.1. Discourse analysis**

The macro theoretical frame of our study is discourse analysis, a very complex and much discussed field in recent years. The clarifications from the literature presented below help us contextualize our own project in this respect. Thus:

“... discourse analysis is generally concerned not with isolated decontextualised sentences but with uncovering of patterns and regularities which occur between and across sentences or conversational turns as they are *used* in real contexts of language.” (Carter 1997: xiv, original use of italics)

Secondly, discourse analysis is:

“A study of the way versions of the world, society, events and psyche are produced in the use of language and discourse. The Foucauldian version is concerned with the construction of subjects within various forms of knowledge/power.” (www.creativityandcognition.com/content/view/129/131/)

It can therefore be argued that discourse analysis, as analysis of language ‘beyond the sentence’ (Tannen <http://www.lsadc.org/info/ling-fields-discourse.cfm>) differs to a great extent from typical linguistic analysis which basically deals with the study of grammar. Discourse analysis is concerned with larger units of language seen in connection with the situation in which they are produced. The social aspect of discourse analysis is enhanced in the case of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) which is an interdisciplinary approach to the study of discourse, rooted in discourse analysis but whose proponents view language as a form of social practice. For example, Fairclough (2003: 3) claims:

“My own approach to discourse analysis has been to try and transcend the division between work inspired by social theory which tend not to analyse texts, and work which focuses upon the language of texts but tends not to engage with theoretical issues. This is not, or should not be an ‘either/or’. On the one hand, any analysis which aims to be significant in social scientific terms has to connect with theoretical questions about discourse (e.g. the socially ‘constructive’ effects of discourse). On the

other hand, no real understanding of the social effects of discourse is possible without looking closely at what happens when people talk or write". (Fairclough 2003: 3)

To this end, we regard our approach to this study as pertaining to the CDA, since the social role plays a crucial part in our analysis and interpretation of the findings.

## **2.2. Construction of identity**

"Within that social interaction, identities are not simply taken for granted; they are established through discursive means which delegate not only identity, voice, and rights to topic, but also status and position within the general journalistic discourse." (Scollon, R., 1998: 189)

As the above quote illustrates, identities (who am I?) are constructed by resorting to various linguistic and discursive strategies. Ivanič, 1997 claims, in the next quote, that the authors of texts do not just reflect their identities (as shaped by their gender, culture or ethnicity) but they also put forward their values beliefs and practices.

"Writing is an act of identity in which people align themselves with socio-culturally shaped possibilities of self-hood, playing their part in reproducing or challenging dominant practices and discourses, and the values and beliefs they embody." (Ivanič, 1997:32)

In brief, we take the view that the kind of language used to construct texts embeds 'who' the 'producer' of the texts is, 'how' the expected readers are seen and 'what' they should believe in.

### **2.2.1. Construction of gender-related identity**

The concept of gender has for the last two decades been intensely debated in feminist studies and various attempts to define and clarify it have been made especially when it comes to the relationships between sex and gender. Lee (2005) argues that:

"Gender-related experiences influence and shape the ways we think about others and ourselves including self-image, behavior, mood, social advancement and coping strategies." (Lee 2005: VI)

Mills (1995:4) on the other hand observes that in the case of 'gender' women are viewed less as a fixed, homogeneous caste than a grouping of people intersected and acted upon by other variables and elements, such as class, race, age, sexual orientations, education and so on. Moreover, she claims:

“Sexual difference is considered relationally than essentially; so that, when discussing the nature of femininity, it is only possible to do in relation to other forms of sexual identity, such as masculinity.” (Mills 1995:4)

We agree that when discussing or researching gender one should view it 'relationally' as a principle and not per se or a status quo and this end we approach the issue of gender construction in relation to the context in which it is investigated rather than in relation to masculinity. Thus the relation with gender roles presented next play, under the circumstances, an important part in our investigation.

#### **2.2.1.1. Gender roles**

The main factors around which gender roles are conceptualized are summarized as follows'. Thus they:

- encompass but go far beyond biological sex
- can be defined as a set of perceived behavioural norms associated particularly with males or females
- are socially prescribed
- are deemed appropriate for each sex by the culture we live in
- put forward the values, beliefs and practices that define a person's stereotypical identity, e.g. women cook and clean, men fix cars
- change over time as cultures and societies are dynamic, how and how fast they may change are matters of debate

As far as the representations of gender roles in the media are concerned, Caldas-Coulthard (1995) claims that:

“Men, in general, are presented speaking in their public or professional roles, while women, when they speak, are identified with the private sphere. They are the mothers, the daughters, the wives, the widows, the page three girls, the stars. The private/public distinction is a very important feature of social organization. If women are represented



mostly speaking in their personal roles, they are marginalized in terms of public or ritual speech.” (Caldas-Coulthard 1995:227)

To this end, researchers such as Bignell (1997), analysed, for example, the semiotic codes of the front covers of teenage magazines ‘to demonstrate how the media constructs the image and behavioural ideology of the teenage girl’. (Bignell 1997:78). He concludes that each of these signs have been chosen to generate a certain meaning. Bignell also argues that the function of magazines is ‘to provide readers with a sense of community, comfort, and pride in this mythic feminine identity’ (Bignell 1997:61). It attempts to convince us that it is not a fictive document, that it is a true reflection of reality, a window into the real world of the woman. According to Bignell, the images of beautiful women on the covers of female magazines are ‘iconic signs which represent the better self which every woman desires to become’ (Bignell 1997:69). The figure thus represents the self for the reader, a future image that is attainable for her if she continues reading and learning from the magazine. On a male magazine however the same figure would represent a sexual image, an object to be attained by the male reader. It becomes evident therefore that ‘men look at women. Women watch themselves being looked at’.

### **3. Methodological underpinnings**

We see our endeavour as being a qualitative case study of an exploratory nature, as detailed below.

#### **3.1. Qualitative research**

Before 1960, quantitative paradigms dominated research in general, applied linguistics research included. Surveys as large as possible, as well as experiments, relying mostly on statistical data were almost solely considered scientific and rigorous. Later, various disciplines, such as anthropology, psychology, sociology started to use qualitative methods, first correlating them with quantitative ones, and then by using them singularly. In today’s research theory and practice, purely qualitative approaches are considered not only scientific and reliable but in some cases recommended. This tendency reflects that, perhaps, a new kind of researcher is as legitimate and valuable as the traditional one, a researcher interested in understanding a phenomenon in its complexity not just in terms of its generalisability. Hood (2009:67) correctly observes that ‘the qualitative researcher is interested in rich, real and uniquely human material’. Difficult as it may be to define qualitative research, there

seems to be one dimension where quite a number of social science researchers share the same view. This is the belief that while in quantitative research one operates mainly with numbers, in qualitative research 'words' are favoured. On the one hand it is seen as 'an umbrella term used to refer to a complex and evolving research methodology' (Croker 2009:4) and on the other, 'the kind of research where you collect opinions, observations and wordy statements, rather than numbers' (Riley 1996:9).

Thus, we consider our study to be qualitative in nature since no counting or statistical strategies will be used, since we try to understand a phenomenon in its uniqueness by resorting to strategies of analysis grounded in the data and that we make no claims of representativeness or generalisability.

### **3.2. Case study**

Case studies generally refer to the 'study of the 'particularity and complexity of a single case' (Stake 1995:xi). As Dörnyei (2007:151-152) observes

“...almost anything can serve as a case as long as it constitutes a single entity with clearly defined boundaries. Thus, the case study is not a specific technique but rather a method of collecting and organizing data so as to maximize our understanding of the unitary character of the social being or object studied.”

We view our study as being a case study, mainly because it is far from being a survey of women's magazines available on the Romanian market, both when it comes to brands (or kinds) and when it comes to the number of issues analysed. Additionally, we consider our data as a 'single entity', even though, as shown forward, one issue of two kinds of magazines were analysed. Their singularity, in our view, is given by their transnational character, their relative comparability in terms of their gender related audience, and their popularity. Our study is also exploratory in nature, since it was not prompted by any hypothesis, neither did it start from a specific micro-theory. Nevertheless, as shown previously, at the macro-level it is rooted in Critical Discourse Analysis. It is an inductive analytical endeavour which is grounded in the data.

### **3.3. The data**

The corpus we constructed for our analysis is provided by the April 2008 issues of the following two Romanian women magazines: *Cosmopolitan* and *Ioana*. The reason behind our choice of these two particular kinds of

women's magazines lies in their differences which we will briefly explore in this section.

Women's internationally branded magazines have been very successful in penetrating the Romanian market since 1989. These Western-style magazines, also present online, lead the way with international players like Ringier, Sanoma, Edipresse, Burda and WAZ, which penetrated the Romanian market in 90's and are now dominating it. Magazines like *Cosmopolitan*, *Vogue*, *Elle* seem to be highly appreciated by young urban, middle class, educated, career-oriented modern females, leaving little room for local magazines such as *Ioana*, *Libertatea pentru Femei*, *Povestea mea*, *Întâmplări adevărate*. The latter ones are generally seen as addressing women who are less educated and well off.

The general perception of the magazines mentioned above as being divided into two distinct and very different groups due to their targeted readership prompted the selection of the two magazines that we decided to investigate. Thus, we decided to focus on *Cosmopolitan*, as one of the most famous international magazines, the proponent of the concept of *cosmogirl*, as compared to the Romanian made *Ioana*, *Ioana* being a very common first name in Romanian.

#### **4. Analysis and findings**

The analytical framework which we adopted after reading and re-reading our corpus and which was prompted by Bignell (1997:78) is based on the argument that magazines are 'just a collection a signs'. What he calls 'signs' placing himself in a semiotic paradigm, may include, in our view, various elements such as themes approached, layout, the colours, text titles, the texture of the paper, the language adopted, the content of the articles and so on, each of these having been chosen to generate a meaning. Magazines are therefore complex collections of visual and written codes that can be extensively decoded and analysed by their readers.

To this end, we tried to identify the similarities and differences between the two women magazines under scrutiny in terms of:

- general features
- cover pages
- advertisements: number and products
- themes
- types of texts

- Anglicisms
- Editorials

#### 4.1 General features

What we understood by general features and the comparative findings identified are presented in the table below

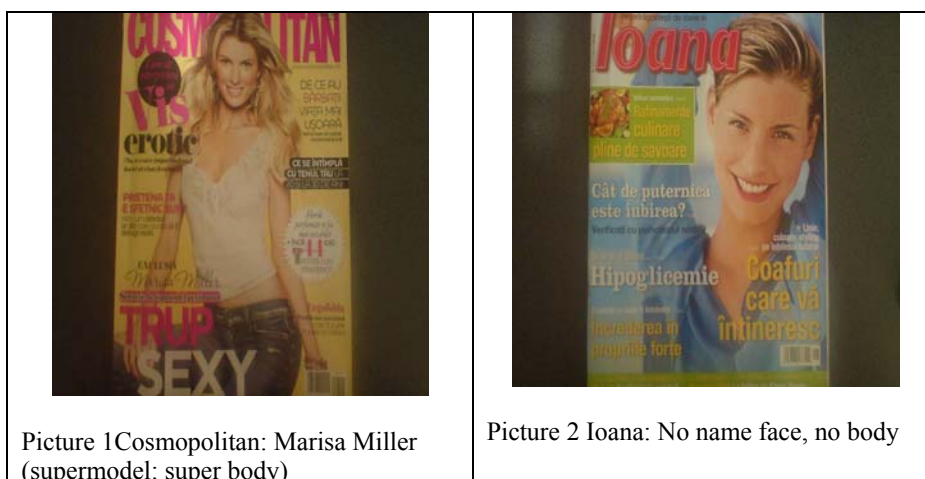
Table 1. General features of the two magazines investigated

The magazines	<i>COSMOPOLITAN</i>	<i>IOANA</i>
Paper	Glossy	Plain
Size	A4	A5
No. of pages	147	74
Price	6.3 RON	2.5 RON

As it can be seen from the table, the major difference between the two magazines is that *Cosmopolitan* is much more ‘luxurious’ than *Ioana*, both in ‘looks’ and in costs, the assumption being that the former addresses women who are much more well off than the latter.

#### 4.2. Cover pages

As the two pictures below show, the faces on the cover pages of the two magazines tell a different kind of story.



Picture 1 Cosmopolitan: Marisa Miller (supermodel: super body)

Picture 2 Ioana: No name face, no body

Thus the targeted female readers are invited to identify with very different models: a famous, gorgeous super model with a perfect body in the case of *Cosmopolitan*, as compared to an anonymous, nameless (though pretty) face.

### 4.3. Advertisements: number and type of products advertised

In this section we will speak about the types of advertisements identified in the two magazines as well as the products they advertise, in order to identify any dissimilarities between them and then try to account for what they might further tell us about the profile of their targeted female readership. First we will analyse full page advertisements and then we will discuss the smaller ones. There are differences between the two magazines, when it comes to advertisements, concerning both the quantity and the quality of these advertisements. For example, *Cosmopolitan* has 41 full page advertisements representing 30% of the total number of pages, while *Ioana* has 8 full page advertisements, representing only 10% of the total number of pages. Additionally, there are differences which refer to the kind of product they advertise as well as the number of advertisements pertaining to that kind. The following two tables summarise these differences.

Table 2 Number of ads across the kind of product advertised: full page ads

Product advertised	<i>Cosmopolitan</i>	<i>Ioana</i>
Make up	4	
Luxury perfumes	10	
Street fashion brand shops	8	1
Beauty creams (face and body)	6	2
Hairstyling products	3	
Hygiene	2	
Edibles (chocolate + juice + tea + coffee)	5	
Mobile phones and gadgets	3	1
Other magazines (home decoration)	-	1
TV and radio programmes	-	2
OTCs	-	1
Beauty centres	1	
Medical centres		1

The case of small ads confirms the pattern of differences found in full page ads.

Table 3 No. of smaller ads across the kind of product advertised:

Product advertised	<i>Cosmopolitan</i>	<i>Ioana</i>
Beauty	10	3
Fashion	4	1
Hygiene	1	1
Edibles (chocolate + juice + tea + coffee)	3	10
Mobile phones, gadgets and cars	2	1 (vacuum cleaner)
OTCs	-	6
Beauty Centers	3	
Medical centres	-	1
Trade fairs		1
Advocacy ads		1
Museums		1
Fiction	3	6
Films	3	

As the two tables above show, advertisements found in *Cosmopolitan* referring to beauty, fashion or style are much more consistent than those found in *Ioana*. The products advertised in *Ioana*, however, include advertisements that refer to more domestically oriented products such as vacuum cleaners while some beauty products found in *Cosmopolitan* are completely absent (e.g. luxury perfumes).

#### 4.4. Themes

The differences between the two magazines are more prominent and support the trend identified when we analysed advertisements. The table below presents the findings.

Table 4 The themes approached in the two magazines studied

Themes	<i>Cosmopolitan</i>	<i>Ioana</i>
Style (beauty and fashion)	√	√
Dating	√	
Getting pregnant (willingly or unwillingly)	√	

Sex	√	
Cheating	√	
Couple relationships	√	√
Wellness	√	√
Celebs	√	
Friends	√	
Films & entertainment	√	
Know yourself	√	
Confessions	√	
Job and money	√	√
Food and drinks	√	√
Horoscope	√	√
Holidays & travel	√	√
Did you know that?		√
Painting		√
Environment protection		√
Gardening and flowers		√
Health		√
Child care		√
Cooking (recipes)		√

Sex-oriented themes (e.g. dating, cheating) which are present in *Cosmopolitan* but are absent in *Ioana*. *Ioana*, on the other hand approaches themes like ‘gardening’ ‘health’ ‘childcare’ and ‘cooking’ which are more homemaking oriented and cannot be found in *Cosmopolitan*. Moreover, the most important theme, at least quantitatively, according to the number of pages dedicated to it is ‘style’, in *Cosmopolitan*. Thus there are 64 pages referring to style (including the ads) representing 45% of the total number of pages. In *Ioana*, nevertheless, the most important theme is ‘cooking’, as 15 pages are dedicated to it, representing 20% of the total number of pages.

#### 4.5. Types of text

When it comes to the types of texts present in the two magazines, no major differences were identified, as shown in the following table.

Table 5 The types of texts identified in the two magazines studied

Types of text	<i>Cosmopolitan</i>	<i>Ioana</i>
Ads	√	√
Contents page	√	√

Editorials	√	√
Tips/Recipes	√	√
Quizzes	√	√
Thematic articles	√	
Horoscopes	√	√
Reviews	√	√
Interviews		√
Aunt Agony Columns	√	

It is worth mentioning that the predominant types of texts identified (excluding the ads) in both magazines were tips and recipes.

#### 4.6. Anglicisms

The presence of Anglicisms (English words used in the Romanian context of the magazines) came forward quite strongly when we started reading and re-reading the two issues investigated. In the following checklists we will record these Anglicisms by magazines and by locus, i.e. in titles or in text.

##### *COSMOPOLITAN:*

- In titles - book, film and song titles are never translated: *hitul 'Poker Face', cartea 'Verbal Abuse'*
- section titles, most often than not, are either
  - in English: *Cosmo news, Cosmo informer, Cosmo'n vogue, Hot news, Informer star, Beauty insider, Real life, Cosmo weekend, Cosmo book club, flower power*
  - or bilingual: *Informer stil, Stil insider, Job si bani, Look de noapte, look de zeita*
  - there are very few Romanian titles: *Trai in doi, Tu cu tine, Trup in forma*
- In texts we identified the following patterns:
  - Constructions at the phrase level
    - *the show must go on, shine, shine like a star, maxi dress, lady in red, , art & fragrance, look fresh, let's play, just like the wind, misterious (sic!) girl, sweet lady*
  - Constructions at the word level
    - *job-ul, ok, clubbing, vip-uri, sexy, gloss-ul, supermarket, hobby-ul, junkoteque, trendy*
  - Mixed constructions
    - *șampon reloaded, stil super cool, pantaloni skinny, fashioniste*



*IOANA:*

- Only a few titles in English: *Beauty, Shopping, Trendy, In/out, News, Star Style, Showbiz*
- No anglicisms in text were identified

This aspect of our analysis revealed, as shown in the previous checklists, that the presence of Anglicisms is much stronger and much more complex in *Cosmopolitan* than in *Ioana*.

#### **4.7. The editorials**

We considered that it might be useful to present the editorials of the two magazines analysed. There were basically two main reasons supporting our decision. A first reason is a journalistic one: editorials in such popular magazines have a certain role, i.e. of ‘setting the tone’ of a particular issue. The second reason was research related and data grounded. Namely, after repeatedly reading the two magazines and after completing our analysis we observed that the two editorials instantiate in a nutshell the majority of the features discovered throughout the whole process of our analysis. To support this claim, we decided to translate and quote the two editorials as follows. For the translation validation purpose, each of us translated the editorials individually and then we compared and discussed them deciding on the final version.

##### ***Cosmopolitan***

*Early summer always finds us complaining either about putting on too much weight lately or about cellulite has cozily settling in and having to put our mini-skirts and shorts on a waiting list. In Cosmo’s office the moment you utter the word ‘cake’ you are speedily updated on the number of calories per piece and on how much you need to work out in the gym to burn them up in time and so by and by you invariably get to trialled diets, which are then categorised (into excellent, impossible, good-for-nothing, controversial) and 90 % dismantled. I imagine the same thing happens in your group of friends. This is why in this month’s issue you will find a special section which doesn’t necessarily tell you what types of diet to follow but rather what to do to avoid needing them. Marisa Miller, Victoria’s Secret superb topmodel and Cosmo’s covergirl this month says that it’s not difficult to stay in shape (p. 124). We should believe her and try it too, shouldn’t we? For example a first step would be to change the nature of your ‘cravings’ during the office lunch breaks. Read the article What do you eat at work?. p. 122 and you’ll understand your drowsiness immediately after a piece of junk food...and appealing one, too. Of course you’ll continue to relent before unhealthy food stalls – we all do –, but at least you’ll be able to scientifically explain what happens to your body when it dares to riot. And yet...*

### ***Ioana***

*It's sunny outside, and the town looks beautiful, trees have blossomed and they keep unpleasant things out of sight. Bright colours replace the black and grey of our thick winter coats. Even the faces of the passers-by look more serene and it seems easier to ignore the word crisis. What better excuse should I have for running to the park to find a bench in the sun to sit on and daydream about holidays instead of sitting in my office. No, I'm not going to play truant, I'll just make the best of my lunch break and of the existence of a park nearby. Try it yourself if not at noon, at least in the evening on your way home or at the weekend. A moment of relaxation doesn't do any harm. It's a pity not to enjoy the perfect weather before the scorching heat of the summer bestows headaches on us.*

At this point we decided not to discuss these two editorials but to let them 'speak' for themselves and leave our comments for the concluding section of our paper.

### **5. Conclusions**

The purpose of our paper was to analyse the two magazines as far as their similarities and differences in gender construction are concerned. For this reason, in the concluding section of our paper we will briefly summarise first the similarities and then differences.

When it comes to similarities, two major trends were put forward by our analysis:

- A common major function, the persuasive function of the kind: 'I am the expert and I know what you need, so you should follow my advice'
- Both magazines try to sell something: from products to self image

However when it comes to the gender role construction of the targeted readership, more differences than similarities were identified. The next table summarises the findings in this respect and puts forward the main features of the 'profile' of the two types of female readers targeted by the two magazines

Table 6 The features of the two kinds of targeted female readers

A Cosmo female should:	A female Ioana should:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• identify herself with a famous, gorgeous looking female (face and body)</li><li>• use and buy (almost exclusively) style related products: beauty products and fashion products</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• identify with a pretty, no name face</li><li>• mainly cook, take care of children, house, the garden and her health</li></ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Her motto: do everything to look beautiful and have fun (including lots of sex)</li> <li>• Construct herself for herself (as the most important person in the world)</li> <li>• Have a successful career but try to spend the money earned wisely</li> <li>• speak English quite fluently</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Her motto: try to look/stay young and happy</li> <li>• Construct herself in relation to other people and the public good</li> <li>• Be aware that she might lose her job and try to be less stressed about it</li> <li>• (pretend) to understand just a little bit of English</li> </ul>
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Thus, to finally wrap it up:

- A Cosmo female should work hard to stay in shape between bouts of shopping for beauty and fashion items.
- A femeie Ioana should relax between bouts of cooking.

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## DECLARATIVE ELICITATIONS IN A COGNITIVE PERSPECTIVE

ÁGNES HERCZEG-DELI  
Eszterházy Károly College

*Abstract:* The paper explores the cognitive factors behind the linguistic signals of elicitation in speakers' declarative utterances in exchange initiating moves. The contextual factors will be interpreted in a Relevance Theoretic approach, and it will be illustrated how schemata emerge across speaking turns in natural discourse. The excerpts presented in the paper come from studio discussions and phone-in programmes recorded from BBC Radio, but I assume that the cognitive factors detectable in the context of these specific genres can be considered more general, and that they are also effective in other types of natural discourse.

*Keywords:* context, contextual analogues, elicitation, Relevance Theory, schemata.

### 1. Introduction

In communication the question of *appropriateness* (or inappropriateness) is a crucial issue. Crystal (1989: 20) defines the conception as “a linguistic variety of form which is considered suitable or possible in a given social situation”. In conversation the clue to whether a linguistic form is interpretable as it was meant to be interpreted is the response. If the response is accepted by the first speaker, the interpretation of the speaker's intention is obviously appropriate.

In a discourse analytic approach *Elicitations* are functional units, discourse acts requesting a verbal response in an exchange (cf. Sinclair and Coulthard 1992; Coulthard and Brazil 1992; Francis and Hunston 1992; Tsui 1992, inter alia). They occur in Initiation or in Re-Initiation moves, and are compulsorily followed by a Response move. Elicitations are very frequently realized by interrogatives (Sinclair and Coulthard 1992: 9), which is usually considered as the default form for questions, while declaratives typically provide information. This, of course is not a strict discourse rule. Although the grammatical forms of English are restricted to four sentence types – ‘declarative’, ‘interrogative’, ‘imperative’ and ‘moodless’ – these realize a multiplicity of functions (Coulthard 1985: 7). Discourse data of natural conversations provide several examples when speaker's meaning is realized by a declarative form, and the hearer interprets it as elicitation for a response.

Aware of such facts and many other natural phenomena in communication pragmatists and discourse analysts have applied the plausible

assumption that language alone cannot do the job of communicating the speaker's intention, and for the appropriate interpretation the context is crucial. The concept of context has been used for a long time in linguistics by many, but there are only few semanticists and pragmatists who took the pains to define it. The following section is a discussion of those factors – cognitive and other – that the author of this paper considers components of the context of discourse. Those properties of the context will be identified that must be considered influential in the interpretation of the speaker's meaning as elicitation, and that contribute to the relevance of the response.

## **2. A Cognitive Approach to Elicitations**

### **2.1. The Relevance Theoretic Perspective of Interpretation**

Sperber and Wilson's theory of relevance in communication (1986, 1995, 2002, 2004) is based on two principles: a Cognitive Principle and a Communicative Principle. Marmaridou (2000: 13) takes a similar view about communication underlining that social meaning is internalized in terms of cognitive structure, i.e. socio-cultural aspects of pragmatic meaning are part of cognitive structure and not external to it. This paper is meant to support this assumption by providing evidence of how cognizance works in natural discourse exchanges.

Setting out from Grice's (1975) inferential model of communication Relevance Theory provides a frame for an explanation of what are the contextual factors contributing to the relevance of an utterance. In the inferential approach the point is that communication is achieved when the speaker's communicative intention is recognized. Sperber and Wilson propose that in this process endeavours for cooperativeness with the hearer's expectations of relevance play a crucial role in guiding him to a plausible interpretation.

Unlike Grice, Sperber and Wilson look at the interpreter's side carefully and suggest that just as the perceptual abilities are crucial for getting information about the physical world conceptual abilities are essential for information processing (Sperber and Wilson 1986/ 1995). The concept of *cognitive environment* is central in the theory; they define a person's total cognitive environment as "a function of his physical environment and his cognitive abilities" (1986: 39), which comprises "the individual's actual awareness of facts, i.e. the knowledge he has acquired" (ibid.).

In much of the relevant literature the context was seen as given for a long time, moreover, it was generally assumed that the context was determined in advance. As opposed to such views, Sperber and Wilson see the context as a dynamic construct. In their view in the processing of new information the context is chosen, which means that the hearer makes adequately selected background assumptions for meaning (1986: 138-139). In this model in the interpretation process the context changes from moment to moment. Sperber and Wilson argue that for the selection diverse sources are used such as long-term memory, short-term memory and perception, and that encyclopaedic information which is organized and stored in chunks called frames, schemata, scenario and prototype in the literature also takes part in interpretation. Comprehension emerges through several inferential steps with the help of the mental efforts which the individual makes exploiting the contextual resources and his processing abilities.

In relevance theoretic terms “an input is relevant to an individual when its processing in a context of available assumptions yields a POSITIVE COGNITIVE EFFECT” (Sperber and Wilson 2002: 251; emphasis as in the original). For a conclusion deducible from the input and the context together the authors use the term *contextual implication*, which they consider the most important type of cognitive effect (ibid.).

Fetzer (2004: 3) emphasizes that although the concept of context is essentially fuzzy, it is omnipotent in sociopragmatics, in discourse analysis and in ethnomethodological conversation analysis, and, in fact, it is “the anchor in any pragmatic theory”. Her holistic view of context is in line with Sperber and Wilson’s interpretation of the concept, with the difference that she clearly distinguishes three types on the basis of linguistic, cognitive and social aspects (Fetzer 2004). In her view the social context includes the co-participants and the immediate, concrete physical surroundings, as well as time, and also the macro-contextual institutional and non-institutional domains. My understanding of context follows Fetzer’s, and in this paper for the investigation of relevant responses in the exchanges cited I make an attempt to elucidate the cognitive factors at work, on the basis of the linguistic context. I assume that a positive cognitive effect of an utterance triggers interpersonal processes, i.e. the understanding of speaker meaning represented by either clearly direct or indirect forms stimulates a relevant response.

This paper is based on the following sensible assumptions: in the mental construct of the cognitive context all the factual knowledge of the

speaker and the hearer, their beliefs, as well as their mental abilities and logical skills are incorporated, in which lack of knowledge is also a crucial factor (cf. Herczeg-Deli 2008 to appear).

## 2.2. Reasoning in Discourse

The speaker's intentions in natural discourse can be explicitly declared, but meanings are more often assumed, and the wordings of a discourse are interpreted with the aid of the hearer's cognitive environment.

Although we don't know exactly what neural processes are going on in the brain we can make some hypotheses about how correct interpretation emerges. While logicians since Aristotle have been speaking of two modes of reasoning – induction and deduction –, in the investigation of linguistic interpretation in natural discourse a third mode must also be taken into consideration. This is pragmatic inference, which was first recognized by Aristotle, who referred to this kind of reasoning with the word *apagoge*, which means *reduction*. In his description of argumentation Peirce relabelled the Aristotelian concept *abduction*, by which he meant arguing by hypothesis, and often by analogy. Hanson (1958, qtd. in Givón, 2005: 26) somewhat similarly finds that the pragmatic mode of inference is dependent on the notions of similarity as well as on relevance.

Relevance emerges as a result of cooperativeness. In the light of Relevance Theory my assumptions about *the conditions of relevance* in a discourse exchange can be summarized as follows: Speaker's linguistic behaviour satisfies Hearer's expectations of a relevant act in the current context, and this judgment about the suitability of the Speaker's utterance(s) stimulates correct inferences as to the Speaker's meaning. Correct interpretation arouses an appropriate, i.e. a relevant response. A relevant response by satisfying the co-participant's expectations adjusts the cognitive context to the current needs of the discourse, and 'moves' the discourse forward.

Sperber and Wilson assume that in order to achieve the best interpretation in the easiest way it is in the communicator's interest "to make her ostensive stimulus as easy as possible for the audience to understand" (2002: 257). "Ostensive behaviour – they say – provides evidence of one's thoughts", and "an act of ostension carries a guarantee of relevance" (1986: 50). Ostensive behaviour is observable, it manifests intention. But the authors of *Relevance* also point it out that in human communication in many cases – perhaps in most of the cases – what the communicator intends to make manifest



is “partly precise and partly vague” (ibid.: 59). Sperber and Wilson go on to say that often, the weaker forms are found sufficient or even preferable to the stronger forms (1986: 60).

While the indirectness of expressing intentions is non-ostensive, it is not uncommon. Taboada (2006) makes a similar observation about explicitness in discourse. Looking at discourse markers she discovers that markers of coherence between the linguistic representations of discourse exchanges often - between 60 and 70 % on average - remain implicit, i.e. linguistically less conspicuous.

Obviously, in natural language the communicators’ assumptions about a mutual cognitive environment allow a certain degree of indirectness without the danger of misunderstandings. In the following some linguistic evidence will be given of ongoing cognitive processes in natural discourse exchanges.

### 2.3. Linguistic Explicitness of Intention: Ostension

Performative verbs in Initiation moves can signal a demand for information or for action; they make the speaker’s act direct and ostensive for the hearer. The expectation of the speaker in the following two extracts is clear for the hearer; there is a need for a Response:

- (1) A: *I must ask you* about the spelling of your name, incidentally. It’s [tɪleɪv]. Is ‘e’ double ‘l’, ‘a’, ‘y’, ‘n’, ‘e’. It’s a # long way round.  
B: (laughs) Well, it’s in a an effort to get it pronounced like the French *Heléne*.
- (2) A: Hello, my name is [≡] Dylan Winter. I’ve got a problem with a hired car. *I*  
B1: Yes  
~A: *wondered if I could* talk to one of your partners.  
B2: Right. [≡:μ] # # problem with a hired car. Yes. Have you seen anybody here before?

When the speaker overtly expresses lack of knowledge – *I don’t know, I didn’t know* – his utterance can be interpreted as Elicitation for Confirmation, and it is not uncommon that the Confirmation act is followed by an act providing further Information, as in the following extract:

- (3) B1: 1956. It was at Wembly. We sang, we danced and swam.  
A: *I never actually knew* she came over and did a show over here.  
B2: Yes, she did. I think that was the only show she ever did here.

B's Comment after the Confirmation *Yes, she did* provides further relevant Information about the topic, which is a typical instance of cooperative behaviour.

The Initiations, i.e. A's moves in the three excerpts above have a strong contextual effect. Such linguistic contexts with their explicitness – *I must ask you, I wonder, I never knew* - make the speaker's act ostensive for the hearer; there is no need for various assumptions and selection for the most plausible meaning. The linguistic signals are easy to understand by simple decoding; their elicitive function is obvious.

## 2.4. Emergence of Cognitive Schemata in Discourse Exchanges

### 2.4.1. Reality in Initiations

When a speaker's utterance is about a part of reality in the addressee's life – which is supposed to be some common-ground knowledge -, the addressee usually interprets this as information to be confirmed, rejected or elaborated. This type of exchange gives evidence of the existence of the Situation – Evaluation cognitive schema. The following two exchanges are examples of this:

- (4) A: Yes. You wanted to be a jockey when you were when you were a lad.  
B: Yes. I'd [≡] that was my dream, sure.  
(5) A: That doesn't worry you, of course, because *you speak fluent Turkish, naturally*.  
B: Well, I must admit last year before we went we did go for [≡] three months to learn some Turkish.

Evaluation is a commonly occurring rhetorical act following Situation or Problem discourse units (cf. Winter 1994, Hoey 1994) or Interpretation elements of Rhetorical Structures (cf. Mann and Thompson 1988; Taboada 2006: 571). The second speaker in example (4) accepts the first speaker's assumption as true, and after confirming it he evaluates the situation: *that was my dream*. In extract (5) speaker B's response is an implicit Confirmation, which becomes interpretable as her Reason for speaker A's assumption about reality is offered: *last year before we went we did go for [≡] three months to*

*learn some Turkish*. I assume that in relevance theoretic terms Evaluation, just like Confirmation, is a kind of adjustment of the cognitive context to the current needs of the discourse, by which the speaker's perspective is filtered into the context.

#### 2.4.2. Signalling Inferences

Inferences made from the immediate or less immediate context can be linguistically marked. The following is a hospital situation in the department of paediatrics. Speaker A is interpreting B's, the nurse's explanation of the technique of taking blood pressure:

- (6) B1: Well, just # you just press [≡] pump air into the cuff until you can't hear anything through the stethoscope. You cannot hear the pulse. Then you release it gradually until you hear the first beat and that's the systolic pressure as maximum pressure. And then you carry on releasing the air slowly to the last strongest beat, and that's the diastolic pressure.  
A: *Ah!* So what you've done is to stop the blood from circulating.  
B2: That's right.  
~A: and then as you let it go you can work out what the pressure  
B3:            |has built  
              |That's right. |  
~A: built up [? \*] # *Ah!*  
B4: So it's a very simple technique, really.

Less ostensive as speaker A's meaning is here than in extracts (1), (2) or (3), it is not misunderstood by the hearer. The contextual implication is signalled by the discourse connective *so*, which encodes the result of the speaker's inferences for which she expects Confirmation. The pragmatic marker *ah*, which is uttered twice by her, is another signal of the cognitive processes emerging in her mind; it underlines the heuristic experience, which is a typical characteristic of successful problem-solving activities. B4 in the extract is a Follow-up move expressing the speaker's evaluation: *a very simple technique*. The Evaluation *it's a very simple technique* is introduced by *so*, which this time is not a signal of inferencing; it links the utterance to some external context; it is the representation of the speaker's personal experiences of a particular slice of the world.

Nor has *so* the contextual effect of implicating an assumption in (7) A1 below. It signals topic change here, the introduction of a question, an ostensive Elicitation. But in move A3 of the same discourse it encodes some procedural

meaning; it signals the speaker's inferences drawn from certain facts of a real world situation and the current cognitive context:

- (7) A1: So how much 've I clocked up in these five minutes so far?  
B1: In these five minutes so far? # I would say that you've clocked up about five or six pounds  
A2: About five or six pounds?  
B2: That's right.  
A3: *So* I'm well into # my twenty pound fine already.  
B3: You are. Regrettably. # But...

The host's contextual assumption in move A3 is interpreted by B as Elicitation for Confirmation or for Rejection. The Confirmation is followed by an act of Evaluation – *regrettably* – communicating the speaker's sympathy.

In the discourse extracts (6) and (7) above A's assumptions about the meaning of B's utterances are related to the linguistic context, i.e. to B's wording, but a great deal of other components of the broader context is also used. Knowledge of the circumstances, or in (7) the use of logic and arithmetic skills are essential for the understanding of A's meaning. The use of the same cognitive abilities is crucial for speaker B in both cases, since judgement about the appropriateness of the co-participant's interpretation requires similar mental efforts on her/ his part, too. It is in this way that the cognitive processes involved in the context become interactive.

### **2.4.3. The Hypothetical – Real Schema**

Inferences to be confirmed or rejected are hypotheses. The confirmation points at reality as accepted by the second speaker. In this respect the two extracts in part 2.3.2. involve a common schema: the Hypothetical – Real. Extract (8) shows a cognitive context very similar to that of extract (7). So introducing an assumption based on the speaker's inferences in move A2 below implicates the function of Elicitation:

(8) A1: (asks a question)

B1: Actually I charge sixty pounds an hour # myself # plus VAT. That is not a particularly high rate # for a partner in a firm of solicitors. In the city the rates could be twice or three times that, but # in the provinces sixty pounds an hour is probably not particularly high at the moment.

A2: *So if* I carry on this conversation for about another twelve minutes I'm already gonna owe you more than I owe the council.

B2: This # is true. # And this is why we try'nd create a balance.

In move A2 the speaker is considering a hypothetical situation: *if I carry on this conversation for about another twelve minutes*, and makes an inferred assumption related to a supposed case: *I'm already gonna owe you more than I owe the council*. The expected Response is a judgement about the validity of the assumption. The cognitive schema is the same here as the Hypothetical – Real pair in Winter (1994). The exchange A2 – B2 in extract (8) is apparently intertwined with another schema, that of the Problem – Solution pattern (cf. Winter *ibid.*; Mann and Thompson 1988; Taboada 2006: 571). After the Confirmation of A's assumption Speaker B gives further information, which is an assumed solution: *a balance*. A Solution presupposes a Problem; hence it is obvious that B's assumption is that the situation hypothesized by his conversational partner represents a Problem.

Other types of contextual implicatures can also be linguistically marked.

(9) A: You just have been made redundant, *I gather*, talking of other things.

B: Unfortunately, yes, just recently.

The expression *I gather* signals the contextual inference of the speaker about the addressee's reality; it is a strong Hypothetical about the Situation. His assumption is accepted as reality by speaker B – *yes* – with some further information – *just recently* –, and the Situation is evaluated: *unfortunately*. In the exchange the Hypothetical – Real schema links up with the Situation – Evaluation pattern.

Explicit contextual assumptions introduced by such linguistic signals as e.g. *I gather*, *I say*, *I understand*, *I take it*, *it seems* are typically elicitive in Initiation moves, and are interpreted as alternative questions. They occur in exchanges as the Hypothetical member of a pair, and are followed by acceptance or rejection as Real:

- (10) A1: You have a big, strong face yourself.  
 B1: Thank you very much  
 ~A 2: dark complexion, a good colour and strong brown eyes. *I say* you're a decisive person.  
 B 2: Yes, I am.
- (11) A: Anyway it's lovely to have spoken to you John. And *I understand* I can have a photograph.  
 B: You can have a photograph, yes, but you can have a sticker as well
- (12) A: Judith, *I take it*, that, broadly speaking, women get paid between two thirds and three quarters of the income of their male counterparts.  
 B: Yes, I'm afraid, that's true.
- (13) A: But *it seems to me* you're just looking for tolerance rather than unity.  
 B: Yes, I want tolerance, you see, # you are not going to get unity with all the Christian people. You don't have unity in the # in the Jewish faith. They have # progressives and they have the Hassids, but they've got [≡] they're still all Jewish.

#### 2.4.4. The Unspecific – Specific Schema

Unspecific meaning in discourse typically requires specification, therefore vague reference in discourse is usually followed by some particularization. The Unspecific – Specific schema works across speaking turns, too, so that the Unspecific in an Initiation move is interpreted as Elicitation for specification:

- (14) A: *I gather* you had *problems* getting # getting back into the country last night.  
 B: We got back fairly late 'nd got held up for an hour at Heathrow waiting for our luggage because some of the security people # [≡μ] # thought that the Archbishop's cross # [ω≡] was a machine gun. So that kept us waiting.

In the extract two linguistic units of the initiating utterance – *I gather* and *problems* – generate two schemata: the Hypothetical – Real and the Unspecific – Specific, which emerge across the speaking turns. The double contextual implication of the Hypothetical and the Unspecific members achieves a strong cognitive effect on the hearer. The implication is equal to the meaning of a wh-question which could sound something like *What were the problems when you were getting back to the country last night?*

#### 2.4.5. Contextual analogues

The linguistic signals of Elicitations undeniably function as contextual analogues which show a wide variety. The speaker's choice of an appropriate form in the current context in many cases seems accidental. Natural conversation provides evidence of this when the speaker's mind boggles at the possibilities. In fact any of the following signals printed in italics in the first speakers' turns would do the job of eliciting response:

- (15) A: *I often wonder* [η≐τσ] *I presume you* [κ] *would not* go on growing it indefinitely, but they do *seem* to get it huge, *don't they*, until they get clipped.  
B: They do, yes. [≐μ] I think it eventually.
- (16) A: *Is that*, so you specialize totally in African violets.  
B: Indeed.
- (17) A: *So wasn't it*  
B1: [ \* \* ]  
~A: it it  
~B1: John Carr [ \* \* ]  
~A: *it wasn't obviously* built as a hospital, though.  
B2: No, it was originally stables for the duke's horses.
- (18) A: But it *must have started* before that, Keith, I mean, you *must* as a [πραι], *did you have* a very good English teacher? We were talking about English teachers earlier on.  
B: I did. I did have a good English teacher. [≐] # .....
- (19) A: *I thought is it* a it was what *I was wondering*, *is it* a comedy, or a tragedy, so *what's the feeling?*  
B: Well, what can I say? It is a very very funny play, but it will also make you cry. So that's all I can say. It's a sort of a saga, you know. ...

“Relevance is sought and achieved in mental processes”, but “mental effects and efforts are non-representational properties of processes” (Sperber and Wilson 1986: 132). The examples above show that Sperber and Wilson's statement seems too general, and only partly true. In spontaneous speech the speaker's hesitations in the process of self-repair serve as a sign of some cognitive efforts, such cognitive processes that emerge in the speaker's mind while s/he is searching for the appropriate form. The linguistic forms cropping up during the search in the examples above indicate analogous meanings in the

current context, a selection of the forms acceptable for the required meaning. The conversational extracts above provide reasonable evidence of how close in function is the strategy of asking an explicit question to the strategy of making a hypothesis relevant to the context.

### 3. Conclusion

The research was concerned with the issue of what contextual components and assumptions govern the hearer to interpret a declarative utterance in an Initiation move as an Elicitation. Examples from natural discourse data prove that in the identification of speaker meaning the mental context plays a more influential role for the hearer than sentence form, and that implicitness or indirectness do not necessarily put constraints on the emergence of optimal relevance. In the cognitive context rhetorical relations emerge with the aid of the total cognitive environment of the participants. In the paper I argued that interpretation and appropriate response in discourse also involves knowledge of certain rhetorical patterns applied as a sign of cooperative behaviour. The examples discussed in parts 2.4.2., 2.4.3., 2.4.4. show that cognitive schemata can embrace, which enhances the strength of relevance.

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# ADDRESSING DISCRIMINATION ON THE GROUNDS OF 'RACE' AND ETHNIC ORIGIN IN EU LAW

KATHARINA KÖHLER

Vienna University of Economics and Business

***Abstract:** As part of anti-discrimination policies, laws against discrimination aim at overcoming a recognised social wrong. The need for such laws to capture concepts of difference determining social reality creates a tension with the aim to counter these very concepts. In EU anti-racism law, the concept of "race" is simultaneously declared problematic, and employed in the norm text. Initial results of an empirical investigation into the application of this legislation in Austria suggest, however, that the conceptual problems with the categories "race" and ethnic origin and their linguistic implementation are not central to the law's application.*

***Keywords:** Critical Discourse Analysis racism, discrimination, European Union, Language and law.*

## 1. Introduction

A dilemma is inherent to any approach towards countering racism: On the one hand, the category 'race' is recognised as a racist concept as such, which, consequently, should not be employed. On the other hand, anyone dealing with racism and racist behaviour, at least up to a certain point, is bound to re-produce racist patterns, if only by describing the workings of the category 'race' in practice. The discussion of this problem also is led, for example, in regard of to the role of ethnic data collection, cf. DIMR 2009. This paper asks the question how the European Union deals with this dilemma in pertinent legislation implementing the principle of equal treatment.

Racism and discrimination *in* political discourse are established topics on the research agenda of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), see e.g., Reisigl and Wodak 2001). Linguistic critique, in particular in the form of – prospective and retrospective – practical critique, can aim at contributing to the solution of discrimination related social problems (cf. Reisigl 2007: 388). In this paper, I attempt a contribution by an exploratory investigation of law *against* racist discrimination and its application, namely a pertinent EU directive, the Directive's implementation in a particular Member State, Austria, and case law by the European Court of Justice.

After an initial presentation of the EU Anti-Racism Directive, I present some details of the wording of these texts and linguistic critique thereof. Then I

turn to the law's practical application at EU level and in Austria and get to a preliminary conclusion.

## **2. The Anti-Racism Directive**

In the year 2000, the Council of the European Union unanimously adopted a directive against racist discrimination in the labour market and other important areas of life (2000/43/EC, henceforth: Anti-racism Directive). A directive is a binding instrument of EU law that defines certain aims, which Member States are obliged to reach by means of their national legislation. Regarding the Anti-racism Directive, it was clear that this would require major legislative changes at national level for several states, a factor that usually leads to lengthy negotiations. Still, agreement was reached just seven months after the Commission had put forth its proposal (COM [1999] 566). This remarkable speed is attributable to EU's reaction to the political situation in Austria, one of the then 15 EU Member States (cf. e.g., Tyson 2001: 218). At that time, governments and European Parliament Members were scandalized by the conservative Austrian People's Party forming a coalition government with the right wing Freedom Party, a party so far considered ineligible for a governing role. This gave additional impetus to the political will in favour of adopting legal measures against racist discrimination. The adoption of the Anti-racism Directive is a success story of non-governmental actors, EU parliamentarians and Commission officials working together for non-discrimination measures to be taken by the Community. It has been called 'a heroic tale', the legislation adopted appraised as 'the most wide-sweeping equal opportunities legislation in the communities history' (Chalmers 2001: 193).

Such appraisals fit in with a picture where the adoption of legislation is the point of culmination of a successful political initiative. However, the story does not end there, as the law's actual effects remain to be seen. Nine years having gone by since those glory days, with all – by now 27 - Member States having passed national implementing measures, should permit a comparison of early expectations and fears with actual developments. Before getting to selected evidence on this question from the EU level and the case of Austria, I elaborate on points of linguistic criticism of anti-racism legislation.

## **3. Linguistic critique**

In the title and body text of the Directive, the equivalents of 'race' (e.g., in the German version) or 'racial' (e.g., in the English version) are freely

used, without the quotation marks I apply here to signal that I do not endorse the concepts myself. Currently, there are 27 Member States using 23 official languages among them at EU level. All 23 language versions count as authentic and binding. Consider the following examples from the English language version of the Anti-Racism Directive:

Council Directive 2000/43/EC of 29 June 2000 implementing the principle the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of *racial or ethnic origin* (Directive 2000/43/EC, title, emphasis added).

The purpose of this Directive is to lay down a framework for combating *discrimination on the grounds of racial or ethnic origin*, with a view to putting into effect in the Member States the principle of equal treatment (Directive 2000/43/EC, Article 1, emphasis added).

This wording largely corresponds to that of the legal basis for the adoption of the Directive, Article 13 of the Treaty establishing the European Community (TEC), which was adopted in 1997 and entered into force in 1999:

Without prejudice to the other provisions of this Treaty and within the limits of the powers conferred by it upon the Community, the Council, acting unanimously on a proposal from the Commission and after consulting the European Parliament, may take appropriate action to combat *discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin*, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation (Article 13 paragraph 1 TEC, emphasis added).

However, the preamble to the Anti-racism Directive also contains an explicit rejection of the idea of separate human ‘races’:

The European Union *rejects* theories which attempt to determine the existence of *separate human races*. The use of *the term “racial origin”* in this Directive does not imply an acceptance of such theories (Directive 2000/43/EC, Recital 6, double quotation marks in the original, emphasis added).

This two-fold approach of both rejecting and employing the ‘race’ concept is a compromise between different views of Member States on the language to be used in the Directive. As Tyson (2001: 201-202) reports without naming individual states, some were not satisfied with repeating the Treaty wording and argued that the mention of ‘race’ or ‘racial origin’ amounted to acceptance of racist theories. In contrast, others found it important to use the word ‘race’, and not just ‘ethnic origin’, in order to be clear about the Directive

combating *racism*. The inclusion of the clarifying recital quoted above achieved the unanimous acceptance required.

Differing attitudes regarding the use of the words 'race'/ 'racial' continue to show effects in European political and legal discourse. In legal and non-legal academic writings as well as in writings on legal and political issues addressing the general public, it is customary to refer to EU directives by expressions descriptive of their regulatory content or aim, which assume the character of a name tag. For Directive 2000/43, various names are in use in English: 'race directive', 'race/ racial equality directive' (both used with roughly equal frequency according to a Google search) or, 'anti-racism directive', which I prefer, but which is the least popular choice. In contrast, in German 'Antirassismusrichtlinie', the direct counter part of 'anti-racism directive', is the most frequently chosen option for referring to Directive 2000/43, whereas 'Rassenrichtlinie', the literal translation of 'race directive' is rare, and 'Rassengleichheitsrichtlinie', corresponding to 'race equality directive' is close to unattested.

Obviously, preferences differ across languages. Coming from a German speaking country that was a part of Nazi-Germany and involved in the practical application of 'race' ideology, with racist violence up to the point of genocide, I strongly feel that if the words 'race' or 'racial' are used at all, such usage requires some signal of distance by the speaker. The aversion against endorsing the 'race' terminology is, however, not restricted to the German speaking world. As Bell, Chopin and Palmer (2007: 16) point out, some states avoid use of 'race' or 'racial origin' or add a qualification to 'race' in their own national anti-discrimination legislation implementing the Anti-racism Directive. Thus, the Finnish Non-Discrimination Act uses the term 'ethnic or national origin', the Swedish Ethnic Discrimination Act uses 'ethnic belonging' (Bell, Chopin and Palmer 2007: 16). This is also the option chosen by Austria, which I will return to below.

In contrast to Austria, the German legislator chose to keep the Directives' wording of 'race or ethnic origin'. However, human rights experts continue to lobby for a different wording in Germany (cf. Cremer 2008). It shall be noted that the EU legislation under discussion here is not the only one using the concept of 'race' in connection with the prohibition of discrimination. A number of international human rights instruments use similar phrasings, which then get translated into the national languages of States Parties to such covenants and 'race' appears in implementing measures at national level. Thus,

whereas 'race' may be taboo in German in political discourse, it is frequently present in legal language. Contrary to popular belief, this has also been the subject of criticism – not just from the German speaking world – from within the international UN system, in an UNESCO Statement on Race going back to 1949 (cf. Cremer 2008:4). However, the demand to avoid using this terminology has not been met, and as far as I know, the discussion surrounding the wording of the Anti-Racism Directive is a new development.

Linguistic critique of the Directive or other legal texts proscribing discrimination goes beyond the mere choice of lexical items. From a CDA perspective, Reisigl (2007: 368-369) admonishes that the phrasing of legal texts that speak of 'discrimination *on (the) grounds of* "race"/ age/ etc.' risks a fallacious inversion of the attribution of reasons for discrimination, locating these reasons on the side of the victims rather than on the side of the perpetrators. Reisigl (2007: 368) points out that

... it is not "race" which is the reason for the discrimination against a specific group of persons, but racism, which lies behind the social construction of "race" categories...

When developing alternative suggestion, one should, however, bear in mind that the specific offences defined as discrimination by legal instruments may vary in regard to the relative importance of the victims' perceptions of discrimination, the perpetrators' intentions and the potential or actual effects of certain actions and omissions. Thus, multiple perspectives may be integrated in one legal instrument outlawing discrimination. Therefore, I assume that explicitly invoking *racism* rather than '*race*' as the cause for an offence might run into other problems, because it might be taken to suggest individual racist intentions on the part of a perpetrator of an action with (potential) discriminatory effect, which is not necessary under the Directive. Consider the definition of discrimination in the Anti-Racism Directive:

Concept of discrimination

1. For the purposes of this Directive, the principle of equal treatment shall mean that there shall be no direct or indirect discrimination *based on racial or ethnic origin*.
2. For the purposes of paragraph 1:
  - (a) direct discrimination shall be taken to occur where one person is treated less favourably than another is, has been or would be treated in a comparable situation *on grounds of racial or ethnic origin*;
  - (b) indirect discrimination shall be taken to occur where an apparently neutral provision, criterion or practice would put *persons of a racial or ethnic origin* at a particular disadvantage compared with other persons, unless that provision, criterion

or practice is objectively justified by a legitimate aim and the means of achieving that aim are appropriate and necessary”  
(Directive 2000/43/EC, Article 2, paragraphs 1-2, emphasis added).

This formulation of the discrimination offences has been subjected to criticism, as well, namely for inviting essentialism. Chalmers (2001: 213) points this out in particular with respect to the comparison between an actual person and an imagined person in the definition of direct discrimination.

To sum up, the Anti-Racism Directive is both seen as a success of anti-racist forces by its sheer existence, and as problematic in a number of respects, some of which concern language – the reinforcement of the concept of race, the risk of attributing the cause of discrimination to the victim rather than the perpetrator, and the formulation of offences inviting essentialist interpretations of ‘racial or ethnic origin’. Other points of concern mainly regard the individual approach to what is a social problem, which will not be discussed here. But how does the Directive fare in practice?

#### **4. Application in practice – EU level**

For the time being, laws based on the Anti-Racism Directive in the wording discussed above, accompanied by the disclaimer against theories categorizing people into ‘races’, are in force across the EU. Kjær (2008: 259-260) describes EU law (in the form of directives) as regularly appearing in the following type of genre chain which may be subjected to linguistic analysis:

preparatory texts – directive – national instruments implementing the directive – request by a national court for a preliminary ruling at the European Court of Justice – ruling of the European Court of Justice – judgment by the national court on the basis of European Court of Justice rulings – national and international textbooks, casebooks and legal periodicals commenting on the directive and the judgment of the European Court of Justice.

Obviously, this chain is connected to another chain at national level with preparatory materials of national implementing legislation, the national legislation itself, and more decisions by national decision making bodies, i.e. decisions without referral to the ECJ. An analysis of the resulting network of texts at EU level and national level would of course require an equally widespread network of lawyers and linguists across the EU.

At EU level, so far, the material for analysis is limited. In its first and so far only ruling regarding the Anti-Racism Directive Upon a reference for a

preliminary ruling by a Belgian labour court, the European Court of Justice had to deal with a case where an employer publicly stated that he would not hire workers of Moroccan origin or other immigrants (in Dutch: ‘allochtonen’). In its ruling regarding the Court found that:

The fact that an employer declares publicly that it [sic!] will not recruit employees of a certain ethnic or racial origin, something which is clearly likely to strongly dissuade certain candidates from submitting their candidature and, accordingly, to hinder their access to the labour market, constitutes direct discrimination in respect of recruitment within the meaning of Directive 2000/43. The existence of such direct discrimination is not dependant on the identification of a complainant who claims to have been the victim (European Court of Justice, Case C-54/07 [*Feryn*], paragraph 25).

I would like to suggest that this ruling does not support the warning about the invitation to essentialism in the application of the directive.

## 5. The case of Austria

In the ongoing work for my doctoral dissertation, I explore how the Austrian legislator dealt with the ‘race’ question in implementing the Directive, and how a specialised legal body deciding on alleged cases of discrimination deals with the result.

The Austrian legislator initially drafted a proposition that took over the Anti-Racism Directive’s wording of ‘race and ethnic origin’. However, in the course of the parliamentary process, expert hearings in Parliament and behind-the-scene lobbying apparently convinced the Members of Parliament to take a different approach. They opted for a:

...general replacement of the term ‘*race and ethnic origin*’ with ‘*ethnic belonging*’, whereby no restriction of the area of application of the Directive is brought about, but whereby the term ‘*race*’, which is proscribed in German language use, shall be *omitted* (Report of the Equal Treatment Committee, 19.05.2004 AB 499 BlgNR 22. GP, author’s translation, emphasis added).

Neither the Directive nor the Austrian Equal Treatment Act contain legal definitions of what is meant by ‘race’, ‘ethnic origin’, or ‘ethnic belonging’. It is not unusual for legal terms to be vague, even more so when they are used in the EU context, where legislation needs to find approval of at least a qualified majority of States with individual legal traditions, and where 23 language versions simultaneously count as legally binding (cf. e.g., Hartley 1996, Kjær 2008). Nevertheless, vagueness can create a problem by



contributing to legal indeterminacy, which is undesirable in principle in a state under the rule of law. In the particular case of anti-racism legislation, how well can potential victims and perpetrator of discrimination know their rights and obligations given the lack of a definition? How do deciding bodies know in which way to decide in alleged cases of ‘discrimination on the ground of ethnic belonging’, given the lack of a definition?

In my study, which is work in progress, I look for evidence on these questions in the published decisions of Austria’s Equal Treatment Commission. This is an independent public body that passes non-binding findings on alleged cases of discrimination. It sits in Senates composed of 10 to 13 members nominated for this position by a number of Ministries, and by Employers’ and Employees’ organisations. Procedures are free of charge and not open to the public, which makes them attractive in spite of the lack of a legally binding result. The decisions are published on the internet in anonymized form.

So far, I have been able to look at a body of 40 decisions in cases of alleged ethnic discrimination. The texts are not subject to legal requirements about their form or contents. However, their structure is clearly oriented on the models of court judgments and decisions of administrative bodies. Regarding the *nomination strategies* for the participants in proceedings, they follow the typical legal strategies of referring to the different parties almost exclusively by their role in the proceedings. Thus, *nomination* does not give much evidence on the Equal Treatment Commission’s approach towards the concept of ‘ethnic belonging’ of the claimants. There is no uniform approach to whether or at which point in the text a claimant’s ethnic identity is referred to in the written form of the decision. Some texts are formulated with great care with regard to avoiding ethnic labels, such that it is sometimes difficult for the reader to understand what exactly the alleged ethnic component of the discrimination consists in.

The *argumentation* employed by the different parties and the Senate itself, as it can be read off the available texts, is chiefly tailored to meet the requirements of establishing/ disproving facts relevant for the legal definitions of discrimination, and on evaluating them in the light of the rules of proof holding for these procedures. Ethnic identities are of minor importance in the argumentation brought forth. In contrast, *racist language* used by perpetrators, if admitted to by the perpetrators or rated as plausible, is a major argument against them.

Interviews conducted with members of the Equal Treatment Commission confirm that the kind of discussions that would be more interesting from the point of view of my research question – namely how the concept of ‘ethnic belonging’ is interpreted – are taking place (if at all) in connection with the preliminary question of the admissibility of applications brought before the Equal Treatment Commission. These discussions are conducted behind closed doors, and traces of these hardly ever find their way into the written decisions.

There is evidence that the question of delimitation of the concept of ‘ethnic belonging’ actually did give rise to some discussion in the Senates that showed just the essentialist thinking that has been feared to be furthered by the wording of the Directive. In connection with the case of a young Jewish man who got thrown out of a restaurant under anti-Semitic slurs, the Equal Treatment Commission actually called in an expert witness in order to hear her opinion on whether being Jewish was to be regarded only as belonging to a religion (in which case the law would not have been taken to apply) or also as belonging to an ethnic group. Of course, there is no guarantee that a law that explicitly outlawed racism would not also cause a deciding body to call into question its applicability to a blatant case of anti-Semitism, but still the question would have needed to be asked at a different level, namely not as “what does it mean to be Jewish” but as “what does it mean to act in anti-Semitic ways”.

On the other hand, the Equal Treatment Commission has passed other findings that explicitly reject the view that individual victims’ need to have a specific ethnic identity in order for discrimination to take place. Thus, an Austrian woman married to a Muslim man of Egyptian origin and now a Muslim herself was found to have been discriminated against ‘on grounds of ethnic belonging’ when she was refused child care for her daughter because other parents objected to her Muslim dress.

## **6. Conclusion**

So far, the conceptual problems related to formulating the Anti-Racism Directive and its implementations in EU Member States do not seem to find too many repercussions in the practical application of these laws. Still, there is room for improvement in regard to averting essentialist concepts of ethnic identity.

Above and beyond that, a linguistic critique of the self-presentation of ‘anti-discrimination policies’ and ‘anti-discrimination legislation’ is in place. Empirical research shows that this terminology does not meet with acclaim by

the general public. A recent survey carried out on behalf of Germany's Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency criticizes the wording as displaying 'unfortunate semantics' and contributing to the rejection that anti-discrimination policies are facing. The study quotes respondents' speaking out about 'a monster buzzword' that 'makes everybody who hears it smirk'. (Antidiskriminierungsstelle des Bundes 2009: 98, author's translation).

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# FRAMES IN AMERICAN TV DISCUSSIONS

AGNIESZKA NOWICKA

University of Poznań

***Abstract:** The paper focuses on analyzing the role of frames in American TV discussions in conversation analysis framework. The analysis aims at creating a tentative classification of frame types depending on their interactive positioning in discussions and their meaning as perceived in participants' perspective. Observation of two discussion types shows that interactants' orientation to the type of the communicative event can influence the use of frames.*

***Keywords:** conversation analysis, meta-formulations, reformulations, TV discussions.*

## 1. Introduction

In aim of the paper is to analyze the functions of frames, and more specifically, meta-formulations and reformulations in American TV discussions. Using conversational analysis perspective allows us to define formulations functions in the sequential context of an interaction. Thus, first, as their meaning is interpreted by interaction participants when they react to the first utterance in a sequence; second, as those conversational resources are deployed in a wider context of talk, not only in the adjacency pair co-text, but in reference to turns that appear in non-adjacent positions in talk, that is in follow-up or preliminary position, and in reference to the communicative event type. The next turn-proof procedure reveals listener's understanding of the preceding turn in the reactive move. However, such analysis is most effective if the sequence is closely bound by adjacency relationship, which is not always the case in longer discussions or interviews in which turns become more complex and can be simultaneously reactive and initiatory. Thus, an additional tool of the deployment of the action in a wider sequential context needs to be used.

## 2. Institutional interaction in conversation analysis perspective

In conversation analysis research, interviews as well as TV debates, which often resemble such interviews, are considered to be a type of institutional interaction and are analyzed against the background of the conversation which is treated as a primary form of social interaction. Additionally, comparisons are made with more classical and formalized TV

interviews. In general, in any data drawn from institutional settings interactants' deployment of originally conversational resources or talk practices to perform certain institutional tasks is observed (Clayman and Teas Gill 2004: 589-606).

The classical interview follows certain conventions, namely, a strict interactional structure, since as opposed to the conversation, interview talk restricts turn construction and turn allocation. Interviews unfold as a series of questions and answers turns, questions being respectively produced by interviewers (IR) and answers by interviewees (IE). It has been observed that in classical interviews, interviewee refrains from producing acknowledgement tokens (e.g. "uh huh, yeah"), news receipts (e.g., "oh," "really?"), or assessments (e.g. "that's great") (Heritage 1985, Greatbatch 1988: 406-407). However, in more relaxed formats, IR and IE produce listening tokens, and if it's a multiparty discussion, such tokens tend to be produced by those debaters who are just about to take a turn. In general, the interview format can be quite flexible and various deviations from the classical scheme can be observed.

### **3. Preliminaries, meta-formulations and reformulations**

Customarily, interviewers embed statements or comments which are realized as preliminaries to questions and which frame them, setting topical agenda for the following answer. Journalists tend to use such pre-frames in the first part of the question in order to include an argumentative statement or an assessment in the sequential position which makes it more difficult for an IE to dispute. This happens because any evaluative comments appearing in the preliminaries are perceived as a background information to the question which needs to be addressed first in the successive turn (Clayman and Whalen 1998: 244-245).

Nevertheless, interaction participants customarily react to those preliminaries and reformulate the questions, first of all, in order to deal with their complexity, second, to find ways to contest argumentative statements embedded in IR's question frames and comments. The reformulation can begin, for example, in a short introductory meta-formulation, such as: "the premise of your question, John is..." Reformulating IR's formulations, IEs provide the frame for the ensuing answer, which is the action complying with the adjacency pair conversational rationale. IEs in their answers following answering part of a turn usually refer to the reformulated content, which is an immediately adjacent item of talk, rather than to the original and more interactionally distant IR's question (Clayman 1993: 160-161). A pattern that Sacks (54-69: 1987 after

Clayman 1993: 161) has termed the *preference for contiguity* in interaction. This strategy allows IEs to evade questions and to steer the topic trajectory as set up by IR's background statement.

Reformulations aim either at one component of a complex question or recast the gist of IR's turn. They can appear in the affirmative or interrogative form, as for instance in: "are you saying that...?" (Clayman 1993: 163-164). The aim of such reformulations is shifting the topical agenda and simultaneously contesting an assumption made by a journalist (Clayman 1993: 168). The reformulation usually differs syntactically from the ensuing response and precedes it in the same turn (Clayman 1993: 163). It may, though, occupy a separate turn, if an IR chooses to intervene with a repair initiation to steer the flow of talk back to the previous topic.

Most reformulations are preceded by a kind of a meta-formulation, however, not all meta-formulations introduce reformulations since, as the analysis of the below-presented data indicates, they can appear as lone-standing, separate units, often realized as separate turns in talk.

Meta-formulations that are analyzed in this article are less formulaic and ritualized than discourse markers alone which also show meta-textual functions, in the sense that they somehow describe or hedge ongoing talk. Instead, more marked and more elaborate actions often consisting of several elements, including discourse markers, are taken into consideration. Moreover, the observed meta-formulations make an explicit reference to talk, to discourse, to person's behavior, that is their communicative action happening online during interaction time. The focus is on the types of actions using direct meta-textual references to an unraveling communicative action, describing or assessing the way of arguing or producing other forms of talk, and resorting to discourse descriptors usually combined with the 1st and 2nd or 3rd person pronoun reference: "you describe," "I'm just saying" "it sounds like" or more specifically defining some argumentative action such as: "to generalize," ("you can't just generalize"), "argue," "claim," "point," etc. The meaning of referencing structure is usually highly dependent on the co-text and prone to varied interpretations on interaction participants' part.

Meta-formulations and reformulations can vary in the degree of politeness. They can be realized with distinct degrees of *directness* or the *mitigation*. The usage of meta-formulations and their degree of mitigation, as I would like to argue in my data analysis, depends on the genre as perceived by interaction participants.

Directness or bald on record is defined by Brown and Levinson as a strategy of speaking that conforms with the rationality of Grice's maxims, so oriented at maximum efficiency of communication. As opposed to indirect strategy, which is based on any communicative behavior in which the literal and conveyed meanings differ. Such directness of talk regularly appears in communicative events perceived as teases or joking (Brown and Levinson 1987: 94-96, 134). As was observed by Clayman and Heritage (2002: 759), journalists in presidential press conferences preface their questions with politeness or deference marking and indirect references to president's willingness or ability to answer the question, such as other referencing: "could you," "will you," or "would you," followed by a speech act verb like "comment," "tell" or self-referencing markers: "I would like to ask" or "I want to ask."

#### **4. Data analysis**

Data comes from two series of American TV discussions. The first excerpt is aired regularly on the internet and titled: *Uncommon Knowledge*. It is realized as a moderated academic discussion-interview, featuring invited experts on the subject with possibly divergent opinions. General subject of the first analyzed discussion is "Torture and the war on terror" and concerns the use of torture in fighting terrorism, mainly, in the US context.

##### *Overview*

Debaters use meta-formulations in this discussion to negotiate roles (journalist, interviewer and interviewee roles), to direct the topic agenda and to disagree politely. Speakers refer to their own utterance in the current discussion or other interactant's utterance, the preceding one or the following one, in the second pair part or in the question in the first pair part.

The moderator usually reformulates IEs turns before nominating them to speak with the aim of eliciting a counterargument from them. Thus, since he asks questions, responses are naturally addressed to by IEs, even though answer concerns other present debater's argument. Such moderation style provides a greater formality than in case of the later discussed show where this does not happen. However, the role of IR as the one who directs the topic and represents public voices in an objective manner is being challenged. IE uses meta-formulations in this interview with an aim to assess IR's action as argumentative and expressing his personal opinion, not an expression of an



objective public voice. The IR understands those meta-formulations in this way and tries to contest them, intending to re-establish the validity of his argument as supported by objective authority data, not as being just a matter of his personal interpretation. IE undermines IR's role as an objective voice animator and in order to disagree with formulations included in IR's questions. This means that she needs to change their status from assumed background information into a topic to contest, or, more specifically, into a negotiable argument.

In the fragment 1 below, JM starts, in lines 1-2, from more objectified formulations with a general reference using a more objectified infinite structure such as in: "it's wrong to say" to arrive at more personalized ones, using a direct address forms of 2nd person pronoun reference "you," saying: "First of all I think it's wrong to say that Israel (.) eh sort of has (.) no holds barred on physical coercion techniques." The meta-formulation is hedged by discourse markers "first of all" and "I think," delaying, thus, hedging the production of meta-formulation. In turn the meta-formulation itself delays the answer to the question proper. JM's actions are mitigated here for two reasons: first, because not answering the question might result in an interactive problem in an interview. Using such a hedged meta-formulation shows that IE knows that such action is not expected from her as an IE. Additionally, hedging allows her to follow politeness routines in disagreement.

Reformulations used by the IE serve the purpose of directing the topic of the discussion and contesting the assumptions included in IR's questions. The only way the IE can negotiate the assumption and comply with the role of the IE to answer questions to the point is to reformulate the presumption embedded in moderator's question. In this way IE and IR orientate to the interview as having a rather classical structure in the sense that the moderator nominates speakers and IR and an IE are bound by the question-answer routine and using meta-formulation allows them to depart from the scheme while maintaining sequential and topical contiguity.

**Fragm. 1** [Torture and terror, *Uncommon knowledge internet discussion*, 01:30]

1 JM: First of all I think it's wrong to say that Israel (.)  
2 eh sort of has (. ) no holds barred on physical coercion techniques  
3 PR: right  
4 JM: [The Israeli Supreme The Israeli]  
5 PR: [(all I know) that (. ) they do have]  
6 JM: Supreme Court has come in and has outlawed a number=  
7 PR: =yes=  
8 JM: =of [stress and duress (. ) techniques]  
9 PR: [that's precisely the point]  
10 (..)  
11 PR: that is precisely [the point they have drawn lines very closely]  
12 JM: [But also a number of stress and duress] techniques that fall short of  
13 torture that are cruel=  
14 PR: =right=  
15 JM: =inhumane or degrading treatment  
16 PB: uh:::  
17 JM: are also illegal in Israel  
18 PB: °that's right°  
19 JM: It's not just=  
20 PR: =fine=  
21 JM: torture It's also things  
22 PR: But they have [very] explicitly carved out a space where]  
23 JM: [hhh like stress (. ) and duress pres- eh:]  
24 PR: interrogators are (. ) allowed (. ) to use (..) coercion  
25 JM: and I'm not sure I I don't believe that (. ) that the tactics you've described there would in fact  
26 be lawful in Israel now  
27 PR: Well I did [the- th the sour- comes comes] from an art-  
28 JM: [uh::m they they]  
29 PR: I'll just give you the source I'll give the audience  
30 [the sources]  
31 JM: [yeah]  
32 PR: It comes from a long article in the *Atlantic Monthly* by Mark Bowden  
33 (..)(gesticulating)  
34 PR: All right  
35 JM: But I I I think under (. ) s- some of the Israeli Supreme Court decisions that would be yh  
36 yh(.) questionable whether those would would [qualify or not]  
37 PR: [You grant however] that in the reality  
38 that Israel faces (. ) it is perfectly reasonable and indeed perhaps commendable that they actually  
39 faced up to it and have drawn lines (. ) that the legal and political process has addressed the  
40 question .hhh of what you may and may not use and have come down on the side (..) that (. )  
41 physical coercion is in some circumstances justified  
42 JM: I think the story[of Israel]  
43 PR: [and you'd like to see] us (. ) do the same  
44 JM: I think the story of- (. ) no I'm not sure that I I agree with your (. ) characterization of what  
45 has happened in Israel (. ) I think the: s-s:story is a little more nuanced than that which is that  
46 over time .hhh they went through a period where they allowed more uh: physical coercion than  
47 they do now (..)and they:: (. ) experimented with that and discovered that it was (..) bad for their  
48 political system↑ it was bad for their country .hhh and over time they they've begun restricting  
49 more and more the techniques that are used there  
50 PR: ok

In lines 9 and 11, IR uses meta-formulation to introduce a reformulation of JM's argument and prove that the upshot of JM's argument actually supports his earlier formulation: "that is precisely [the point they have drawn lines very closely." It appears as a self-initiated repair in the second part of a pair and is combined with a reformulation. Moderator's utterance follows as a reaction to interviewee's argumentative meta-formulation.

In lines 25-26, JM, an IE, in response to moderator's arguments, produces again a meta-formulation, followed by a reformulation: "and I'm not sure I I don't believe that (.) that the tactics you've described there would in fact be lawful in Israel now." The meta-formulation is hedged, expanded and followed by reformulations. The action's aim is to contest the statement included in the earlier IR's question. JM hedges her assessment by using hesitation markers, personal opinion prefaces "I'm not sure," "I don't believe that" and by using the conditional structure "would." JM shows the orientation to the classical IE and IR roles, with the IR asking questions and IE answering them and she aims to negotiate the possibility to steer the topic to some degree. However, at the same time, JM's clearly undermines another classical aspect of IR's acting as an objective public representative. Using a meta-formulation, the IE tries to foreground the argument formulated in IR's preliminary in order to contest it.

In lines 27, 29-30, 32, the moderator responds, re-establishing his journalistic role as complying with standards of objectivity: "Well I did [the- th the sour- comes comes] from an art-," "I'll just give you the source I'll give the audience [the sources]," "It comes from a long article in the Atlantic Monthly by Mark Bowden." Moderator's reaction shows his interpretation of JM's meta-formulation as challenging his objectivity, since, he produces his own meta-description to redefine his earlier statements as a valid and objective quotation of a well-documented case from a published article. PR treats IE's actions as a trial to undermine his role of an objective "public voices moderator" into the one of a co-discussant who formulates subjective judgments which are thus open to a reinterpretation. His aim is to reestablish his role as an impartial and thus credible moderator and treats it as the problem to be dealt with immediately before JM moves further to formulate her argument, thus, he successfully interrupts her turn to revalidate his earlier formulation. Yet, JM continues to discuss the topic she forwarded from the prefatory background of IR's turn, in lines 35 and 36: "JM: But I I I think under (.) s- some of the Israeli Supreme Court decisions that would be yh yh(.) questionable whether those would would [qualify or not]."

In the next turn the moderator introduces a meta-formulation: “you grant however,” to go on with a reformulation, in lines 37-41 and in line 43, and “you’d like to see us do the same,” thus repeating his earlier argument and reformulating what might be treated as the upshot of his understanding of what she said. Yet, the cycle repeats and JM, in lines 44-4,5 contests moderator’s description by using another meta-formulation, this time however, this is a response to moderator’s turn: “I think the story of- (.) no I’m not sure that I I agree with your (.) characterization of what has happened in Israel (.) I think the: s-s:tory is a little more nuanced than that.” The action is hedged just like the previous one because again the IE contests the objectivity of moderator’s formulation.

All in all, as can be observed, JM’s succeeds in making journalist’s prefatory comment a topic of the discussion. The basic observed meta-formulation functions are to negotiate IE and IR paired roles in order to direct the topic and contest journalist’s argument. The IE mitigates her meta-formulations thus showing an orientation to the classical norms of the interview, whose violation entails an interactional trouble. Mitigations of meta-formulations serve as well the aim of polite disagreement.

The next discussed show’s title is *Politically incorrect with Bill Maher*, aired on ABC Seven. As the title suggests, this is a panel discussion, humorous, lighthearted and ironic. The moderator and guests tell jokes, and play a debate game. The topic concerns a controversial issue of John Walker, American teenager who joined the Taliban. The problem discussed is whether he can be described as a traitor or not.

The discussion has a confrontational character; speakers often talk at the same time, interrupting one another and competing for a turn, which results in numerous overlaps. Debaters speak with emphasis, with an animated intonation and in loud voices, while the studio audience takes choral turns, applauding and laughing. In this show, speed and dynamism are more important than a profound and nuanced probing of a discussion problem. The panel resembles a competition game in which direct counterarguments are expected to appear.

The moderator, Bill Maher, introduces the guests, but he does not nominate them to take turns. Instead, he introduces the topics, providing background knowledge to the discussion, which includes also quotations from other media. However, after each successive introduction of the subtopic, he takes part in a discussion as a co-debater, while discussants self-select for a turn. As a result utterances are also relatively short in comparison with the previously analyzed discussion, since they usually get interrupted or overlapped either by a moderator or other participant. The show’s convention invites such conversational behavior. The formal

sequential aspect retained from classical interviews is that debaters do not introduce new topics, they usually stick to the ones introduced by the moderator.

### *Overview*

Interaction participants use meta-formulations to incite the discussion or to contest an argument. Meta-formulations often function here as teases used to play a debate game with an exaggerated directness, thus, they are more direct and less mitigated than the ones used in the previous discussion, since there is no need for mitigation in interactional events treated as games by its participants.

On the whole, in comparison with the previous discussion, there are fewer meta- and reformulations, and most of them are used by BT, who as a foreigner apparently learns the rules of the genre online. Reformulations and meta-formulations do not appear that frequently since the debate is treated as a game whose purpose is being direct and provocative, while the moderator emphasizes his personal and playfully exaggerated bias in approaching the subject.

**Fragm. 1** [American Taliban 1, *Politically Incorrect* with Bill Maher on ABC, 00:20]

- 1 BM: ye::s=
- 2 DT: =and I was twenty three years old (.) and I spent three years on the front line filming and I
- 3 can tell I was very young (..)and (at) that time I was doing things which I wouldn't do now (.)
- 4 because i didn't think about it
- 5 HT?: (probably)
- 6 DT: and it is young
- 7 (...)
- 8 DT: I mean
- 9 (..)
- 10 S?: ehlm
- 11 DT: you can't just put- (.) you know he's a traitor ((clapping his hands)) you have to see:: what
- 12 did he do:: I mean you know::=
- 13 HT: that case [that case]
- 14 DT: [in case by case basis]
- 15 HT: this is=
- 16 DT: you can't just generalize things [like like that]
- 17 SG: [but that's why he] but that's why he's

DT, who is a Bosnian director, is relatively indirect in comparison to other participants since he mitigates his utterances using hedges, such as “just,” “you know,” appealers “you have to see,” “I mean,” showing an orientation to polite disagreement format. In lines 8, 11-12 and 16, he produces a relatively mitigated meta-textual actions, followed by a reformulation, an upshot of the previous arguments other debaters produced.

His last meta-formulation is quite direct when compared to previous discussion as he uses fewer hedges and a direct address towards the other debater: “you can’t just generalize,” as it directly addresses in: “you can't just put - (.) you know he's a traitor you have to see:: what did he do:: I mean you know”, “you can't just generalize things [like like that.” This last quoted meta-formulation is less hedged since it appears at the sum up position, in the follow up turn, when the major mitigating job has already been done.

**Fragm. 3** [American Taliban 4, *Politically Incorrect* with Bill Maher on ABC, 00:16]

1 BM: and he's not a boy  
 2 DT: no he's not  
 3 BM: he's  
 4 SG: I think  
 5 (.)  
 6 SG: [I think (it's actually the same thing]  
 7 BM: [you know::(..) brainwashing]  
 8 SG: that he should be: (..) that he should be:: brought to trial and (.)  
 9 and if it's proven that he (..) committed treason he should be hold accountable=  
 10 BM: =right=  
 11 DT: =ok (.) but don't (.) you know:: don't  
 12 SG: xxxxx  
 13 DT: call him traitor before he::=  
 14 SG: = I'm no- [I'm)  
 15 DT: [he] did it >THAT'S THE ONLY THING [I'M saying]<  
 16 HT: [that's just  
 17 your::] sty:::le hhh ((pointing towards SG))  
 18 SG: hhhhhhhjh  
 19 HT: ei::::::

DT produces another meta-formulation, in lines 11, 13, 15, directed at other debater’s opinion: “ok (.) but don't (.) you know:: don't call him traitor before he, he] did it >THAT'S THE ONLY THING [I'M saying].” This action is mitigated as well, since it is preceded by an agreement token “OK” and hedges such as “you know” and a self-referencing meta-formulation “that’s the only thing I’m saying.” It has a purely argumentative function to contest SG’ argument. The action is realized in three successive turns since SG treats it as an accusation and interrupts BT’s turns with a direct denial and a trial to repair and probably reformulate his argument.

Additionally, in line 16, HT produces a different kind of non-argumentative meta-formulation. It overlaps with DT’s description, somehow jocularly reformulating it and offering a competitive description

of SG's actions referring to role as a debate game player and a possible tease: "[that's just your::] sty:::le hhh ((pointing towards SG))."

**Fragm. 4** [American Taliban, *Politically Incorrect* with Bill Maher on ABC, 00:27]

- 1 DT: in case of Bosnia there were people like me: (..) I was ready to fight for for for for  
2 free::dom of my country (..) I was ready to stop you know::: bloodshed and stuff like this (.) but  
3 believe me for first three (...) months of war I had a gun (...) with three bullets  
4 (3.5)  
5 DT: that was my war=  
6 BT:=yeah  
7 DT: [and xxxxxxxx]  
8 BM: [I don't understand] your point there  
9 (..)  
10 DT: NOBODY GAVE US WEA [PONS]  
11 BT: [the means (.) to fight]  
12 DT: [YOU KNOW] THERE ARE MEANS  
13 BM: [ah:::]  
14 DT: YOU CAN HELP THESE PEOPLE (.) YOU DON'T EVEN HAVE TO SEND  
15 SOLDIERS in there  
16 BM: you [won the war with three bullets]  
17 DT: [you can still treat them as a] ballet dancer if you want  
18

From time to time moderator demands explanations from a debater, initiating actions that direct the topic. He for instance prompts an IE to explain the point that is not sufficiently developed or not clearly connected to the topic. In line 8, BM produces such meta-formulation as a repair initiator: "I don't understand] your point there." However, this repair initiator is not intended to argue a point but is used to signal a lack of understanding of DT's utterance. Later on, in line 13, comprehension is signaled by a receipt token "ah." The meta-formulation is unmitigated and BM interrupts DT to clarify incomprehension before DT proceeds with his argument. As a result, DT reformulates his story, and other debater cooperates in this reformulation supporting it.

## 5. Conclusion

The functions of the observed meta-formulations depend on how interaction participants' perceive the ongoing interactional event or genre. In game genres, meta-formulations appear quite rarely as the topic flows more freely in a conversational-like manner and thus there's no need to direct it by using meta-formulations. If they do appear, they mainly focus on game features of the show or are directed at negotiating comprehension just like in conversations. In consequence, the level of mitigation of such actions is also lower than in more academic and more closely moderated TV

discussions. While, in non-game like shows interaction participants use meta-formulations to disagree with the co-debater, and these actions are mitigated to varying degrees. Interviewees produce meta-formulations to argue with the moderator as if with another IE, which entails contesting classical interview roles and is thus perceived as a potentially troublesome action and is mitigated.

As can be seen in *Table 1* IR's meta-formulations in academic TV debates usually appear in the first pair of an adjacency pair in prefatory positions and as a background information. However, their sequential position changes into the follow up turn when an IE successfully manages to topicalize prefatory assumptions in IR's questions. In addition to being responsive, they also become argumentative and contest the issue topicalized by the IE. On the other hand, in game debates, the IR restricts himself to producing non-argumentative meta-formulations aimed at creating a game type of an event or at producing repair initiators aimed at message comprehension.

**Table 1**

IR (interviewer)				
	Argumentative		Non-argumentative	
	1st pair part position (initiation, question)	2nd pair part position (response)	1st pair part position (initiation, question)	2nd pair part position (response)
Mitigated ↑ ..... ↓ Non-mitigated	Before formulating the statement before question, reformulating previous talk (also reference to previous turn).		Meta-formulation hedging comments.  <i>I kid of course</i>	
	Introducing the topic and nominating.  Before formulating the statement before question, reformulating previous talk (also reference to previous turns).	N negotiating the role of an objective journalist.  <i>IWell I did [the- th the source- comes comes] from an art-I'll just give you the source I'll give the audience [the sources] It comes from a long article in the Atlantic Monthly by Mark Bowden; that is precisely the point they have drawn it:::nes very closely</i>  Arguing the point.  <i>You grant however] that in the realitythat Israel faces (.) it is perfectly reasonable</i>	Introducing the topic and nominating, formulating the statement before question reformulating previous talk (also reference to previous turns)	Negotiating understanding.        <i>I don't understand your point</i>

The register of meta-formulations in *Table 2* shows that IEs rarely produce meta-formulations in the first part of a pair. This originates in the moderated nature of the discussed events in which institutionally the IR initiates exchanges, while IEs either produce topical meta-formulations in follow-ups or deploy them in positions which can't be clearly defined as purely initiatory or follow-up in a sequence.



**Table 2**

IE (interviewee)				
	Argumentative		Non-argumentative	
	1st pair part position	2nd pair part position (response)	1st pair part position	2nd pair part position (response)
Mitigated		<p>Negotiating the topic, contesting the discussion style – directed at co-debaters' turns</p> <p><i>you can't just put- (.) you know he's a traitor ((clapping his hands)) you have to see:: what did he do:: I mean you know::=</i></p> <p><i>you can't just generalize things [like like that</i></p> <p><i>ok (.) but don't (.) you now:: don't call him traitor before he::= he] did it THAT'S THE ONLY THING [I'M saying]&lt;</i></p> <p>Contesting IR's formulation and steering the topic.</p> <p><i>First of all I think it's wrong to say that Israel (.) oh sort of has (.) no holds barred on); and I'm not sure I I don't believe that (.) that the tactics you've described there would in fact be lawful in Israel now/no I'm not sure that I I agree with your (.) characterization of what has happened in Israel (.) I think the: s-s:story is a little more nuanced than that</i></p>		
Non mitigated				Game like teases <i>et this is just your style</i>

In general, such as in case of JM's meta-formulations in *Table 1*, meta-formulations can show a complex “double meta-structure,” consisting of several components such as discourse markers which can mitigate the meta-formulation itself, while the meta-formulation itself can function as a mitigating action in reference to discourse preceding or following it.

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<sup>1</sup> Transcription symbols:

- (.) micropause
- (1.0) pause in seconds
- [ the beginning of an overlap
- ] the end of an overlap
- : prolonged sound
- h outbreath or laughter
- .hhh inbreath
- a emphasis
- CAPITALS utterance louder than the surrounding talk
- (xxxx) unintelligible talk or a transcriber's guess
- °silent° utterance
- ↑raising intonation
- ↓falling intonation
- >quicker< and <slower> utterance
- interrupted or discontinued utterance or a sharp cut-off of the prior sound
- = latching between utterances.

# ARE THERE CONSTRAINTS ON VERB MEANING AND VP STRUCTURE IN PROVERBS?

ANCA-MARIANA PEGULESCU

University of Craiova

***Abstract:** Verb meaning has been subjected to certain analyses that revealed constraints limiting the complexity of VP structures. It seems that in some languages a constraint on the meaning encoded in a verb and its complements is more obvious than in some others. Proverbs, as specific patterns, offer a particular framework for everyday verbs or those belonging to the chosen ethnofields. The presentation will display how certain types of meaning components (be they complex or not) contribute to the complexity of verb meaning.*

***Keywords:** constraint, meaning component, paremic unit, verb meaning.*

## 1. Introduction

Starting from a verb like *to speak*, one can say that *he/she speaks a language or can speak the truth*. On the other hand, a person can give opinion, or can talk *nonsense* or *business*. As transitive verbs, neither *talk*, nor *speak* can have a person as its object. The element of meaning can figure in a **constraint** on possible verb meanings. The **constraint** can limit the complexity of verb meaning.

I have selected the complementarity between *cause* and *effect* components of meaning lexicalized in verbs or verb structures displayed by proverbs:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| R | Cine <u>se razimă de umbră</u> , de-ndată peste cap tumbă.               |
| E | <i>Catch not at the shadow</i> and lose the substance.                   |
| R | <u>Cine se oțetește</u> , să bea oțet, să-i treacă.                      |
| E | He <u>that is angry without a cause</u> shall be pleased without amends. |

The question that can be asked when studying cause and effect as a **constraint** on the overall complexity of a verb's meaning, is whether Romanian and English display the pattern in proverbs or 'conflate' in their verbs either cause and effect. Thus the Romanian verb a se oțeti specifies a change, a transformation due to certain environment conditions while the English corresponding verbs like to turn sour, to acetify are not used in the English paremic version, for conveying the same **message**. To be angry without a cause is definitely more an explanation than a verb phrase. The effect is obvious in to be pleased without amends and again, we do not face a verbal entry but an explanation.

It is clear what cause and effect have in common if we compare two verbs like a spune and a face in the following paremic units:

- R Cine spune mult, face puțin.  
E They bray most that can do least.  
Good words without deeds are rushes and reeds.

The first English counterpart does not use the same verb (in the first part of the unit), while the second English counterpart uses only nouns (words, deeds).

The verb a păzi plays a double role in:

- R Cine își păzește limba își păzește capul.  
E The tongue talks at the head's cost.

If the Romanian verbal structure a păzi limba can convey a constrained meaning (being most of the time replaced in the spoken language by a-și ține gura), the second part of the same paremic unit – a păzi capul - is used not only for the sake of the well known paremic symmetry but also for preserving the rhythm and the rhyme. Another aspect deserves to be underlined: the Romanian verb a păzi, usually favours entailments having the characteristic [+object][+animate] (a păzi casa, a păzi turma), while the English verb to talk (used in the English version of the Romanian proverb Cine+și păzește limba, își păzește capul) does not present the same *constraints*. Being either transitive – to talk nonsense – or intransitive – to talk to someone- or allowing a manner construction in – to talk at the head's expense- it can combine with different entailments. What, however, brings the common denominator of the *message* of both the Romanian and the English versions, are the nouns limba/ tongue and capul/ head. The difference is that Romanian uses limba and cap as objects, while the agent is unknown and neutral, whereas English makes the noun tongue both an agent and experiencer.

## 2. Constraints on verb meaning

The *constraint* against lexicalizing both *cause* and *effect* components in a single verb is a *constraint* a both what can be packaged into a verb's meaning. A clause can include more than one such a *meaning component*:

- R Închide grajdul după ce îi fură calul.  
E It is too late to shut the stable door when the steed is stolen.  
When the house is burned down you bring water.

In the above examples the *effect* precedes the *cause* and paremic pattern works in the same way both in Romanian and English. The *cause/effect* complementarity is often a complementarity between different kinds of changes:

- R Îndoaie-te ca trestia și vântul nu te va rupe.  
E Better bend than break.  
All that shakes falls not.

Romanian uses the comparison between the human being [*te*] and the *reed* while English focuses on verbs that represent changes along a scale: *bend, shake, fall*.

Sometimes a verb's meaning transcends the sentence meaning like in:

- E Appetite comes with eating.  
R Pofta vine mâncând.

The verb *come* specifies a manner of motion but the verb is neutral as to whether the motion is slow or fast. What really counts is the meaning of the sentence and the *message* that is displayed between a noun and a present participle.

At the level of the word, stricter *constraints* may appear. English expresses the same idea in three versions:

- a) Fortune favours fools.  
b) God sendeth fortune to fools.  
c) The net of the sleeper catches fish.

In a) and b) versions the nouns *fortune* and *fools* are two pillars of the *message* (completed by the third pillar – *God*-), while the c) version introduces three nouns, with the following characteristics: [+object] [+common] (*net*), [+human] [+human] [+common] (*sleeper*), [+common] [+uncountable] (*fish*). The third version which is a metaphor is not nearer the Romanian starting point *Norocul prostului*. The Romanian syntagm – *Norocul prostului* – is an untypical paremic pattern and from this perspective it can be compared to an English synthetic genitive where what counts are the name of the possessor and the possessed entity. The complementarity of *cause/effect* is consequently displayed in a construction where the verb is absent but it is felt somewhere in a deep structure that should not confirm the fact that *fortune favours fools*.

A **constraint** can appear in a construction where the verb and its complements mirror how much meaning can be stored in the main constituent:

- E Money draws money  
R Banul ban unde zărește acolo se rostogolește.

The two counterparts of the same **message** display both transitive verbs and an intransitive one. The intransitive verb from the Romanian version marks the *effect* while the *cause* is illustrated by a transitive verb, a verb of perception.

Romanian and English come very close to the same pattern when using the same morphosyntactic means for expressing the same meaning:

- R Binele așteaptă și rău.  
E After joy comes annoy.

even if we deal with verbs carrying different meanings or having a morphosyntactic status: transitive vs intransitive – *a aștepta* vs *come*.

The *cause/ effect* complementarity may use the nouns cause and effect with their own meanings like in:

- E Bitter pills may have blessed effects.  
R Pilulele amare pot avea efecte binefăcătoare.

or other nouns like in:

- R Înlătură ispita și vei scăpa de păcat.

The English counterpart of the above proverb:

- E Take away the cause and the effect must *cease*.

is no doubt covering the general meaning and is probably targeting the *temptation/ sin* pair, as well.

In some other cases the English noun *cause* is the counterpart of a single Romanian term, even if the **meaning components** of the noun *interese* may include [+object][+abstract][+human][-animate] etc:

- E A man is a lion in his own cause.  
R Omul este leu când îi sunt în joc interesele

In Romanian a verb of perception like the verb *a vedea* (*to see*) can take as an object, nouns having different characteristics:

[+human][+common]:

R Văzut+ai vreun ciubotar cu ciubote bune  
E None more bare than the shoemaker's wife and the smith's mare.

[+common][+abstract]:

R Ochii înțeleptului văd mai departe.  
E Knowledge is power.

[+common][+collective]:

R Ochii mulți văd mai bine.  
E Two eyes see more than one.

The English counterparts do not use the verb *to see* in most cases. More than that, English as a language can use not only different verbs (like the verb to be or no verb at all), but it can bring a totally different kind of verb such as:

R Ochii zavisticului văd și cele ce nu sunt.  
E Cavil will enter any hole and if it find none, it will make one.

On the other hand, verbs from both languages might not take any object at all or might take as an object a whole sentence:

E Seeing is believing.  
R Crezi numai ce vezi.

### 3. Conclusion

From the above analysis, at the level of paremic units belonging to both English and Romanian, we can retain the following aspects:

- a) there is a strong connection between *cause* and *effect*;
- b) most of the Romanian and English proverbs display different verbal structures counterparts presenting different *constraints*;
- c) most of the paremic units in both languages convey a *message* and an *attitude* towards the community, the sender of the *message* belongs to.

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# HEART METAPHORS IN ENGLISH AND ROMANIAN

ANCA STOIAN

“Moise Nicoară” National College Arad

***Abstract:** This paper is a comparative study of English and Romanian linguistic expressions containing the word heart/ inimă, in line with the contemporary theory of metaphor as conceived by supporters of cognitive linguistics and the Neural Theory of Language. Thus, after a short presentation of recent research findings in cognitive science and an introduction in which general considerations on the concept of “heart” are made, the paper presents results and conclusions of the research on heart metaphors in English and Romanian.*

***Keywords:** cognitive science, conceptual metaphor, embodied, heart metaphors, idioms.*

## 1. Introduction

The goals, methods, and results of this research paper have been built along the lines drawn by cognitive science researchers whose main contention is that “human language and thought emerge from recurring patterns of embodied activity that constrain ongoing intelligent behaviour” (Gibbs 2006: 9; 276). The cognitive means by which this is achieved is **conceptual metaphor**, which transfers recurrent patterns of bodily actions, also called “image schemas”, to the conceptual domain of the mind by extending them to refer to abstract concepts through a system of mappings and inference patterns. In other words, the metaphor can be understood as a mapping from a source domain (more concrete, very often the body) to a target domain (more abstract). Thus, abstract concepts become more accessible by being linked through metaphor to more concrete concepts belonging to our everyday embodied experience.

The Neural Theory of Metaphor (developed by Jerome Feldman, Srinivas Narayanan and their colleagues), as part of cognitive science, further specifies **the neural characteristics of conceptual metaphors**, which are “computed neurally via neural maps – i.e. neural circuitry linking the sensory-motor system with higher cortical areas” (Lakoff and Johnson 2003: 255). In the neural theory of metaphor, “the maps or mappings are physical links: neural circuitry linking neuronal clusters called *nodes*. The *domains* are highly structured neural ensembles in different regions of the brain” (Lakoff and Johnson 2003: 256). Thus, the anatomical basis of conceptual metaphors resides in “simultaneous activations that result in permanent neural connections being made across the neural networks that define conceptual domains” (Lakoff and Johnson 1999: 46). Furthermore,



relatively recent findings in cognitive science seem to indicate that higher level cognitive processes are indeed body-based since the *same* neural mechanisms which are responsible for “lower level” activities like perception and movement are also used by “higher level” cognitive abilities like reasoning and conceptualization (Rohrer 1998: 16). Svensson and Ziemke (2004) show that higher level cognitive processes make use of partial simulations or emulations of sensorimotor processes through the reactivation of neural circuitry that is also active in bodily perception and action.

Also important for my research is the cognitive view of idioms according to which the meaning of most idioms is *conceptually motivated* in a systematic way (Kövecses and Szabó 1996: 326). The systematic conceptual motivation for the meaning of most idioms is given by metaphor, metonymy and conventional knowledge.

Having considered the fact that embodied experience in general underlies both concepts and the linguistic expressions based on those concepts, we certainly expect this to be true about body parts themselves, i.e. we expect concepts denoting body parts to create metaphorical mappings with abstract concepts and enter linguistic expressions to better express these concepts. Indeed, when analysing English linguistic expressions (collocations and fixed expressions/ idioms) containing the word *heart* as compared to Romanian linguistic expressions containing the word *inimă*, I could see how the experiential knowledge the English and Romanians have about their hearts helps them define and better understand more abstract concepts. In my analysis I made use of a wide range of dictionaries, thesauri, and concordances (listed in the references section), as well as of the complex, encyclopaedic work of my mentors at the West University of Timișoara, whose second part is a dictionary of body collocations (see Pârlog et al. 2009). I also consulted my British friends, Kate and Ken Cloke, on the meaning or use of certain English expressions.

## 2. General considerations on the concept of “heart”

When approaching the concept of “heart”, both in English and in Romanian, the first association one makes is with feelings or emotions, opposing the **heart** to the **head** which represents reason or the intellect. Sentences like (1), (2), and (3) are just a few examples that clearly illustrate the opposition in which the conceptualizations for “heart” and “head” enter:

- (1) Let your *heart* rule your *head*. (“act according to what you feel rather than to what you think is sensible”)
- (2) His *head* told him not to fall in love, but his *heart* had the final say.
- (3) The president must try to win the *hearts* and *minds* of the voters.

Still, there are English phrases where the words for heart and mind are interchangeable, with no (or little) change of meaning: *set one's heart/ mind on sth* “have a fixed desire for sth, be determined to get or do sth”, *set/ put sb's heart/ mind at rest/ ease* “cause sb to set aside doubts, fears, or worries”, and Romanian phrases like *a avea/ a simți un ghimpe la/ în inimă* (or *în cuget*) “have some trouble or discontent (unrevealed to anybody yet)”, lit. “have/ feel a thorn at/ in the heart (or in the mind)”. There are yet other phrases, both in English and in Romanian, in which the heart is (surprisingly) associated with the mind, such as: *take/ lay sth to heart* means “be very upset by sth; be deeply affected by sth” but also “pay attention to sth, consider sth seriously”; *imagine/ say in one's heart* “think (of sth)” and its Romanian counterpart *a cugeta/ zice în inima cuiva* “(lit.) meditate/ say in one's heart”; *a avea ceva pe inimă/ suflet* “be tormented by a thought that hasn't been confessed, have a secret”, lit. “have sth on the heart/ soul”. These phrases as well as the English *heady* which means “having a strong effect on one's senses, making you feel excited and hopeful” point out certain *mind/ thought – heart/ feelings* overlappings.

Of course, these observations are confirmed by the dictionary definitions of more abstract meanings of the word *heart*: “the center of the total personality, esp. with reference to intuition, feeling, or emotion” (*Dictionary.com Unabridged*); “the seat of the affections or sensibilities, collectively or separately [...]; rarely, the seat of the understanding or will; the better or lovelier part of our nature; the spring of all our actions and purposes; the seat of moral life and character [...]” (*Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary*). Such definitions seem to indicate that, in point of fact, the heart stands not only for feelings, but also for mind, will, character, i.e. for the soul or the inner self as representing personhood, essential human characteristics, everything the LIFE of a human being means. And life is, as we all know, inseparably tied to the beating of the heart. Indeed, there are numerous phrases both in English and Romanian in which the words for heart and soul are interchangeable: *heart/ soul-searching* “a very careful examination of one's conscience, innermost feelings, and motives”; *(God) bless his heart/ soul* – (colloq.) an expression of fondness, gratefulness, kind feelings; *poor heart/ soul!* – an exclamation of pity for somebody; *din toată inima/ din tot sufletul/ din adâncul inimii/ din adâncul sufletului/ ființei* “(lit.) from all one's heart/ soul/ from the bottom of one's heart/ soul”; *(a fi) cu inima împăcată/ cu sufletul împăcat* “have a clean conscience, be at peace”, lit. “(be) with a self-reconciled heart/ soul”; *a-l durea pe cineva inima/ sufletul* “feel pain inside, be sorry, be upset”, lit. “one's heart/ soul aches”.

The etymology of the Romanian word *inimă* (see DEX 1998) further explains and confirms the reference of the word *inimă* to the soul (*inimă* < Lat. *anima* “soul”). As far as the etymology (see Harper 2001) of the English word *heart* is concerned (*heart* < O.E. *heorte* < P.Gmc. *\*khertan-* < PIE *\*kerd-* “heart”), by being shared with the words *courage* (< O.Fr. *Corage* < V.L. *\*coraticum* < L. *cor* < PIE *\*kerd-* “heart”) and *core* (< O.Fr. *coeur* < L. *cor* “heart” < PIE *\*kerd-*), it helps us see the century old connection people made between the human heart and bravery, on the one hand, and centre or interior, on the other hand. In fact, the word *heart* itself can be used with the meaning of “interior” as well, and it is this reference of the word *heart* to the soul and to the inside that gave birth in English to **overstatements** such as: *heart and soul* “completely, with the utmost earnestness” (which emphasizes the overall involvement of somebody’s personality); *in one’s heart of hearts* “according to one’s truest, innermost feelings (syn. *deep down in one’s heart*)” and *from one’s heart’s core* “expressing one’s deepest thoughts or feelings in a most sincere way” (which underline the depth of sincerity, genuineness, or the expression of ultimate truth).

### 3. Results of the research on heart metaphors

In what follows, I am going to present an enumeration of **meanings** the words *heart* and *inimă* can have, together with the conceptual mechanisms that I found to underlie phrases having these meanings:

English <i>heart</i> MEANINGS AND METAPHORS	Romanian <i>inimă</i> MEANINGS AND METAPHORS
Vital organ of the human body and the area around it (breast, bosom)	Vital organ of the human body and the area around it (breast, bosom) – <i>inimă/ cord</i>
Life/ Death THE HEART STANDS FOR LIFE/ DEATH	Life/ Death THE HEART STANDS FOR LIFE/ DEATH
Soul/ Personhood/ Essential human characteristics THE HEART IS THE QUINTESENCE OF A HUMAN BEING	Soul/ Personhood/ Essential human characteristics THE HEART IS THE QUINTESENCE OF A HUMAN BEING
THE HEART STANDS FOR THE HUMAN SOUL (INNER SELF) AS A WHOLE	THE HEART STANDS FOR THE HUMAN SOUL (INNER SELF) AS A WHOLE
THE HEART IS A CONTAINER FOR ONE’S FEELINGS, REASON, WILL, AND CHARACTER	THE HEART IS A CONTAINER FOR ONE’S FEELINGS, REASON, WILL, AND CHARACTER
(Lack of) Affection/ Love/ Passion THE HEART STANDS FOR LOVE	(Lack of) Affection/ Love/ Passion THE HEART STANDS FOR LOVE

THE HEART IS A CONTAINER FOR  
LOVE/ THE BELOVED ONE  
LOVING IS HAVING SB IN ONE'S  
HEART  
LOVING IS GIVING ONE'S HEART  
AWAY (TO BE PLACED IN THE HEART  
OF THE BELOVED)  
LOVE IS HEART  
LOVE IS A WAR IN WHICH THE  
HEART IS THE STAKE  
AFFECTION IS PROXIMITY TO THE  
HEART  
LOVE IS INTENSE BEATING OF THE  
HEART  
GAINING LOVE IS A THEFT OF HEART  
LOVE IS A JOURNEY TO SB'S HEART  
LOVE IS HUNGER OF THE HEART  
—  
(Lack of) Feelings/ Emotion/ Sensitivity in  
general  
THE HEART STANDS FOR FEELINGS  
OF PLEASURE, JOY, DISCONTENT,  
PITY, PAIN, SADNESS  
GOOD FEELINGS ARE WARMTH OF  
THE HEART  
SAD IS HEART DOWN  
EMOTIONS ARE BURDENS ON THE  
HEART  
INTENSE FEELINGS ARE FIRE  
(BURNING OF THE HEART)  
GOOD EMOTIONS ARE BIG HEART  
EMOTIONS ARE MOVEMENTS TO THE  
HEART  
HAPPY IS HEART UP  
EMOTION IS HEART  
EMOTION IS MOVEMENT OF THE  
HEART  
(Lack of) Courage  
- see also *hearten/ dishearten*  
COURAGE IS HEART  
LACK OF COURAGE IS MOVEMENT  
OF THE HEART  
LACK OF COURAGE IS HAVING THE  
HEART IN A DIFFERENT PLACE  
  
FEARFUL IS HEART DOWN  
(Lack of) Willingness/ Intention  
THE HEART STANDS FOR  
WILLINGNESS

THE HEART IS A CONTAINER FOR  
LOVE/ THE BELOVED ONE  
LOVING IS HAVING SB IN ONE'S  
HEART  
LOVING IS GIVING ONE'S HEART  
AWAY (TO BE PLACED IN THE HEART  
OF THE BELOVED)  
LOVE IS HEART  
LOVE IS A WAR IN WHICH THE  
HEART IS THE STAKE  
AFFECTION IS PROXIMITY TO THE  
HEART  
LOVE IS INTENSE BEATING OF THE  
HEART  
GAINING LOVE IS A THEFT OF HEART  
LOVE IS A JOURNEY TO SB'S HEART  
LOVE IS HUNGER OF THE HEART  
LOVE IS A BOND OF HEART  
(Lack of) Feelings/ Emotion/ Sensitivity in  
general  
THE HEART STANDS FOR FEELINGS  
OF PLEASURE, JOY, DISCONTENT,  
PITY, PAIN, SADNESS  
GOOD FEELINGS ARE WARMTH OF  
THE HEART  
—  
EMOTION IS A BURDEN ON THE  
HEART  
INTENSE EMOTIONS ARE FIRE  
(BURNING OF THE HEART)  
GOOD EMOTIONS ARE BIG HEART  
EMOTIONS ARE MOVEMENTS TO THE  
HEART  
HAPPY IS HEART UP  
EMOTION IS HEART  
EMOTION IS MOVEMENT OF THE  
HEART  
(Lack of) Courage  
  
COURAGE IS HEART  
LACK OF COURAGE IS MOVEMENT  
OF THE HEART  
LACK OF COURAGE IS HAVING THE  
HEART IN A DIFFERENT PLACE/  
STATE  
—  
(Lack of) Willingness/ Intention  
THE HEART STANDS FOR  
WILLINGNESS

Mind	Mind
THE HEART STANDS FOR MIND	THE HEART STANDS FOR MIND
Memory	Memory
HEART IS MEMORY	HEART IS MEMORY
THE HEART IS	REMEMBERING IS KEEPING IN THE
	HEART
Interior - Centre/ Depth	Interior - Centre/ Depth
THE HEART STANDS FOR THE INNER	THE HEART STANDS FOR THE INNER
SELF	SELF
INTERIOR IS HEART	INTERIOR IS HEART
THE HEART IS A CONTAINER	THE HEART IS A CONTAINER
Essence/ Importance	Essence/ Importance
ESSENCE IS HEART	ESSENCE IS HEART
CENTRAL IS IMPORTANT	CENTRAL IS IMPORTANT
Person	Person
THE HEART STANDS FOR A PERSON	THE HEART STANDS FOR A PERSON
Character/ Nature	Character/ Nature
THE HEART STANDS FOR	THE HEART STANDS FOR
CHARACTER	CHARACTER
AFFECTION IS WARMTH	THE HEART IS A CONTAINER
(Lack of) Truth, sincerity	(Lack of) Truth, sincerity
THE HEART STANDS FOR (LACK OF)	THE HEART STANDS FOR (LACK OF)
TRUTH	TRUTH
Worship	Worship
THE HEART STANDS FOR WORSHIP	THE HEART STANDS FOR WORSHIP
Shape	Shape
Game of cards	Game of cards
THE HEART STANDS FOR THE CARD	THE HEART STANDS FOR THE CARD
THE HEART STANDS FOR THE GAME	
Food	-
Stomach	Stomach
	THE HEART IS STOMACH
Narcotics	-
20 MEANINGS	18 MEANINGS

As can be seen, English and Romanian share most of the meanings, although there are conceptual metaphors related to certain meanings that function only for one of the languages. Added to these shared meanings, the English *heart* also refers to food and narcotics, namely to a special type of meat or a particular sort of narcotic pill, but these senses are marginal in the language. From among all the meanings listed above, given the lack of space, the present paper will address two, namely “courage” and “memory”.

### 3.1. The heart as “(lack of) courage”

As we noticed before when looking at the common etymology between the English *heart* and *courage*, the two concepts have long been associated with one another. Furthermore, the Romanian *curaj* “courage”

also comes from the French *courage*, deriving thus from the same Proto-Indo-European root *\*kerd-* “heart”. This is probably due to the physical sensation felt in the chest around the heart when courage, excitement or, on the contrary, fear is felt. Many of the linguistic expressions having this meaning also make reference to feelings associated to (lack of) courage such as enthusiasm or sadness and disappointment. It is to be noticed, though, that courage is not only a matter of feelings, it is also a state of mind, involving will and determination. Thus, besides the physical motivation, the conceptualization of “courage” in terms of “heart” is interrelated to the reference the word *heart/ inimă* has come to have not only to feelings but reason and will as well.

The basic conceptual metaphor functioning for this meaning of *heart/ inimă* is COURAGE IS HEART. It underlies phrases such as: *lose heart* “become discouraged, lack enthusiasm” and its Romanian counterparts *a(-și) pierde inima/ a i se tăia inima* “lose courage, hope; get discouraged”, lit. “lose one’s heart/ have one’s heart cut”; *take heart* “start to feel more hopeful and more confident; cheer up”, whose Romanian counterpart would be *a (mai) prinde (la) inimă* “(lit.) catch (some more) (at) heart”; Eng. *give sb (fresh) heart* “make sb feel positive, esp. when they thought that they had no chance of achieving sth”; Eng. *have the heart (to do sth)* “(esp. neg.) have the necessary courage or callousness to do sth”; Eng. *in good heart* “in good courage/ hope”; Eng. *out of heart* “discouraged”; then Rom. *cu inimă* “courageously”, lit. “with heart”; Rom. *a i se face (cuiva) inima cât un purice* “be afraid of sth, get discouraged”, lit. “one’s heart becomes as small as a flea”. The Romanian phrase *a-i ține cuiva inima* “encourage, comfort sb”, lit. “hold sb’s heart” is based on the COURAGE IS HEART metaphor as well, and is also consistent with the LACK OF COURAGE IS MOVEMENT OF THE HEART metaphor (see below): holding somebody’s heart steady prevents it from moving, which would imply lack of courage. Some other phrases are more indirect realizations of the COURAGE IS HEART metaphor (the word *heart* cannot be replaced by *courage*, but *heart* is used in contexts related to courage or the lack thereof): if it is to insert fear in someone, this is done into the heart – *strike fear into sb’s heart* “make sb be afraid”; *heart-trouble* euphemistically refers to “fear, cowardliness”; and *a heart of oak* is “a brave person”.

There are a number of compound or derived words both in English and Romanian containing the word/ root *heart/ inimă* which are also based on the COURAGE IS HEART metaphor: *chickenhearted* “cowardly”; *disheartened* “discouraged, dismayed, depressed”; *lion-hearted* “very courageous” and its Romanian non-derived corresponding phrase *cu inimă de leu* “(lit.) with the heart of a lion”; *heartless* “(archaic) lacking courage

or enthusiasm”; *stout-hearted* “brave and resolute”; *weak-hearted* “having little courage, of feeble spirit” and its Romanian corresponding phrase *slab de inimă* “(lit.) weak of heart”; Rom. *inimos* “courageous”, lit. “heartly”.

LACK OF COURAGE IS MOVEMENT OF THE HEART is another metaphor underlying phrases in which *heart/ inimă* refers to “(lack of) courage”. The kind of movement referred to by this metaphor is an unusual one, different from the physiological beating of the heart. Abnormal movements are, thus, associated with lack of courage or fear, seen as negative states: *one’s heart leaps/ jumps/ quickens* “used for saying that sb suddenly feels excited, nervous, or afraid”; *heartquake* “trepidation, fear”; *a i se strânge/ a-i strânge cuiva inima* “feel/ make sb feel powerful emotion, upset, sadness, pain, or fear”, lit. “one’s heart shrinks/ clench sb’s heart” (similar in meaning to Eng. *one’s heart sinks*, which is, however, based on the FEARFUL IS HEART DOWN metaphor); *a tremura inima în cineva* “be afraid, scared”, lit. “one’s heart trembles inside one”.

Particularly interesting is the conceptual metaphor LACK OF COURAGE IS HAVING THE HEART IN A DIFFERENT PLACE, which also functions for this meaning of the word *heart/ inimă* and which is especially productive in Romanian: *a-i sări cuiva inima din loc/ piept* “get very scared/ startled”, lit. “one’s heart jumps out of its place/ chest” (one of its English counterparts, *jump out of one’s skin*, contains a word denoting another body part and is based on the conceptual metaphor THE SKIN IS A CONTAINER FOR THE SELF); consequently, the reverse *a-i veni cuiva inima la loc* “(lit.) sb’s heart comes to place” means “regain calmness, balance and courage after a moment of emotion or fright”. The English *have one’s heart in one’s boots* “be depressed, discouraged” also presents the heart in a very unusual (and improper) place. A more intriguing case is that of the English phrase *have one’s heart in one’s mouth/ throat* “be full of apprehension, excitement, or fear”, which presents us with the atypical image of the heart being located in a higher position, while lack of courage or fear is typically conceptualized as having the heart down (see FEARFUL IS HEART DOWN below). This new place of the heart is not only unusual but also very “risky” (in the mouth it could be chewed and/ or swallowed). This phrase could be motivated by the physical sensation of the heart pulsating in the throat, or even the mouth, in instances of extreme fear. What makes this expression even more intriguing for us, however, is its seemingly corresponding Romanian phrase *a-și lua inima în dinți* “(lit.) take one’s heart in one’s teeth”, which proposes an even more vivid image of the heart in a very wrong place but which has, nevertheless, a positive meaning, namely “hearten, pluck up courage”. Indeed, someone who “takes their heart in their teeth” is being extremely fearful, but is determined to get over their fear and

pluck up courage for doing something they are reluctant of. Probably this idea of holding the heart tight with the teeth is connected to the idea of stability, fixedness and firm support, which are ingredients of courage (movement and trepidation accompany cowardice and fear – see the LACK OF COURAGE IS MOVEMENT OF THE HEART metaphor above).

Not only does the metaphor LACK OF COURAGE IS HAVING THE HEART IN A DIFFERENT PLACE underlie more phrases in Romanian than in English, but it also has a version, LACK OF COURAGE IS HAVING THE HEART IN A DIFFERENT STATE, which only functions in Romanian for phrases like: *a-i îngheța cuiva inima/ sângele în vine* “stay stone-still, be dumbfounded from fright”, lit. “sb’s heart/ blood in the veins freezes”; *a i se tăia inima cuiva* “lose courage”, lit. “one’s heart is cut”; *a-i trece (cuiva) rece prin inimă/ spate* “shiver with fear, or horror, be appalled”, lit. “cold passes through sb’s heart/ back”. Here, physical agents such as coldness and sharp objects, seen as generally harmful for human beings, are associated to lack of courage or fear. It is somewhat puzzling in this context to encounter a phrase such as *cu inima rece* “(lit.) with cold heart” which, in a sentence like (4) below, means “courageously, daringly, energetically, willingly”.

(4) Înfruntă pericolul cu inima rece.

We are probably dealing with a situation similar with that involved by the Romanian phrase *a-și lua inima în dinți*, analysed above, in which the courage implied by the linguistic expression is not an original phase, i.e. the person concerned was first afraid or reluctant to do the respective action, but subsequently has learnt or become trained in putting fear aside and doing the right thing bravely or, if necessary, in spite of the persistent fear.

The last metaphor to be analysed for this meaning, FEARFUL IS HEART DOWN, **only functions in English** and is a subcategory of the primary metaphor HAPPY IS UP. Thus, COURAGEOUS IS HEART UP (see *lift (up) one’s/ sb’s heart* “be/ cause to be encouraged, hopeful or joyful”), and consequently, FEARFUL IS HEART DOWN: *down-hearted* “low in spirit, depressed; sad and discouraged”; *have one’s heart in one’s boots* “be depressed, discouraged”; *one’s heart sinks* “one’s courage or hope fails”. Also, as fainting implies collapse, *faint-hearted* which means “lacking courage, cowardly, timorous” is also based on this metaphor.

**3.2.** The next meaning analysed in this paper, **the heart as memory**, is more poorly represented in linguistic expressions in both languages. Still, in English the word *heart* is more closely associated to this meaning due to one phrase which has become the only way (at least for



many contemporary speakers of English) of expressing “knowing/ learning by rote; memorizing word for word”, namely *know/ learn (off) by heart*. The heart here plays the role of the unique instrument for word-by-word memorization. Romanian does not have a corresponding phrase containing the word *inimă*, the Romanian counterpart for this phrase being *a învăța/ a ști ceva pe de rost*, which also contains a word denoting a body part, though different from the one used in English (*rost* “mouth” < Lat. *rostrum* “mouth”, and hence “speaking”), the phrase being translated literally as “learn/ know by mouth”. Still, the meaning of *rost* in this phrase is opaque for most speakers, who view the phrase as a frozen idiom. The underlying metaphor for the English phrase is MEMORY IS HEART. This metaphor is further confirmed and strengthened by the phrase *be etched/ engraved on one’s heart/ memory/ mind* “remembered because it has made a strong impression on one”, where *heart*, *memory* and *mind* are interchangeable.

Romanian has one single instance in which the word *inimă* refers to memory, namely *a păstra (pe cineva/ ceva) în amintire/ în inimă/ în minte/ în suflet* “never forget sb/ sth”, lit. “keep sb/ sth in memory/ heart/ mind/ soul”, where the word *memorie* “memory” itself is again an alternative. Still, the possibility to use the word *suflet* “soul” in the same phrase empowers the word *heart* in its reference to memory (it is not an accidental use), while the presence of the word *minte* “mind” as an alternative here, like in the English phrase mentioned immediately above, makes it perfectly clear that it is the reference of the word *heart/ inimă* to the mind that makes it eligible in a context which refers to memory. It is indeed the whole inner self that is concerned with memory, although the mind is the most important factor. This phrase also functions according to the MEMORY IS HEART metaphor and its subcategory REMEMBERING IS KEEPING IN THE HEART, where the heart is seen as a container for one’s memories. The English counterpart for this phrase, *keep sb/ sth in one’s heart*, is more frequently used for the personal version (*keep sb in one’s heart*) while the impersonal one has been replaced nowadays by its competing phrase *keep something in (one’s) mind*.

#### 4. Conclusion

To conclude, the reference of the word *heart/ inimă* to feelings but also to mind and will, and its overlapping in some instances with the soul, has made the analysis of linguistic expressions containing this word a complex, yet fully rewarding endeavour. The contrastive analysis contributes to a better understanding of the concept of heart in both languages as well as of the differences and similarities in conceptualization between them.

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# TRANSLATING ENGLISH OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS: THE SOCIO-CULTURAL CONTENT OF GENRES AND SUB-GENRES

**RODICA SUPERCEANU**

Polytechnical University of Timișoara

***Abstract:** The study of the cultural problems with the translation of official documents requires defining the notion of culture-specific item which expresses both general encyclopedic and generic information. The paper reports the corpus selection on the basis of genre properties, conceptualizes and classifies culture-specific items and applies the research results to genre texts of official documents for personal use.*

***Keywords:** corpus selection, cultural problems, culture-specific item, genre properties, translation of official documents.*

## **1. Introduction**

As a source of translation problems and potentially thorny difficulties in any area of communication mediation and with any kind of text, socio-cultural items deserve to be treated separately and distinctively in a study of translator's problems and difficulties, the more so in a study of personal official documents as their defective translations may have far-reaching and quite undesirable communicational consequences in administrative and legal settings.

Our observation of Romanian target texts of English official documents as well as of the reactions of public authorities using such texts indicates that defective translations result from the translator's superficial documentation, literal translation and even worse from his/ her ignorance of translation norms.

The exploration of socio-cultural items in translation studies focuses on literary texts, leaving the translation of official documents mostly to one side despite their social and cultural importance in communication. As internationally known studies of the translation of official documents we can mention only Robert Mayoral Asensio's (2003), whereas in Romania no such studies exist.

In our opinion, the cultural problems with the translation of official documents are due to the differences between the two national cultures in contact and the socio-cultural textual practices of the discourse communities using particular document genres. Our hypothesis in this study is that the socio-cultural items differ not only with the national and the professional culture in which a document is created, but also with the genre or sub-

genre of that document. The hypothesis derives from the defining characteristics of genres, whose manifestations in the translation practice have been confirmed through our observations. Thus, a thorough and insightful research will have to be carried out in several steps:

- defining the genres/ sub-genres which will make up the research corpus of documents in English;
- defining the object of study: the general encyclopedic and the generic socio-cultural items to be investigated;
- formulating hypothesized items;
- carrying out a sociological survey which will be able to prove or disprove the hypothesized items as problems and to identify the problems which systematically become difficulties.

This paper presents the corpus selection by defining the genre status of frequently translated English personal documents, the conceptualization of the socio-cultural item and the identification of such items in three genre texts: (the registration) certificate, (the high school) diploma and power of attorney for hypothesis formulation. The hypothesized items will be used in the sociological survey as answer categories in the closed questions of the questionnaire.

## **2. Corpus selection**

Realistic and relevant descriptions and interpretations of language usage by a discourse community can be made only by studying the genres through which its members communicate. It is genre analysis which has shown that only by studying professional genres can we develop our knowledge of discourse and text production and interpretation from individual aspects to the social, cultural and institutional ones (Bhatia, 1993).

Genre analysts have agreed that genre properties can be used for at least two purposes: 1. to validate the genre status of a group of professional communicative events; 2. to establish the genre membership of a text.

In this study, we have used the properties for both purposes, which have helped us to classify the English personal official documents requested as translations into Romanian.

The genre properties have been established through the contribution of a large number of analysts of various orientations, as follows:

- genre codifies the discursive properties of a society/ community (Todorov 1978), or, in other words, it *materializes a type of communicative event* (Hymes 1974, Saville-Troike 1982, Swales 1990, Bhatia 1993);

- genre is action carried out through language, which “*comprises so much of our culture*” ( Miller 1984);
- genre is created and used by a *discourse community*, which *names it* (Swales 1990);
- genre is *characterized by a set of communicative purposes* common to all members of the community (Swales 1990, Bhatia 1993);
- genre *materializes as a schematically structured text* (Swales 1990, Bhatia 1993);
- the *content and style of texts are determined by the communicative purposes* (Swales 1990, Bhatia 1993);
- genre texts are created according to the conventions active in a community, but are exploited differently in order to present particular situations and to achieve personal intentions and special effects (Bhatia 1993);
- genres have obligatory and optional structural components (Bhatia 1993).

Thus, a genre mirrors at least one culture (that of the discourse community), but it may also mirror other kinds of culture. Genre texts produced in the same professional culture, but in different national cultures will have similar contents and textual forms as these are determined by the communicative purpose. The obligatory structural components will be present, but they may have different orders in different languages, i.e. national cultures.

The classification of personal documents can be based on several criteria:

- the socio-professional action which the document performs in interaction, e.g. identification (identification documents), transaction (transaction documents), certification (certification documents);
- the fact in the objective reality which the document describes, certifies, etc., for example civil status (civil status documents), property (property documents), studies (study documents);
- the issuing civil service authority, e.g. notary public documents, judicial documents.

However, we consider that for research purposes the classification of documents needs to be scientifically grounded, and therefore to be based on the properties of genre. Thus, we have identified these properties and used them in the definitions of the documents, the genus denoting the communicative purpose, i.e. the speech act, and the specific difference denoting the fact in reality which the document is about, i.e. its content (Table 1).

Table1. Definitions of genres of personal official documents

Document	Genus	Specific difference
Certificate of birth	statement	of the official facts of a live birth
Certificate of marriage	statement	of the marriage of two people
Certificate of studies	statement	of a person's qualifications/ passing an exam/ completing a course
Certificate of citizenship	statement	of a person's citizenship granted by a government
Certificate of registration	statement	of the registration of a vehicle (details of a vehicle and its owner)
Transcript of the police records	statement	of whether a person has or has not a criminal record
Title deed	statement	of a person's title to a property
Driving license	statement	of a person's right to drive a vehicle on public roads
High school diploma	conferment	of the high school diploma on a person
Bachelor's diploma	conferment	of the bachelor's degree on a person
Master's diploma	conferment	of the master's degree on a person
Doctor's diploma	conferment	of a doctorate on a person
Deed of conveyance	agreement	about an exchange of property
Contract of employment	agreement	about the terms of a person's employment by a company or another person
Power of attorney continuing	granting	an agent the authority to act on behalf of the donor on various matters
Power of attorney for property	granting	an agent the authority to make decisions about another person's property/ finance
Power of attorney for personal care	granting	an agent the authority to make decisions for the donor if he/ she becomes mentally incapable
Declaration	formally announcing	a fact by which a person wants to obtain a right according to the laws in force

According to genre analysis, content and style may distinguish sub-genres within a genre. In the case of official documents the difference distinguishing sub-genres is the fact in reality which the document is about.

As can be seen in the table, some documents share a communicative purpose, which indicates that they belong to a genre, but as their content differs, they belong to a sub-genre. According to the table, the genres are:

- *Certificate* – issued by public/ civil authorities - states a fact or somebody's right(s);
- *Diploma* – issued by educational institutions - confers on a person a degree or a qualification;

- *Contract* – drafted and acknowledged by notary publics - records the agreement between two persons or parties for the purpose of creating, modifying or terminating legal relationships;
- *Power of attorney* - drafted and acknowledged by notary publics - grants a person an authority or appoints a person to act on behalf of the donor;
- *Declaration* – drafted by notary publics on behalf of a person - announces a state of affairs generating rights or obligations.

### 3. The concept of culture

In 1952, two sociologists, Krorber and Kluckhohn, identified over 164 definitions of culture by anthropologists, ethnologists and sociologists (Akoun and Ansart 1999: 126) and since then the concept has enlarged and been defined more dynamically.

The French and British approach to culture promoted the idea that culture is synonymous with civilization and that it is the cultivation of the spirit, an idea shared by the anthropologist E. F. Taylor as early as 1871, which he expressed as “that complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, arts, morals, law, customs and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society” (apud Katan 1999: 16).

The ethnological trend came up with the idea that culture involves people’s life style, while the romantic trend maintained that cultural items: myths, notions, ideas, images, models are spread over a well-determined area and into certain social strata, which led to the classification of culture as scientific, artistic, popular, elitist, etc.

In the German approach, culture and civilization are two opposing concepts: *culture* denotes the individual excellence, the artistic and personal development of a person or social group, while *civilization* denotes the process of material and technical development of a society (Abercrombie, Hill 1994: 98-99).

The German sociology, more precisely Durkheim, considers that culture is actually a socio-cultural phenomenon, i.e. a social structure including the purposes, norms, rights and obligations, moral codes and behaviors determined by values and rules (Zamfir, Vlăsceanu 1998: 150).

To the concept of culture denoting the *beliefs and customs of a social group* the American sociologists have added the concepts of *value system*, *belief system* and even ideologies (Abercrombie, Hill 1994: 99), distinguishing two types of culture: a *material one* (objects as products of a society such as tools, clothing, dishes, building architecture etc.), and a *spiritual one* (language, values, norms, beliefs and knowledge shared by the members of a society).



Starting from the observation and analysis of cultural practices in various areas of man's activity such as scientific, literary, technical and from the study of cultural differences, intercultural relationships, and various situations of cultural contact, the sociology of culture has been able to re-define culture as the "outcome of the relationships between social groups" (Cuhe 2003: 101).

In this research, we consider that the concept of culture cannot be restricted to aesthetic, philosophical or civilizing aspects and that it also includes social, institutional and professional aspects. More precisely, 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 personal official documents these practices are mirrored by genres/ sub-genres and the cultural items in the genre texts.

#### **4. The concept of culture – specific item**

In linguistics and translation studies, the concept of culture denotes aspects of civilization ranging from the aesthetic and the philosophical ones to life style (cf. Wuilmart in M. Tenchea 2008: 59). This view of culture has influenced the way in which the concept of cultural item is understood.

In linguistics, culture-specific items - called *culturemes* in the French and German literature (according to the pattern forming the terms *phoneme*, *morpheme*) and cultural terms in the English literature - are defined as culturally marked linguistic units bearing cultural information (Martinet 1991, Galisson 1991, Blondel et al. 1998). For some theorists, the term has socio-cultural connotations and literary, historical, and political references, i.e. elements of behavioral and elitist culture in the anthropological sense as well as elements of civilization (Blondel et al. 1998: 4).

The concept was taken up in translation studies and enriched with new senses especially by the representatives of the German trend *Kulturemtheorie*. H. Vermeer and H. Witte (1990: 137) consider *cultureme* to be a societal phenomenon having specific cultural relevance to the members of a society.

Translation studies describe cultural items as being dependent on the extra-linguistic context and therefore they can be understood and interpreted only through reference to a reality item specific to a culture. As a result, they are called cultural, extra-textual or extra-linguistic items, the last term marking the distinction from the linguistic and pragmatic items.

In this study, we view the culture-specific item as a linguistic unit whose referent is a socio-cultural reality. Cultural items cannot be dissociated from the social ones, although we agree that social facts cannot

always be reduced to cultural facts 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. The referents of culture-specific items may be known to local, national or transnational communities of the same profession, which suggests the division of the items into *local, national and transnational*.

According to this theoretical perspective and considering our specific corpus, we have classified the cultural items into two classes:

1. *general encyclopedic*, representing universal, national and local cultural phenomena mentioned in translation studies as denoting knowledge of the world (Lederer 1994: 3) and occurring in various genres;
2. *generic*, representing cultural phenomena denoting professional and communicational knowledge and practices specific to a genre.

The two classes share the mark of the group, a cultural charge shared by the human society in the first class and by the professional community in the second class.

##### **5. Culture-specific items in personal official documents**

The above view on culture and culture-specific item has been applied in the analysis of three genre texts of the sub-genres: certificate of registration, high school diploma and power of attorney for identifying the socio-cultural items specific to personal official documents. The corpus is made up of documents issued in U.K., Canada and S.U.A.

The results presented in tables with two columns record the general encyclopedic items and the generic cultural items by sub - classes marked with capital letters and exemplified (Tables 2, 3 and 4).

Table 2: Culture specific items in registration certificate

General encyclopedic items	Generic items
<i>A. Name of issuing civil service authority</i>	<i>A. Superstructure/ cognitive structure</i>
<p>1. State : United Kingdom</p> <p>2. Central Government Department Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA)</p>	<p>1. Heading</p> <p>1.1. Central Government logo</p> <p>1.2. Codified element for document and vehicle identification</p> <p>1.3. Name of country</p> <p>1.4. Name of document</p> <p>2. New keeper supplement</p> <p>3. Notification of permanent export</p> <p>4. Instructions for selling the vehicle privately</p> <p>5. Vehicle details</p> <p>6. Registered keeper</p> <p>7. New keeper or new name/ new address details</p> <p>8. Changes to current vehicle</p> <p>9. Declaration (of the registered keeper to sign when notifying any change)</p>
<i>B. Abbreviations</i>	<i>B. Specific Abbreviations</i>
<p>UK (United Kingdom); DVLA</p> <p>DLVNI (Driver and Vehicle Licensing Northern Ireland)</p> <p>PLG (Private / Light Goods); Ms (); Rev. ()</p>	<p>VIN (Vehicle Identification Number)</p> <p>Des. Codes (Dispatch Codes) ;</p> <p>N0. of seats inc. driver (Number of seats including driver)</p>
<i>C. Codes</i>	<i>C. Codified elements</i>
DN4 5PF (Postal code)	<p>1. <i>Transnational</i> : European codes for describing the vehicle</p> <p>A- registration mark</p> <p>B- date of first registration</p> <p>C – vehicle type description</p> <p>2. <i>National</i>: Additional codes for vehicle security and control</p> <p>A1 – validation character</p> <p>B1 - date of first registration in the UK</p> <p>X – taxation class</p> <p>3. <i>Codes marking the class of document</i></p> <p>V5/2, V5/4</p>
<i>D. Expressions</i>	<i>D. Expressions</i>
<p><i>Terminological</i></p> <p>Taxation class; Heavy oil</p> <p>Private/ Light goods</p>	<p><i>Terminological</i></p> <p>New keeper supplement; Validation character; Despatch codes</p>
	<i>E. Non - verbal elements</i>
	Straight brackets for marking the additional

	codes: [ B.1 ], [ X ],
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Table 3: Culture specific items in high school diploma

General encyclopedic items	Generic items
<i>A. Name of issuing authority</i>	<i>A. Superstructure</i>
1. <i>State</i> Washington 2. <i>Local</i> Bellevue School District	1. Data about the issuing authority (State, county, educational institution) 2. Certification formula 3. Conferment formula 4. Dating formula 5. Signatures of authorized persons and seal of issuing institution
<i>B. Name of educational institution</i>	<i>B. Specific formulas</i>
Sammamish High School	1. <i>Certification formula</i> X has satisfactorily completed a Course of Study prescribed for Graduation for this School 2. <i>Conferment formula</i> ... and is therefore awarded this diploma 3. <i>Dating formula</i> Given this month of June, two thousand and six
<i>C. Names of positions</i>	
Superintendent; Principal President of the Board	
<i>D. Expressions</i>	
1. <i>Terminological</i> High school 2. <i>Numerical</i> December 31 2008	

Table 4: Culture specific items in power of attorney

General encyclopedic items	Generic items
<i>1. Name of authority</i>	<i>A. Superstructure</i>
1. <i>State</i> State of Michigan 2. <i>County</i> County of Wayne	1. Name of document 2. Formula for granting authority 3. Acts which the donee/ agent will carry out for the donor 4. Conditions under which the power of attorney is effective 5. Issuing date 6. Signatures (of donor and witnesses) 7. Acknowledging formula 8. Title of notary public and date when his/ her commission expires 9. Signature and seal of notary public

<i>B. Names of institutions</i> Public Service Credit Union	<i>B. Abbreviations</i> 1'st (Witness Signature) 2'nd (Witness Signature)
<i>C. Names of positions/ ranks</i> Notary public Officer administering oath Branch manager	<i>C. Formulas</i> 1. <i>Formula for granting authority</i> I, ....., residing at ....., hereby appoint ..... of .... as my Attorney-in Fact(Agent). 2. <i>Acknowledging formulas</i> - The foregoing instrument was acknowledged before me this 14 <sup>th</sup> day of November, 2007 by ... - My Commission expires May 11, 2012 - Acting in the County of Wayne 3. <i>Dating formula</i> - Dated November 14 <sup>th</sup> , 2007 at ... - The foregoing instrument was acknowledged before me this 14 <sup>th</sup> day of NOVEMBER, 2007 4. <i>Certifying signatures</i> Signature, position/ title
<i>D. Abbreviations</i> Charter St. (Charter Street) Ex (Expires)	
<i>E. Expressions</i>	
1. Formulaic Mr./ Miss + name of person N 2. Numerical <i>December 31 2008</i>	

The analysis of the culture specific items in the three texts has shown differences in the nature and occurrence of items with the kind of document, which may be a *form* with spaces to be filled in with information or a *text*, i.e. a collection of written sentences.

The general encyclopedic items occurring in all three texts are the names of issuing authority and expressions of one or two of the kinds terminological, numerical and formulaic.

The document as form, the registration certificate (RC), includes abbreviations and codes, both shortened informational units likely to occur in forms. The documents as text, the high school diploma (HSD) and the power of attorney (PA), include names of institutions since their content makes reference to such organizations: the HSD is issued by an educational institution, while the PA mentions organizations with which the donee is to liaise by virtue of the authority granted by the donor. These two genre texts

also contain names of the positions or ranks of the persons involved either in the official actions or in the document drafting.

One generic item shared by all analyzed texts is the superstructure as specific textual organization. As for the other generic items, they differ with the kind of document.

The document as form, the RC, includes abbreviations, codified elements and terms, which are all field - or document – specific. Since the genre is used in EU member states, it includes both national and transnational codes. The genre also contains non-verbal elements as straight brackets for marking additional national codes.

The documents written as text contain genre-specific formulas expressing the speech act(s) performed by the genre, e.g. the diploma: certification and conferment formulas, the power of attorney, the authority granting and the acknowledging formulas. Moreover, the two genres also share the dating formulas.

## **6. Conclusion**

As part of a research project into the cultural translation problems with English official documents, this paper has covered the three initial steps.

The study of the genre status of English personal documents making up the corpus has demonstrated, on the basis of their communicative purposes, that they belong to five genres, each having a number of sub-genres distinguished by the fact in reality the document refers to.

The object of research, the culture - specific item, has been defined after a thorough study of the concept of culture developed in anthropology, ethnology and sociology, of the concept of culture-specific item formulated in linguistics and translation studies, and of our specific corpus of documents. The definition enabled us to classify the items into *general encyclopedic* denoting universal, national and local cultural phenomena and *generic* denoting cultural phenomena specific to discourse communities and consequently to genres and subgenres.

By applying the resulting view on cultural items to genre texts (registration certificate, high school diploma and power of attorney) we have been able to identify sub-classes of specific items and to hypothesize the items likely to become problematic during translation.

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# NLP AND LINGUISTIC ASPECTS OF REFRAMING IN BUSINESS NEGOTIATIONS

CRISTINA-MIHAELA ZAMFIR

University of Constanța

***Abstract:** In communication, people have strengths and weaknesses in receiving information. The technique of reframing is very important in NLP communication as regards both meaning and context. By improving specific language patterns, limiting beliefs can be reprogrammed or reframed. In understanding the term reframing, the two collocations, i.e. context /vs/ meaning reframe are essential. Considering the importance of framing positions, offers and counters in the process of negotiation, several types of frames will be highlighted.*

***Keywords:** negotiation, NLP, language patterns, reframing.*

## 1. Introduction

The technique of *reframing* is very important in NLP communication as it regards both meaning and context. It also has relevance for a key dimension, namely leadership.

According to Dilts and DeLozier (2000: 1072),

In NLP, reframing involves putting a new mental frame around the content of an experience or situation, expanding our perception of the situation so that it may be more wisely and resourcefully handled.

Reframing means attaching a different perspective to or setting a new frame around the meaning of a situation so as to re-orient it towards a desired state.

In NLP, the concept of *frame* should be interpreted from a *cognitive perspective*, that is by considering the context which surrounds an image or an experience. It is closely linked with the process of *reframing*, i.e. with setting a different frame round a context so as to change perception from a pessimistic view to an optimistic one and generate a more resourceful state.

In understanding the term reframing, the two collocations *context /vs/ meaning reframe* are essential, since they have a positive effect on correcting preconceived ways of thinking in at least two main directions.

## 2. The context reframing

*Context reframe* shifts behaviour from a context where it has a negative frame to a context where it acquires a positive frame. In Molden's



words, this type of reframe is appropriate where “behaviour in one context is useful in another” (2001: 259). There are many aspects in business that indicate the weakness of a country’s economy. A context like the following:

e.g. Financial analysts predict a fall of 4-8% in GDP.

could be positively reframed as:

- a) Financial analysts predict a fall of 4-8% in GDP *although the government optimistically estimates an economic recovery by the end of the year.*
- b) Financial analysts predict a fall of 4-8% in GDP. *That’s not bad, considering that the monetary policy is now being strictly controlled.*
- c) Financial analysts predict a fall of 4-8% in GDP, *but the investment bankers forecast a growth in the fourth quarter compared with the same period the year before.*

The first main form of reframing, i.e. *context reframing* refers to the meaning attached to a particular situation, or, according to Dilts and DeLozier (2000: 1072), it “has to do with the fact that a particular experience, behaviour or event will have different implications and consequences depending on the context in which it occurs”. For, instance, the same word or expression can allow for different meanings in different contexts. “Cutting the payroll” is bad news for employees who are on the verge of being fired, and good news for company managers who are looking for ways of saving money and increasing profits.

Thus, it is obvious that *context cues* are likely to *trigger the meaning of a context*.

Leslie Cameron-Bandler (1978: 131, qtd. in Dilts and DeLozier 2000: 1072) points out that the scope of contextual reframing is “to change a person’s negative internal response to a particular behaviour by realizing the usefulness of the behaviour in some contexts”. For example, we can imagine that, in dealing with a crisis situation, a company employee complains about the leader’s holding daily crisis meetings and risk assessments, asking for action plans to be made in order to avoid bankruptcy. The employee could be offered the following context reframe:

e.g. *Isn’t it reassuring to know that your boss will manage to carry out correct assessments when all the team prepare action plans, so that all of you could keep your jobs?*

Such a productive context reframing will allow the employee to view his/ her leader’s actions with confidence and motivation. In context reframing positive language is used:

- positive words (e.g. *correct, reassuring, manage, keep*);

- negative words (e.g. *crisis, risk, bankruptcy*) are avoided;
- *when* is used instead of *if* referring to involvement and future success;
- a modal of possibility (*could*) is used + *will*.

From O'Connor's (2001) perspective, we are more prone to judge an experience (behaviour) in a new way and create a context reframing by asking: *In what context would this behaviour have value?* As O'Connor (2001: 231) points out, "Put the behaviour in that context and what was a disadvantage becomes a resource". For example,

e.g. 1) I'm too tentative in delegating tasks to my subordinates.

Context reframe: You are too tentative in delegating tasks to your subordinates, *but I know/ I bet you can easily persuade them to work in a gentle non-threatening way.*

2) I'm much too straight in my business negotiations.

Context reframe: You are too straight in your business negotiations, *but I know you kept your speed off the mark in bringing forward strong arguments.*

3) I wish I could feel more relaxed participating in the negotiation with the Japanese investors, as I can hardly say a word.

Context reframe: You wish you could feel more relaxed during the negotiations. *However, not taking part in the discussions offers you the opportunity to observe the rules for professional etiquette – wouldn't it be helpful to practise it more at your negotiating training course?*

Dealing with comparative generalizations such as "I'm too...", "I'm much too", "I'm not...enough", "I wish I could...", context reframing can answer these complaints by changing the context, and, therefore, discovering different potential *meanings*. Or, as Dilts and DeLozier (2000: 703) put it with respect to transforming the meaning of an experience, "to perceive a situation from a 'problem frame', we will focus our attention on certain aspects of that situation, and attach different meanings to events".

Thus, in the previous examples, reframing uses *language patterns* that can put things in a brighter perspective through *positive wording*.

### **3. The content (meaning) reframing**

*Content (meaning) reframe* keeps all options open for reconsidering a particular behaviour and is meant to generate a positive intention behind some problematic behaviour. According to Dilts and DeLozier (2000: 1073), "content reframing in NLP involves exploring the intention behind a person's external behaviour. This is most commonly accomplished in NLP by finding the "positive intention", "positive purpose", or "meta outcome" related to a particular symptom or problematic behaviour" (my emphases).

Moreover, a *beneficial reframe*, be it context or content reframe, *should be made* carefully and with consideration in order to *build good rapport with the receiver* of the message (O'Connor 2001: 232). By way of illustration, the following examples can be considered:

e.g. 1) I feel bad that my boss forgot about the annual two-week vacation in Tokyo that he had initially promised.

Content reframe: *That gives you the opportunity to spend more time with your family at home and recharge your batteries.*

2) All this project work is bogging me down.

Content reframe: *Working overtime for this can be frustrating, but isn't it reassuring to know that, unlike with your peers, you will have a rise in pay?*

3) Our manager is so strict. I had to work long and hard for the report before handing it in to him.

Content reframe: *He is that strict? He must be very accurate in his approach to staff controlling.*

4) The company is cash-rich and has recently announced an aggressive cost cutting program.

Content reframe: *The economic recovery of the company shows that it is taking an increasing interest in cost cutting. Isn't it uplifting to know that the management team is cutting costs to increase profits sales?*

Content (meaning) reframing operates in two important business areas, namely advertising and selling. Products are endorsed in a bright light and, according to O'Connor and Seymour (2002: 130), "Advertisements are instant frames for a product":

e.g. drinking this flavoured energy drink *means* that you are fresh and confident, putting this cream on twice a day *means* that you love your skin, eating these coconuts *means* that you like tropical fruits.

#### **4. Framing positions and reframing offers in negotiating and selling**

In the process of negotiation, each offer should be convincingly framed to obtain a positive outcome. Heavrin and Carrell (2008: 70) have stated the importance of *framing positions*, *offers* and *counters* by mentioning that "Framing is recognized as a key variable in the negotiation process because how an offer is framed has a significant impact on how it will be viewed by the other party. In general, the *framing* of a position refers to the *wording* and *context of the offer*" (my emphasis).

Although at first sight there are strong similarities between the *leading* subtechnique (that belongs to the technique of rapport) and the technique of *reframing*, it is the last part of this definition that makes the difference between them. Moreover, the arguments referring to the context reframing and content (meaning) reframing point out the most important differences.

Further clarification on how an issue could be framed is made by Domenici and Littlejohn (2001: 84-88, qtd. in Heavrin and Carrell 2008: 71-72) who, starting from the premise that each issue may be considered as a point of disagreement between parties, distinguish two areas of issues focus, i.e. *procedures* and *content*. The former has to do with the *exact payment method and the timing of delivery*, whereas the latter deals with the *price, contract length and quantity*. Domenici and Littlejohn (ibid.) go into more detail pointing out two *methods of framing an issue*, mainly in a slanted manner and in a nonjudgemental manner. Both methods suggest different approaches: the slanted manner puts the seller's position in advantage,

e.g. A fair price is \$5,000 because that is the written down value.

whereas the nonjudgemental manner reformulates the issue in the form of a question (framing question), leaving room for a two-party equitable agreement,

e.g. How can we both move forward to obtain a fair price? (How do you feel about getting a fair price?) or  
What solution can we consider to get a fair price?

Domenici and Littlejohn favour the second manner of framing, making it clear that, from the point of view of initiating a positive exchange of issues, "the latter method of framing is less antagonistic and moves discussions toward a process of creative problem solving" (Domenici and Littlejohn 2001: 87, our emphasis).

However, David Venter (2004), in his *Framing – An Important Negotiation Tool*, highlights *four types of frames* particular to a negotiation process: reframing the issue, focus (re)framing, contrast framing, and negative framing. His research shows that the seller's response (strategy) depends on the *purpose appropriate to each type of frame*.

TYPE OF FRAME	PURPOSE	Buyer's initial position: "\$ 10,000 is too high..."
1. REFRAMING	1. Change <i>buyer's context</i> from a purchase decision to an <i>investment decision</i> .	Seller: <i>This Egyptian amphora is a <b>safe investment</b>. The only other liqueur magic bowl sold for twice the price to an antique stall last week!</i>
2. FOCUS (RE)FRAMING	2. Change buyer's context from a simple purchase decision by focusing on the <i>uniqueness of the Egyptian amphora</i> .	Seller: <i>This is <b>the only wine container</b> used in the ancient times by the Ramses dynasty.</i>
3. CONTRAST FRAMING	3. Change buyer's context from a single price of \$10,000 to much <i>smaller, monthly instalments</i> .	Seller: <i>If you pay for it 20 months, the <b>monthly instalment</b> will be less than a low cost flight from San Diego to Chicago, but even your next family generation will drink from the amphora.</i>
4. NEGATIVE FRAMING	4. Frame buyer's <i>decision</i> in terms of <i>avoiding a loss</i> (due to people being loss averse).	Seller: <i>You <b>can make up your mind</b>, but a Hollywood film director who is setting up a movie these days in Cairo saw it yesterday and was <b>very thrilled to buy it promising to come back</b>.</i>

Source: Adapted from Venter (2009)

When the buyer complains about the price, the seller uses what the sales jargon usually calls *supportive language* (e.g. "a safe investment"), in other words "You are receiving an excellent value". The buyer associates the *metaphor* "liqueur magic bowl" given in the frame interpretation with the object for selling, i.e. the Egyptian amphora. Not only does the seller create a very strong mental image in the customer's mind through the use of this metaphor, but he also uses a very effective strategy. He positively reframes the buyer's initial position, by influencing his way of thinking.

The difference between *positive and negative framing* is summed up by Carrell and Heavrin (2008: 72). Their "Reframing Offers"- driven approach shares Domenici and Littlejohn's point of view concerning the *manner* in which negotiators frame offers: "To be perfectly clear, the value of two offers can be identical, but the manner in which they are *framed* or *worded* can substantially affect how they are received and thus possibly

accepted” (my emphasis). For example, the following situation could be considered: office workers are asked to choose between two ambitious economic recovery plans, when 60% office workers are noticed to quit and 150 jobs are going to be made available.

Plan A: The company plans to keep 20% of its 60% productive office workers and save 50 jobs.

Plan B: The company management estimates a one-third probability of keeping all 60% office workers and saving all 150 jobs, but has a two-thirds probability of keeping no office workers and saving no jobs.

Then workers are asked to choose between Plan B and Plan C:

Plan C: The company will lose 40% of its 60% office workers and 100 jobs.

If people were asked to choose between Plan A and Plan B, they would certainly choose the *positive framing* of Plan A. Between Plan B and Plan C, they would turn the balance in favour of Plan B, whereas the difference between Plan A and Plan C is that, although they express the same facts, their *linguistic framings* are at opposite poles of an axis.

A different perspective on reframing is brought by Ury in his book *Getting Past No* (1991: 59-71, qtd. in Carrell and Heavrin 2008: 73), who opposes the idea of rejecting the other party’s offer, but agrees on reframing it, in other words “change the frame around the picture” (1991: 60). In his opinion, “reframing is the most valuable *tool tactic in negotiations* – and the single most valuable *tool in reframing* is *the question asked*, which should focus interests on each side” (1991: 65, my emphases). He makes reference to *four categories of questions*:

1) *Ask why*: Eliminate all uncertainty by clarifying psychological drives rather than discount the opponent’s offer.

e.g. Why do you want this particular type of warranty clause?

2) *Ask why not*: It helps uncover the other party’s real interests.

e.g. Why not consider having a credit plan to cover the purchase?

3) *Ask what if*: Respond with an option rather than disagree with the offer of the other party.

e.g. (I understand you need to receive delivery very soon). What if we agreed to our delivery schedule?

4) *Ask for advice*: Opponents appreciate the opportunity to help develop mutually agreeable options.

e.g. I can agree to accept your first shipment if you allow my staff members to supervise the consignment.

## 5. Conclusion

To sum up, framing offers have an essential role in influencing how others perceive and respond to offers. We can anticipate how we might frame the position of the other party by asking the four *framing questions* above. We can also frame an issue considering the effect that it will have on the outcome of a negotiation, being aware that a *one-word change* can either undermine or restore both sides' confidence in a favourable solution.

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SECTION FIVE:

**ELT STUDIES**



# TRANSLATING OR NOT TRANSLATING IN THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASS?

MIHAELA COZMA

University of Timișoara

*Abstract:* The role played by translation - and by the use of the native language in general - in the context of foreign language teaching and learning is still a controversial issue. Starting from theoretical and research data, the paper argues that, if used appropriately, translation may represent a useful element in language teaching, especially because there are not always perfect equivalents between the two languages.

*Keywords:* foreign language methodology, professional language competence, translation competence, translator training.

## 1. Introduction

Ever since I became a University teacher, my research interests have basically regarded two domains: on the one hand, the teaching methodology, and, on the other, the field of translation studies in general, and that of translator training in particular. In this paper, my main intention is draw a parallel between these two areas of interest, focusing on the manner in which they treat the problem of using translation as a training tool.

The starting point of my endeavour is represented by a paradox. Thus, in professional translator training, one of the ideas frequently advocated by the theorists of the field is that translation should be approached in a manner that differs completely from the one used in traditional foreign language teaching. At the same time, language methodologists reject the use of translation during the language classes, considering that it may have various negative effects on learners. In what follows, I will refer to the fact that, in spite of this paradox, the evolution of the concept of translation over the time has followed similar lines in the two fields, and, consequently, I will discuss ways in which this similarity might be exploited by the foreign language teachers.

## 2. Translation in translation studies

In the 1950s-1960s, translation was understood as an operation performed on languages, as transcoding, being defined as “the replacement of textual material in one language (SL) by equivalent textual material in another language (TL)” (Catford 1965: 20). In other words, the representatives of the *linguistic approaches* perceived translation as an

activity whose primary purpose was to establish systematic relations between signs and combinations of signs in two languages in contact, i.e. the source language and the target language.

As a reaction to this limited view of translation, in the 1970s, the *textlinguistic approaches* were adopted in translation studies, and they produced a more pragmatic reorientation of the manner in which the process of translation had been previously approached. Thus, on the one hand, the focus shifted from the word or phrase to the text as a unit of translation, and, on the other hand, translation was no longer defined as a code-switching operation, but as retextualising the source-language texts. In discussing the translation process, the textlinguistic approaches start from the assumption that the difference between the source-language and the target-language texts lies not only in their sentence structures, which are indeed determined by the respective linguistic systems, but also in regularities beyond the sentence level, and, consequently, the syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic dimensions of texts must be studied in their interrelationships (Neubert 1985).

The main idea stressed by the representatives of the textlinguistic approaches, namely that translators always deal with a text in a situation and in a culture, was further developed, with special focus on the purpose of the text, by the *functionalist approaches*. The representatives of these approaches consciously distance themselves from the retrospective view of the linguistic approaches which focus on reproducing the source text, and adopt a prospective view of translation, which stresses the purpose, the function of the target text in its communicative situation. The idea that translation is much more than a linguistic activity is also reflected by the key notions that they promote: translation brief (or assignment, commission), initiator, client, etc. (cf. Nord 1991). The central figure of the translation process is the translator, who basically decides on the purpose of the translation and, consequently, may be held responsible for the result of his/her act by recipients and clients. With all this interest for the translator and for the manner in which s/he can deal with the problems that might arise at various levels of the translation process, there is no wonder that functionalism led to the establishment of the professional translator training as it is understood today.

### **3. Translation in the language teaching methodology**

As far as the status of translation in the context of the various language learning methodologies is concerned, we can also notice an evolution (cf. Larsen-Freeman 1986). Thus, in the Grammar Translation Method, which was derived from the classical method of teaching Greek and Latin, translation played a central part: the learners were supposed to memorize huge lists of grammar rules and vocabulary items, and had to translate whole literary or historic texts word for word. Since this method was obviously associated with a variety of problems, the subsequent methodologies tried to improve on it.

Thus, in the Direct Method, for example, the teacher and learners avoided using the students' native language and just use the target language. Similarly, the later Audio-Lingual Method tried to teach the language directly, without using the mother tongue as support in explaining the new items. The 'humanistic' methodologies such as the Silent Way and Total Physical Response and the communicative approaches moved even further away from the use of the native language in the classroom, and from these arise many of the objections to translation.

I consider that the brief presentations made above clearly indicate that, when rejecting the idea of using translation as a classroom activity, both professional translator training and language teaching methodology theorists referred to a particular concept of translation. More specifically, they rejected the word-for-word and structure-for-structure type of translation, which focuses on the correctness of specific target-language forms according to the rules of the language system, and which largely ignores aspects of contextual use. In spite of sharing this common ground, the representatives of the two fields in question adopted completely different attitudes with regard to the alternatives that translator trainers, on the one hand, and foreign language teachers, on the other, have at their disposal when it comes to using translation as an instructional strategy. Thus, if – motivated by its very nature - professional translation training benefited from a rich corpus of theoretical and practical suggestions referring to the manner of teaching translation, the language teaching methodology preferred to abandon this type of classroom activity completely for a very long period of time. It is only relatively recently that various language methodologists and practitioners have adopted a more positive attitude towards the use of translation in the foreign language classes, although relatively few coursebook writers offer ideas and materials for this area.

My claim in this paper is that the foreign language methodology should borrow certain elements from the field of professional translator

training in order to make translation activity relevant and really useful for the language learners. In order to justify this claim and in order to identify with precision the types of activities that can be successfully transferred from one field to the other, I will discuss the extent to which the types of competencies that professional translation training aims at building in the trainees overlap with those specific to a general language learning course.

#### 4. Translator competence vs. language user competence

Translation competence is a complex of knowledge and skills that a person needs in order to be able to translate. Starting from the models offered by Bell (1991), Neubert (2000), Martinez Melis and Hurtado Albir (2001), as well as from my own research on the topic, I consider that translation competence can be best described in terms of the following parameters:

TRANSLATION SUB-COMPETENCY	ASPECTS INVOLVED
LANGUAGE COMPETENCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- grammar (e.g. verb form, countable vs. uncountable nouns, choice of word class, word formation, sentence and phrase structure, etc.)</li> <li>- general vocabulary (appropriate use of words and phrases)</li> <li>- mechanics (spelling, punctuation, capitalization)</li> </ul>
DISCOURSE COMPETENCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- cohesion and coherence (e.g. use of connectives, use of pronouns vs. lexical reiteration, lexical chains, etc.)</li> <li>- style and register (e.g. formal vs. informal, neutral vs. emotional, etc.)               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• appropriate for the ST</li> <li>• consistent within the TT</li> </ul> </li> <li>- awareness of the TL conventions for the genre to which the translation belongs</li> </ul>
THEMATIC COMPETENCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- SL term rendered by the officially accepted TT term</li> <li>- consistent terminology within the TT</li> </ul>

	- correct decoding of the ST due to field awareness
CULTURAL COMPETENCE	- awareness and appropriate treatment of culturally-embedded words and phrases (e.g. proper names, various titles, euphemisms, units of weight and measurement, etc.)  → according to the purpose of the translation and the prospective readership, the translator preserves, explains or adapts the culture-related issues
PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE	- use of various documentation sources - use of new technologies - conforming to the instructions given in the translation task - ability to justify the translation decisions
TRANSFER COMPETENCE	- distorted message - omissions - additions - the translation is too free - the translation is too literal - indecision (e.g. several synonyms) - miscopied figures or names

### 5. Suggested translation activities

The main problem associated with the use of translation in the traditional foreign language teaching is that the text to be translated is generally approached in a quite simple manner. Once the students receive the original text, they just start working on it, taking its various sentences in their turn and trying to render their direct meaning as accurately as possible. When asked to explain why they have made certain translation choices, the students usually restrict themselves to purely linguistic arguments, or, in other cases, resort to their “feel for the language”. If, in addition to the purely linguistic competence, the foreign language course is also meant to raise our students’ awareness with regard to (some of) the elements characterizing the other competences discussed above, the translation activities that we use during the foreign language classes should involve considerations of contextual appropriateness. In what follows, I will present some examples in this respect.

### 5.1. Activities raising awareness of cohesive devices

The correct use of the cohesive devices is a sine-qua-non condition for any language user who wants to produce a functionally appropriate stretch of language. In order to raise the language students' awareness with regard to the manner in which cohesion is achieved in their native language in comparison to the foreign language, the English teacher can resort to translation activities such as:

- Students are organized in small groups, and each of them works on translating a different section of a given text. Then, the learners regroup to connect together their parts into a full text, with suitable connecting language (cf. <http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk>).

- Students imagine that they have been invited to join a team of translators to produce a version of the *Macmillan Encyclopaedia* in their native language. Their assignment is to translate all the entries on people (rather than those on countries or political terms, for instance), paying particular attention to the manner in which referential chains are handled in the translated version. After that, they comment on any differences in patterns of reference in the source and target versions of each entry (cf. Baker 1992).

**Elizabeth I** (1533-1603) Queen of England and Ireland (1558-1603), daughter of Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn. Her mother's execution and Elizabeth's imprisonment by Mary I made her cautious and suspicious but her devotion to England made her one of its greatest monarchs. Her religious compromise (1559-1563) established Protestantism in England. Several plots to place her Roman Catholic cousin, Mary, Queen of Scots, on the throne led to Mary's execution (1587). England won a great naval victory in 1588 by destroying the Spanish Armada. Elizabeth never married and was called the Virgin Queen, although her relationships with, among others, the Earl of Leicester and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Essex caused considerable speculation.

**Van Gogh, Vincent** (1853-1890) Dutch postimpressionist painter, born at Zundert, the son of a pastor. He worked as an art dealer, a teacher in England, and a missionary among coalminers before taking up painting in about 1880. His early works were chiefly drawings of peasants. After a limited training in The Hague and in Antwerp, where he studied the works of Rubens and Japanese prints, he moved to Paris (1886). Here he briefly adopted the style of impressionism and later of pointillism. In Arles in 1888 he painted his best-known works – orchards, sunflowers, and the local postman and his family – but only one painting was sold during his lifetime. The visit of his friend Gauguin ended in a quarrel during which Van Gogh cut off part of his own left ear. In 1889 he entered a mental asylum at Saint Remy. The ominous *Wheatfield with Crows* (Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam) was painted shortly before his suicide. His letters to his brother (Theo) contain the best account of his life and work.

## **5.2. Activities raising awareness of genre conventions**

Since linguistic competence does not simply involve the use of words or grammatical forms in isolation, but is characterized by producing texts that are functional in a specific context, students need to be made aware of the features that language use must possess in order to be appropriate in a particular communicative situation. Referring to the same aspect, Bhatia (1993: 156) points to genre analysis as a suitable method in this respect: "After all, the most important function of learning is not simply to be able to read and produce a piece of text as a computer does, but to become sensitive to the conventions, in order to ensure the pragmatic success of the text in the academic or the professional context in which it is likely to be used."

- Students analyze the features that a particular genre presents in the native language, on the one hand, and in the foreign language, on the other. Then, they translate a text belonging to that genre, with the specific task of preserving the genre in the target language (for example, translating a news or a sports report), or of changing the genre (for example, translating a scientific research report for publication in a magazine for non-specialist science enthusiasts) (cf. Bhatia 1993).

## **5.3. Activities raising awareness of cultural references**

Linguistic competence interferes at various points with the cultural competence, and, consequently the process of language teaching should provide students with activities meant to make them familiar with concepts related to the foreign language culture. Translation can be a suitable activity to explore and develop aspects of foreign language learners' intercultural competence.

- Students are required to translate a text that contains several culturally-specific words and notions whose implications for translation deserve attention. For example, they may receive the task of translating, in writing, the following English article featuring a high frequency of British cultural references, for publication in the well-known newsmagazine in their country (adapted from Olk 2009).

### **Britain's New Super Class**

Britain has a new upper class: the "super class", a highly-paid elite, which is built on old professions and institutions. Being British, they have a solid base in tradition, whether in Oxbridge, Clubland, the Inns of Court, the House of Lords, or the City of London with its medieval Corporation and Lord Mayor. On the

other hand, the super class is a new phenomenon originating from the reforms that were a product of Thatcherism in the 1980s. Like the Victorian factory owners and hereditary peers, this class has come to believe in the justice of its wealth and status.

The lives of the new class revolve around Harrods and Kensington; the best public schools; modern art; the Royal Opera; and the high-life in London, where much of the super class is concentrated. For instance, half to two thirds of all solicitors and barristers in England and Wales work in London, as do 85 percent of all QCs.

This concentration in London has two main effects. First, most of the elite's economic weight is exerted at the heart of the nation, ensuring it strong clout with Whitehall - regardless of whether the government is Tory or New Labour. Secondly, it enables the super class to separate itself from most of the country. Britain beyond the Home Counties barely features on its horizon.

#### **5.4. Activities raising awareness of potential contextual inappropriateness**

If we want to raise our students' awareness with regard to a variety of aspects of contextual appropriateness in the native versus the foreign language, we can bring instances of 'bad' translations and discuss with the learners the causes of errors (for example, in terms of inappropriate use of cohesive devices, breach of the genre conventions in the target language, incorrect treatment of the culture-specific issues). It is considered that translation software programmes and web pages represent good sources in this respect (cf. <http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk>).

#### **6. Conclusion**

Before I started working on this paper, I could not help wondering whether the use of translation as a classroom activity was a real problem, which, indeed, called for practical solutions, or was just an artificial debate created by the traditional gap between theory and practice. This is the reason why I went "out in the field" and I asked my students about it. I considered that the answers that they would give are reliable, because they are competent users of English, and, at the same time, have a long "career" as learners of this language in a variety of formal and informal contexts. As a very general conclusion, I can say that, even if they reject the use of the native language as a manner of relaying instructions and, sometimes, as a method of rendering the meaning of the new words, all of them stressed the usefulness of the translation activities as opportunities of highlighting various types of similarities and differences between the native and the foreign languages. I will even quote one of my students, because s/he refers to translation as an extremely useful tool in revealing the differences that the two languages present when it comes to their use in real situations, and this



is exactly the idea that I wanted to stress throughout this paper: “Translation is useful in pointing to similarities and in making analogies between the native language and the foreign one, and this represents an advantage that partially makes up for the <handicap> of not living in an environment of native English speakers.”. It can be concluded, therefore, that the crucial issue is not the amount of native language that is used in the English language class, but the purpose for making use of it.

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# ENGLISH GRAMMAR REVIS(IT)ED?

GAŠPER ILC

University of Ljubljana

**Abstract:** *In the era of Englishes, investigations into English grammar teaching face many problems. It seems that traditional grammar labels such as grammatical correctness and acceptability have lost their descriptive force and value. Using authentic data, the paper argues that modern grammar teaching models should focus more on various contextual factors that determine the acceptability and should not rely exclusively on the grammaticality, let alone adhere to strict prescriptivism.*

**Keywords:** *acceptability, discourse, language teaching, prescriptivism, sociolinguistic variation, standard English(es).*

## 1. Introduction

The present paper has been inspired by a discussion at the 2008 ESSE conference organised by the Slovene Association for the Study of English. The apple of discord at that time was example (1), which some members of the audience claimed to be ungrammatical, arguing that, according to the rules of English grammar, the modal verb *can* may only be followed by the Perfect Infinitive in interrogatives (2a) and negatives (2b).

- (1) The accident can / could have happened.
- (2) a) How can an accident like this have ever happened?  
b) The accident can't have happened.

If we examine corpus data, we may observe that this rather prescriptive rule is, in fact, not valid. For instance, the British National Corpus (BNC) contains 4 examples of *can have happened* in non-negative and non-interrogative contexts and, the British English Web Corpus (ukWaC) has 21 hits. Google search filtered for .uk pages yields 973 hits, for .au pages 397 hits, for .ca pages 296 hits and for .edu pages 752 hits. In addition, in the BNC, there are 164 hits for *can* followed by the Perfect Infinitive in non-negative and non-interrogative contexts, and 7909 hits for the same combination in the ukWaC. What is perhaps even more interesting is that the ratio between the *can + Perfect Infinitive* and *could + Perfect Infinitive* constructions in both corpora is almost identical (2%). Thus, the only grammatical generalisation we can infer from the data is that in non-negative and non-interrogative contexts, the modal verb construction *can + Perfect Infinitive* is less typical than *could + Perfect Infinitive*.

<i>source</i>	<i>can have happened</i>	<i>can + Perfect infinitive</i>	<i>could + Perfect infinitive</i>
<i>BNC</i>	4	164 (2%)	7909 (98 %)
<i>ukWaC</i>	21	1082 (1.9%)	56570 (98.1%)
<i>.uk</i>	973		
<i>.au</i>	397		
<i>.ca</i>	296		
<i>.edu</i>	752		

Table 1. *The corpus data for the use of can/could followed by the Perfect Infinitive in non-interrogative and non-negative contexts.*

Having worked both in the field of applied linguistics and language teaching for several years now, I could not have failed to notice that, by and large, two strategies in grammar teaching have been favoured. The first strongly relies on grammatical prescriptivism, while the other draws on the principles of the communicative approach, and pays little attention to grammatical correctness *per se*. The aim of this paper is to show that both approaches are not entirely appropriate, so alternatives should be sought. In particular, using two different case studies, the paper addresses the following questions:

- (i) to what extent are the grammatical generalisations reliable?
- (ii) to what extent should we rely on grammaticality and to what extent on acceptability?
- (iii) what can be considered right, what acceptable and what wrong grammarwise in language testing?

The paper is organised as follows: section 2 addresses the question of grammaticality and acceptability from the perspective of language teaching; section 3 presents two case studies (the Present Perfect Tense and the Non-progressive statives), the purpose of which is to show that efficient grammar teaching should focus on the notions of grammaticality as well as acceptability, and that considering only one may lead to wrong results. Section 4 discusses a possible impediment in the language learning process that is a result of strict prescriptivism using grammatical (over)simplifications. Section 5 concludes the paper.

## **2. Grammaticality and Acceptability**

It is a well-known, though frequently ignored, fact that there are at least two different kinds of grammatical rules or grammatical generalisations: (i) the language-descriptive and (ii) the language-teaching grammatical rules. While the former are used for theoretical purposes, the latter represent their simplifications, which are created for pedagogical purposes. The language-descriptive rules aim at encompassing all relevant

linguistic data, spanning from (proto)typical examples to peripheral occurrences. The language-teaching rules, on the other hand, focus mainly on the (proto)typical examples and very frequently exclude non-typical cases. To illustrate, consider the language-descriptive rule specifying the use of the reflexives (3) and compare it with the language-teaching rule in (4).

(3) Binding Conditions (final)

A reflexive pronoun must be semantically bound in its domain.

For any two NPs  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$ , if  $\alpha$  could bind  $\beta$  (i.e. if it c-commands  $\beta$  and  $\beta$  is not bound in  $\alpha$ 's c-command domain already),  $\alpha$  must bind  $\beta$ , unless that changes the interpretation (Büring 2005: 129).

(4) We use *myself/yourself/himself* etc. (*reflexive pronouns*) when the *subject* and the *object* are the same (Murphy 1994: 164).

Generalisation (3) may be descriptively adequate, yet it has little or no practical value for language-teaching. For that reason, simplifications like (4) have been developed to cover the majority of cases that any learner of English will encounter in their everyday usage of English. However, at the same time, we must not forget that generalisation (4) fails to cover all occurrences of the reflexives, including the two (not peripheral) examples in (5).

- (5) a) It is only my father and myself who live in London now.  
b) Which picture of himself did Peter like?

In their introductory section, many grammar reference books make an attempt at determining what is considered grammatical and what ungrammatical. Swan (2005), for instance, defines grammatical correctness in the following terms:

If people say that a form is not 'correct', they can mean several different things. They may for instance be referring to a sentence like *I have seen her yesterday*, which normally occurs in the English of foreigners. They may be thinking of a usage like *less people* (instead of *fewer people*), which is common in standard English but regarded as wrong by some people. Or they may be talking about forms like *\*ain't* or 'double negatives', which are used in speech by many British and American people, but which do not occur in the standard dialects and are not usually written. This book is mainly concerned with the first kind of 'correctness': the difference between British and American English and 'foreign' English (Swan 2005: ix).

There are at least two points that need to be discussed. First, while the definition acknowledges the variations across inner circle Englishes (i.e. AmE/BrE), it does not take into consideration other varieties of Standard

English, including Australian and New Zealand English (AusE and NZE). As will be shown in section 3, they both display departures from other inner-circle Englishes grammarwise. Second, and perhaps even more crucial, is the fact that there is no explicit reference made to the dichotomy of grammaticality and acceptability. This distinction goes back to Chomsky (1965: 11), who argues that “[t]he notion ‘acceptable’ is not to be confused with ‘grammatical.’”, adding that “[a]cceptability is a concept that belongs to the study of performance, whereas grammaticality belongs to the study of competence.” In Chomskian linguistic theory, competence represents the speaker's/hearer's innate knowledge of the linguistic rules that make up their internal grammar, whereas their actual use of the language is referred to as performance. Since Chomskian definition of grammaticality is strictly theoretical, at this point the paper makes a slight departure, and treats grammaticality as well-formedness determined by explicit consensus on the grammatical rules. To exemplify the difference between grammaticality and acceptability, consider examples (6). (6a), taken from Swan (2005: ix), displays ungrammaticality (i.e. *less* as a noun modifier selects uncountable and not countable nouns), but it is still considered as acceptable (see above). On the other hand, example (6b) which is Pullum's (2004) re-analysis of the famous Churchillian example, displays grammaticality (i.e. the prepositional particle of the prepositional verb may be fronted in interrogatives), yet its acceptability is highly questionable.

- (6) a) less people  
b) With how many interruptions am I supposed to put up?

In subsequent sections, the paper examines two well-known grammatical phenomena (the Present Perfect Tense and the Non-progressive statives respectively) from the perspective of grammaticality and acceptability, with special focus on pedagogical implications. The aim of the analysis is to offer some possible solution for everyday language teaching practice.

### **3. Case Studies**

#### **3.1. Present Perfect Tense**

The reason for selecting the Present Perfect Tense as a case study is twofold. First, in many languages, the concept of the English Present Perfect is (almost) non-existent, therefore it is frequently focussed on, both in language teaching and testing. Second, examining various grammar reference sections, one can observe that (English) grammarians dedicate a

large amount of space to this tense in contrast to other tenses. Metalinguistic explanations of the usage Present Perfect Tense include terms such as: *result* or *resultative meaning*, *current/present relevance* and *indefiniteness* or *indefinite time*. A google search (2008, May 18) yields 1,170 hits for the combination *Present Perfect Tense* and *Present relevance*, the same number of hits for *Present Perfect Tense* and *result*. But they are all outnumbered by 91,900 hits for *Present Perfect Tense* and the *indefinite time*.

Analysing contemporary standard English linguistic data, it is not difficult to see that these, rather overstretched, grammatical generalisations face several problems. In the introduction to *The Practical English Usage*, Swan (2005: ix) states that example (7) “normally occurs in the English of foreigners”, since the Present Perfect Tense is used with the definite time reference, which is not in accordance with the grammatical rules of English (i.e. in terms of grammaticality as explicit consensus).

(7) I have seen her yesterday.

Later on, however, in section 457, titled *Present perfect (3): perfect or past (advanced points)*, the author admits that

such structures [i.e. the present perfect with expressions of finished past] are unusual but not impossible (though learners should avoid them). They often occur in brief news items, where space is limited and there is pressure to announce the news and give the details in the same clause (Swan 2005: 457).

To exemplify this marginal usage, Swan (ibid.) cites sentences (8) from news broadcasts, newspaper articles, advertisements, letters and conversations.

- (8) a) ... a runner who's beaten Linford Christie earlier this year.  
b) The horse's trainer has had a winner here yesterday.  
c) I have stocked the infirmary cupboard only yesterday.

Apart from the (quasi-)journalistic register, exemplified in (8), various authors (Comrie 1976: 54-55, a.o.) report that the Present Perfect Tense is used with the definite time reference when the definite time is added either as an afterthought (9a) or as a reply to a question (9b). In both cases, the expression of the definite time is not part of the proposition marked for the Present Perfect Tense.

- (9) a) I've bought a new pair of jeans, yesterday in fact.  
b) Have you been to Rome? Yes, last year.

There also seems to be a variation on the use of the Present Perfect tense within the inner circle Englishes. Current studies on the use of the Present Perfect Tense in BrE and especially AmE (Biber 1999: 462, a.o.) suggest, that the notions typically covered by the Present Perfect Tense are now expressed by the Preterite (examples (10)), whereas in AusE and NZE (see Cox 2005, a.o.) it is the Present Perfect Tense that is taking over the usage domains of the Preterite, and thus follows the typical path of Perfect Tenses in other languages (e.g. German and French). So rather than using (10), AusE and NZE prefer the ‘English-of-the-foreigners’ usage as in (7).

- (10) a) I always knew that I could trust you.  
b) Did you ever see anything like this before?

The situation may seem chaotic at first glance, but it is still possible to find explainable patterns of usage without strictly adhering to prescriptive rules. Let us now from this perspective try to re-address the questions posed in the introductory section:

(i) to what extent are the grammatical generalisations reliable?

They are reliable in the sense that they cover the majority of cases that fall into the category of grammaticality as defined in section 2. However, it is our duty as teachers to raise students’ awareness that they do not cover all contextual and sociolinguistic variations, for example, different registers (e.g. written/spoken, academic/journalistic, etc.) and variation across standard Englishes (e.g. AmE, AusE, BrE, etc.).

(ii) to what extent should we rely on grammaticality and to what extent on acceptability?

It should be clear that relying only on one is not a very good strategy, since the first leads to strict prescriptivism, and the other to a *laissez-faire* situation in which the issue of grammaticality is restricted to basic notions such as unmarked word-order, grammatical agreement, etc. A better option is using grammaticality as solid foundation in the initial stages of language learning, whereas more emphasis should be laid on acceptability at the later stages. In particular, it has to be pointed out to any language learner that the acceptability level of any linguistic expression cannot be determined *in vacuo*, but it is established within a given context or within a given sociolinguistic variation. Using data from corpora, we can observe that grammatical phenomena are closely intertwined; therefore, a selection of one may automatically trigger the selection of the other. In their corpus analysis, (Biber et al. 1999: 460 et pass.) notice the following associations:

- Present Perfect Tense relatively frequently occurs in news and academic registers. This also includes the potential/possible extensions of the Present Perfect Tense to the Past Tense domains (see (8)),
- Present Perfect Tense relatively frequently occurs with verbs denoting physical or communicative activities (e.g. *go, say, make*),
- Present Perfect relatively infrequently occurs with verbs denoting mental and existential domains (e.g. *need, want, doubt*),
- Present Perfect Tense relatively infrequently occurs with verbs denoting bodily activities (e.g. *glance, kiss, nod*).

As far as the differences between the varieties of English are concerned, the main focus should be placed on consistent usage. For instance, any selection of the Past Tense *in lieu* of Present Perfect Tense in AmE (see (10)) should occur in a consistent AmE context, including spelling, vocabulary, etc. The same could be argued for the selection of the Past Tense *in lieu* of Present Perfect Tense in AusE and NZE.

(iii) what can be considered right, what acceptable and what wrong grammarwise in language testing?

Taking into consideration points highlighted so far, the question no longer appears problematic.

### 3.2. Statives

In a similar fashion, the notorious question of stative verbs and the progressive aspect can be tackled. A simple linguistic observation (e.g. Quirk et al. 1999: 200) that “[n]ormally stative situation types do not occur with the progressive[,]” has been turned into prescriptive rules, including (i) “[s]ome verbs [denoting states] are never or hardly ever used in progressive forms” by Swan (2005: 471), and (ii) “[s]ome verbs, (for example, *know* and *like*) are *not* action verbs. You cannot say ‘I’m knowing’ or ‘they are liking’; you can only say ‘I *know*’, ‘they *like*’” by Murphy (1994: 8). It is true that in most cases, in the s.c. advanced sections, they introduce the observation that the combination of a stative verb with the progressive form triggers a semantic shift from stativity to dynamicity. Hence, the progressive form in (11b) denotes a voluntary action, in (11c) expresses a controlled or insincere behaviour, in (11d) makes reference to the attitudinal notions, and in (11e) marks the graduality of a process.

(11)



<u>Non-progressive</u>	<u>Progressive</u>
a) I see you well.	Ø
b) I smell the gas.	I'm smelling the rose.
c) She is nice.	She is being nice.
d) I hope you will come.	I'm hoping you will come.
e) She forgot him.	She was forgetting him.

Nonetheless, by examining various authentic texts, it is not difficult to find occurrences, which seem to defy these standard assumptions. Consider (12).

- (12) a) I'm lovin' it.  
 b) Football is a game of chance and I am loving every minute of it.  
 c) I think it's pretty obvious to see I am hating this phone.  
 d) I am seeing a face and hearing a voice from a time in my distant history.  
 e) We are seeing some very distressed and worried people.  
 f) We're seeing some dense fog this morning, so take precautions.  
 g) I am thinking he will soon be following his old dad over here if this war lasts much longer.

A closer inspection shows that their acceptability is strongly dependent on the contexts. None of the events marked for the progressive in (12) should even be considered as states, therefore, they do not fall into the category of the stative situation type (see Quirk et al., *ibid.*), but all display a degree of dynamicity. For instance, (12a-c) involve the idea of a change or development with strong emotional colouring. In (12d-f) there is a sense of sporadic occurrences of *seeing* and *hearing* which represent internal points of a process. Thus, the message of (12e) is not that *we see the fog all the time and everywhere*, but that *this morning, while driving, you may come to places with (spells of) dense fog*. (12g) is a sarcastic remark in a letter by a husband to his wife, complaining about the longevity of World War I. Examples (12d-f) also involve register variation: (12d) is used in written register and the sentence functions as a frame setter, and frame setters are frequently associated with the progressive aspect (see Leech and Short 1981). (12e, f), on the other hand, belong to spoken language (news reporting).

Once again, if we turn to various corpus analyses of relevant linguistic data, we can observe that in non-typical occurrences, the level of acceptability considerably varies in regard to contextual and sociolinguistic

factors. Some of them are discussed in detail by Biber et al (1999: 460 et pass.). To mention only some:

- Progressive aspect relatively frequently occurs in conversation and fiction registers, less in news register,
- Progressive aspect relatively frequently occurs with verbs denoting physical or communicative activities (e.g. *shop, dance, chat*),
- Progressive aspect relatively infrequently occurs with verbs denoting mental and existential domains (e.g. *agree, appreciate, know*),
- The relatively extensive use of the progressive aspect in AmE, especially in spoken varieties.

#### 4. A Student-Friendly Teacher of Grammar?

It is frequently the case that in everyday practice, the pedagogical grammatical simplifications are simplified even further. For instance, it is an established fact that in English, singular proper nouns do not usually take the article. For pedagogical purposes, this rule is often simplified to such an extent that it teaches that proper names never take the article. However, examples of a proper name modified by an article such as (13) are not infrequent:

- (13) a) Also, for a time, a Mrs Minnie Lane ran the pub.  
b) Does a Mr Elmore still live at that address?  
c) 'I met Jeremy Irons yesterday at the party' 'Not the Jeremy Irons?'  
d) ... physical comedy and dance, *played with such belief and commitment by the multi-talented John Paul Zaccarini who created a display of physical grace and ...*  
e) At 18 the troubled George was ready to seek out his own truth.  
f) We saw the George climbing the cliff the other day.

In (13a-c) the use of the indefinite pronoun signals that the proper noun is used as a common noun, and the indefinite article implies 'a certain person called X', or in the case of (13c) 'the well-known person X.' When a proper noun is modified by an adjective (13d-e), the use of the definite is optional and again register dependent, since it mostly occurs in formal and stereotyped style. (Quirk 1999: 290) From this perspective it can be said that the oversimplification in question is not invalid, but is a grammatical white lie. What is important for grammar teaching practice is that if learners of English are exposed to such white lies at the intermediate stages of their development, then it is very likely that such oversimplifications may impede rather than facilitate their language learning process. Once learners of English have grasped that the article cannot be associated with proper nouns, then the productive use of sentences such as (13) is not even

considered as an option. It has been proved too many times that old rules, especially grammatical ones, are hard to break.

## 5. Conclusion

The paper has addressed the question of grammaticality and acceptability from the perspective present-day trends and developments within the inner circle Englishes. It has been argued that grammaticality should still be used as a solid foundation for foreign language teaching since it covers the most (proto)typical occurrences of a particular grammatical phenomenon. At later, more advanced, stages of language learning, more attention should be paid to acceptability, which cannot be fully determined by analysing sentences *in vacuo*, but it is affected by various contextual factors, be it lexical selection, register associations or sociolinguistic variation. The paper also warns against grammatical prescriptivism, especially if it involves (over)simplified grammatical generalisations, because in the long run they may impede rather than facilitate students' linguistic development.

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# PROJECT WORK FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE

AMALIA MĂRĂȘESCU

University of Pitești

*Abstract:* The paper starts with a theoretical introduction about project work, dealing with its three stages, the advantages of organizing such an activity and the steps necessary to be taken when doing it, then presents some issues connected with organizing project work in practice. My own experience regarding the organization of three series of projects is analysed. In the end, several opinions of the students involved in the activity are presented.

*Keywords:* development, group work, organization, practice, presentation, project.

## 1. Introduction

“The project is a long-term task (...) that can be performed individually or by group work” (Vizental 2003: 87). It provides “an ongoing ‘thread’ to classroom work” (Scrivener 2005: 364), by supplying a longer term goal. Very often, teachers lay too little emphasis on long-term tasks that students should perform individually. However, the importance of such tasks should not be underestimated. They involve and activate the students physically, intellectually and emotionally, develop their independence and creativity, lead to the development of an individual style. The students enjoy the task, although they must often work really hard on it, because they feel they are doing something important. The information acquired in this way is functional and retained in their long-term memory.

## 2. Project Work in Theory

A project goes through three stages. It begins in the classroom, with a discussion between the teacher and the students about the necessity of doing a project, about its objectives and requirements, and about the tasks that have to be performed by the students in order to meet the respective requirements. The second stage takes place outside the classroom, and involves the students in various processes (researching, writing, designing, performing, visiting, speaking, etc.) that have as a purpose the gathering of the information necessary to carry out the project. This is done with or without the teacher’s help. During the third stage, the students return to the classroom, giving the material its final form, which they present to the teacher and to their colleagues. The final product can be published, displayed, presented or even performed.

The teacher plays a very important role in organizing, directing and controlling the students, in advising and assessing them. S/he has to make the aims of the project clear to the students, to explain the stages in elaborating it, to devise an evaluation strategy. S/he should help the students by showing them how to start the work and discuss with them the possible problems that may appear along its elaboration.

Before the beginning of the project, the teacher should make the following issues very clear to the students:

- whether there will be a single project for the whole class or several projects for several groups;
- whether the project will be one large task that the teacher sets and learners work on or it will be structured in a series of cumulative steps and stages;
- whether it will last for the whole term or for several lessons;
- whether there must be an intermediary report or just the final one;
- whether s/he will provide the material resources or they have to be found by the students;
- whether there is a particular format of the finished product or a presentation standard required;
- whether s/he will evaluate the elaboration process, the finished product or both;
- whether s/he will assess the project at various stages of its elaboration or only at the end.

It is also very useful if the teacher can offer a model to the students so that they perceive more clearly what it is that they have to do.

Though project work may seem difficult to organize, appearing to require a lot of teaching preparation, it quickly becomes learner-centred. Most demanding for the teacher are the initial planning and the start.

Doing a project has several advantages, concerning both foreign language learning and the development of the students' personality. As far as the use of the foreign language is concerned, project work focuses on practice, ensuring genuinely communicative use of spoken and written English, as it offers students a reason to communicate in English in order to achieve their goal. In addition to that, it offers "a valuable chance for learners of mixed levels to work on something at their own current ability level" (Scrivener 2005: 364). Besides, projects are task-oriented rather than language-oriented, and have tangible outcomes, the end products that the learners can take pride in. On the other hand, project work can help in building the personality of the students, since it involves them in taking decisions about what to do, how to do it, how to present the final product, or

in planning, making decisions, collecting ideas, structuring, discussing, negotiating, solving problems, etc. It is also group-building.

### **3. The Practice of Doing a Project**

My personal experience with conducting project work consists in organizing three series of such activities with three series of students. The first series consisted of 2 groups of 3<sup>rd</sup> year students in Romanian-English and French-English, who worked on their projects during the first semester of the academic year 2007-2008. The second series was a group of 2<sup>nd</sup> year students in English-Spanish during the second semester of the year 2007-2008, and the third series consisted of four groups of 3<sup>rd</sup> year students in Romanian-English and French-English, during the first semester of the year 2008-2009.

All three projects were part of the seminar in English Teaching Methodology and were scheduled towards the middle of the semester, i.e. seminars 5 and 6 out of 14. I began by offering my students the theoretical information about doing a project, then I asked them to consider doing a project themselves in order to understand better what it is and how it is done in case they have to do it with their own students in the future, and I had them think of a suitable theme.

They were all interested in doing the activity, mainly because it provided them with some time off school. The advantage was that it offered them a little break by requiring them to concentrate on the same topic for several weeks. The disadvantage was that it interrupted their rhythm and it became rather difficult afterwards for them to concentrate on the following topics. This happened also because they preferred to stay home and work rather than bring the materials to the classroom. The period when they were required to do the projects was the period of testing in the practical courses, and the period when there was no heating in the building. The first series also had to get through the teaching practice in the major subject. In addition to that, their main source of information was the internet, and there were no computers in our seminar classroom. I presented to them the advantages and disadvantages of doing the activity in the middle of the semester and I offered them the choice to do it at the end, but they preferred to do it as it was planned.

Regarding the themes of the projects, under my guidance, the first series, made of two groups, chose to come out with two guides to Pitești, the second series with a *Dictionary of Stars*, and the third with four projects (as there were four groups): *The Seven Wonders of the World*, *A Dictionary of British Authors*, *Romanian Touristic Objectives*, and *Events Which Influenced 20<sup>th</sup> Century England*.

The differences in the students' personalities and in the cohesion of the groups, as well as my own skills in organizing the activity account for the differences in the results obtained. As always, some students worked more than others, and there were complaints about it, especially in the case of the first series. Because they chose to work at home and to come to class just to point difficulties, the cohesion of the group played a key role in putting together the final product. As far as my organizational skills are concerned, I tried as much as I could to learn from experience and to share my conclusions to the students.

As regards the final products of the projects, the two guides to Pitești did not come out at all. The students worked both at home and in the classroom, using the internet and several guidebooks, but did not manage to offer complete information about the town. After four weeks they gave up, bringing only a part of the project and complaining that some of their colleagues would not cooperate at all. Their interest also ran out as time passed and they saw no progress.

Coming after this failure, *The Dictionary of Stars* was a pleasant surprise. The students working on it were fewer, 12 (as compared with the 30 in the previous groups), were very united and helpful to one another. They wanted an "impressive" dictionary to come out, so they were willing to work more. I suggested one personality for each student, but they wanted two or three, with two pages for each personality. The presentation included basic information and a photograph. One student volunteered from the very beginning to put together the information. The work can be improved, as the letter style varies throughout it, and so does the structure of the entries, not to mention that some of the artists were introduced by their first names. (Thus, we have Catherine Zeta-Jones listed under C and George Clooney under G, but Anthony Hopkins under H.) But it does look like a dictionary, even having an introduction and small pieces of paper with the letters written on them attached to the pages, for easier reference. And it was the only project that was ready in two weeks.

Realizing that small groups do better, especially if they are made of friends, I allowed the next series to split and work on several projects at their choice.

The presentation of *The Seven Wonders of the World* was done by seven students, each working on one wonder. Each entry is dealt with on 5-7 pages, containing information about the location, description, history, role and destruction of the Mausoleum of Maussollos at Halicarnassus, the Hanging Gardens of Babylon, the Lighthouse of Alexandria, the Statue of Zeus at Olympia, the Temple of Artemis at Ephesus, the Great Pyramid of Giza and the Colossus of Rhodes. Photographs are also included.

*The Dictionary of British Authors* was compiled by 14 students. It includes 43 authors, ordered chronologically, from Geoffrey Chaucer, William Shakespeare and John Milton, to Doris Lessing and A. S. Byatt. Two-three pages are devoted to each author, containing their biography and bibliography, and also photographs. The students also included less famous authors like the poetess Emilia Lanyer or the dramatist John Ford.

The 17 students working on the *Romanian Touristic Objectives* came out with information about the location, description, history, etc. of 15 objectives (towns, resorts, castles, caves etc.), among which the Bucegi Mountains, the Danube Delta, Peleş Castle, Poenari Castle, Scărișoara, Herculane, Iași, Sibiu, Sighișoara. Two-three pages are devoted to each objective. Photographs are also included, and the student working on the presentation of Sibiu included photographs taken by herself when visiting the town in 2007, when it was European Cultural Capital.

The *Events Which Influenced the 20<sup>th</sup> Century England* were selected by 5 students, and what is remarkable is that they tried to select events that happened on each day of the calendar. Of course, they could not, and not all events are necessarily notable, but they include births, deaths, marriages and divorces of famous people, political acts and scientific discoveries, prizes obtained, battles lost or gained, show premières, coronations, explosions, the passing of certain more important laws etc.

All four projects of this last series were finished in three weeks. Their main source was the internet. Because the students worked on various projects, I also asked them to present them in front of the class, but, though I gave them time to prepare their presentations, they were not very enthusiastic about it. I had to point out their strengths, and I was more interested in hearing what they had to say.

#### **4. Opinions about Doing a Project**

At the end of the activity, I also asked the last series to write anonymously their opinion about it. It is significant that rather few did, but also that some of them signed their papers. Here are some of the opinions:

What I really appreciated about this project was that it gave us the possibility to choose our subject and also to work in groups. This way we could really enjoy what we did and also we could make new friends and know one another better. It's a pity we did not do this kind of project earlier, when we were in the first year. These projects are very interesting and educative, but in the last year of faculty they only make our schedule more crowded and therefore make us not to give them the importance they deserve (A. D.).



I consider that doing a project has been a great experience for me. In the project I spoke about Iași City, a city that I have never visited, and I found interesting things about, so I want to visit it soon (anonymous).

Working on this project made me feel part of a group and that was very nice. It was very nice how each of us worked and did his job and how we met and discussed about the next steps. It was fun because each of us had something to do and because you did not have to do all the work by yourself (L. C.).

The project was put together relatively easy. The students included in our project carried their tasks through without giving our project coordinator any emotions. All in all it was a nice project. It can be useful too. It provides enough information in order to convince someone to visit a place or just information about a place, in general. It can be used in a school as a didactic material at geography classes. I personally enjoyed working on this project together with my fellow students. It was an opportunity to find out more about them and an occasion to work as a team (anonymous).

It was a pleasure to be involved in such an activity. It is very nice to work with other colleagues. There can be shown feelings such as: unity, collaboration, common interests and also it was revealed a strong desire to realize an exquisite common work. Moreover I believe that team work is always less stressful than individual work (A. E.).

Doing this project did not seem too difficult to me as I had to write about three English writers that I had already studied last year. It was actually nice because I got to re-read things I had studied and recalled the information. After doing this project, I remained with the feeling that we should do our best to keep a vivid memory of the things we studied so that they do not get lost. And, no matter the topic, every project enriches our weak knowledge so any subject is welcome to deal with (N. M.).

I have always hated the idea of doing a team project. Why? Because, in my opinion, doing this kind of project implies more work than doing a project on your own. First, the team has to choose a subject. Then the team makes a short plan, from which every member of the team chooses a chapter that he treats in his own way. Now the team has to choose the leader, the one who will have to give the final form of the project. Nobody wants to be the leader, so in the end they choose me. The day when everybody brings the individual work comes and I find that there is no connection between the chapters. So I must read all pieces of information and try to gather them into a coherent project work. So I work the whole weekend doing a team project work while my team solves personal problems, does other homework or even has fun. As far as I am concerned, when I become a teacher, I will never ask my students to do this kind of project work (anonymous).

My project consisted in writing about the most important English writers. I cannot say I consider it extremely important or difficult to do. I chose this project because I considered it the easiest. It took me a couple of hours to click right

after selecting the material and choose 'copy' and then 'paste'. Of course, I had to reduce the information before printing it. I do not believe the project to be useful for me, as I will never read what is in it as I have already studied most of the authors and we are to study the rest of them. It was just another duty I had to carry out as a student. I sincerely hope someone will read it and will use it in order to do his/ her homework or simply to try to obtain further information about a certain writer (I. T.).

## **5. Conclusion**

All in all, doing a project proved to be an instructive activity both for the students and for myself. The students experienced the advantages and disadvantages of working in a team, learnt more about their colleagues, and improved their skills in finding, organizing, translating and presenting information. I learnt about my students' interests and personalities, and, hopefully, improved my organizing skills. And we all enriched our general knowledge in the process.

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# THE ROLE OF TEACHING PRACTICE IN INITIAL TEACHER TRAINING

MONICA OPRESCU

University of Timișoara

***Abstract:** Teaching practice is one of the key elements in students' initial teacher training. How students view it, which its advantages and drawbacks are and which its role is in influencing students' decisions to become teachers are the questions to be answered in my paper.*

***Keywords:** questionnaire, initial teacher training, teaching project, teaching practice.*

## 1. Introduction

Teaching practice is the first real step in the initial teacher training. It is an opportunity to develop and test teaching skills. Although “it is often said that ‘good teachers are born, not made’ there are certain elements that can be learnt – it is a “craft” that can be learnt “through a mixture of personality, intelligence, knowledge and experience” (Harmer 2007: 23).

Besides a pleasant personality, adaptability, intelligence, reliability, respect and other personal features, there are certain skills that may be learnt: knowledge of the language system, methodological competences (choosing the right activities, materials, developing language skills and also personal ones, class management skills) and even the ability to use classroom equipment.

Quite a difficult profession to be learnt and taught, on the boundary of art and science, as Harmer (2007: 32) states. The scientific aspects would be the ones related to the language system (its knowledge, the ability to explain it), but also the ones related to methodology (methods, techniques, planning, the use of materials, technology). The art of teaching relies in the relationship between the teacher and the students:

good teachers listen and watch, and use both professional and personal skills to respond to what they see and hear. Good teachers have a knack of responding by doing things ‘right’, and that is most definitely an art (Harmer 2007: 33).

Teaching practice may be considered learning by doing (Gower et al. 2005: 1). Its main aims are to raise awareness upon the essential aspects a teacher must know (learners, skills, strategies, teaching techniques, class management skills, planning abilities).

Part of the students' pedagogical training, teaching practice is the practical subject which requires good theoretical background, practical skills, but also a lot of energy. Students are sent in schools, working with a mentor teacher there and a methodologist at the university, both trying to motivate the students and to offer them the best training possible. The amount of time students should spend in schools and at the university (for the practical and theoretical aspects) is 3 hours/week, 42 hours/semester. The mentor and the methodologist are supervisors and guides of the students during teaching, their duties including the help given with lesson preparation, the observation of the lessons and the feedback given after.

The practice period is divided in two stages: the observation period, during which students attend, observe classes and discuss them and prepare for the next stage, the actual teaching stage. The assessment of the teaching practice is both formative and summative, the mentor and the methodologist evaluating the students' performance while teaching and the presentation of their portfolio. The assessment of the lessons taught will be an important part of the final mark. The objectives, activities and evaluation of the teaching practice will be discussed as follows (see also Oprescu 2008: 7-8).

#### **Teaching practice objectives:**

- to initiate students in practicing the modern teaching methods and techniques;
- to become familiar with teaching, learning and evaluation, the three stages of the educational process;
- to be able to use activities and materials that develop language skills;
- to teach lessons using modern methods, different types of interaction, interesting materials, games etc.;
- to make well structured lesson plans and other necessary documents;
- to familiarise students with class management;
- to raise awareness upon assessment;
- to develop their own teaching style, essential for their future formation as teachers.

### **Activities:**

- becoming acquainted to the English curriculum and other documents, the current textbooks and the supplementary teaching materials;
- observing the lessons of the mentor teacher and those of their colleagues (20 hours);
- preparing for the lessons: making lesson plans, searching for auxiliary materials, consulting the bibliography;
- teaching lessons (4 lessons);
- receiving and giving lesson feedback;
- completing their portfolio with the necessary documents.

**The evaluation** of the teaching practice is both formative and summative, consisting in the teaching of the lessons and the presentation of a portfolio.

Elements of the portfolio:

1. a record of the student's attendance;
2. a record of the taught lessons;
3. observation sheets;
4. lesson plans;
5. auxiliary materials;
6. the final report of the mentor teacher.

## **2. Case study**

I have asked the students in the 3<sup>rd</sup> year English at the West University in Timișoara to fill in a questionnaire after finishing their practice stage. 57 students have answered the questionnaire. It referred to their initial stage of teaching practice, which lasted for a semester for English and took place in schools in Timișoara. Here are the findings of the study.

### **Research findings**

The first question referred to the schools chosen for teaching practice and the students' answers proved that they were considered suitable for teaching practice. The students mentioned the fact that the pupils generally had a good level of English and that they were offered good conditions (materials, equipment) to learn teaching.

The students' relation with the mentors was mostly a positive one. They said that mentors helped (through discussions, e/emails, phone calls), explained how to make the lesson plans, how to approach the students and how to use the materials, helped them become confident, told them "tricks

of the job". Nevertheless, there were some negative remarks. Some mentors missed their lessons, did not give enough feedback, did not give explanations or materials.

The feelings towards teaching practice were another problem raised. The study proved that most students had enjoyed the experience. They said it had been a pleasant and useful experience, difficult at the beginning but a success at the end, a creative and interesting experience. The negative aspects were related to the fact that it was a lot of work. They mentioned the fact that they were not excited because of too much paperwork and disappointed about the students' behaviour.

The problems encountered during teaching practice referred to:

- timetables - full timetables.
- organisation - lots of papers (observation sheets);  
- long distances.
- methodological aspects - lesson planning.
- class management - timing - not finishing all the activities;  
- discipline - noisy and rude students; students who did not want to participate, difficulty to keep the class attentive, the students not being involved;  
- hyperactive children.
- interior factors - stress;  
- emotional aspects.

The most pleasant aspects mentioned by the students were the whole experience, they said, teaching, the students enjoying the lesson, asking and answering questions, students learning something new, communicating with children, transforming teaching into a game.

The influence of teaching practice upon the students' desire to become teachers was, overall, a positive one, 41 students saying it was a positive experience which made them feel more confident in their teaching skills. Because they enjoyed the experience they took into consideration this option. Only 3 students confessed that they did not want to become teachers. And 13 students felt confused, they said that they were still not sure about it, considering it an option.

### **Suggestions**

The students felt that some elements had to be changed. They suggested:

- to reduce paperwork;
- to do less observation, more teaching;
- to have a period only for teaching practice (without lectures, seminars);
- to shorten the period;
- to assist their peers more;
- to be given more explanations;
- to do more planning;
- to do more practice.

### **3. Conclusions**

The general perspective over the teaching practice period is a positive one. Although there were some problems concerning timetables, the students' relationship with mentors, some difficult situations during the classes, much paperwork and stress, most of the students enjoyed the experience. It helped them gain an overview of what teaching really is and most of them confessed they were ready to try it. The pleasant aspects mentioned were especially the relationship with the students, which was a close one, and the rewarding aspects of this profession.

The problems to be solved refer to some mentors, timetables, paperwork and, among methodological aspects, planning and class management skills. Students have also mentioned stress and emotional aspects, but these are inherent aspects of the teaching profession and are also connected to personality. The aim of the study was a practical one, as it has been designed with this specific objective: to give a general perspective of the teaching practice and to set some new guidelines to be followed in the future when organising it.

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## **APPENDIX**

### **Teaching Practice Feedback Form**

1. Were you given sufficient information before beginning the teaching practice?
2. Was the school suitable for teaching practice?
3. Did your mentor teacher (school teacher) help you whenever you needed? How?
4. Did she help you develop your teaching abilities and gain confidence when teaching?
5. Which are your feelings towards the teaching practice?
6. Which were the problems that you have encountered during your teaching practice? Do you see any solutions?
7. Which were the most pleasant aspects?
8. How did teaching practice influence your desire of becoming a teacher? Please explain.
9. Was it different from your expectations? How?
10. Which are your suggestions for next semester?



## THE SEQUENCE OF ACQUISITION OF PASSIVE VERB FORMS

VESNA PILIPOVIĆ, ISIDORA WATTLES

University of Novi Sad

***Abstract:** This article deals with the sequence of acquisition of the passive voice that was observed in a three-year-long research carried out in a secondary school in Serbia. The research involved around 170 students divided into an experimental and a control group that were taught by different teaching methods. The errors were collected through written tests and the most common ones analyzed and categorized providing the results which led to the conclusion that the same sequence of development was present in both groups of students regardless of the teaching method employed.*

***Keywords:** error analysis, language learning, passive, sequence of acquisition.*

### 1. Introduction

Since the 1970s when errors learners made were eventually regarded as an inevitable part of the performance development, error analysis has become an important part of SLA/ FLA investigation. Pit Corder was among the first linguists to suggest that better understanding of language learning would come from a more systematic investigation of learners' errors by discovering the 'built-in syllabus' of the language learner (Corder 1967: 161-169). Both methodologists and teachers have since been increasingly aware of the fact that language learning is a creative and developmental process of building up a new language system that is becoming gradually closer to the language used by native speakers through trial and error and hypothesis testing. This developing language system or 'interlanguage' (Selinker 1972: 219-231) is an unstable system that has a structurally intermediate status between the native language and the foreign language. Errors learners make in building up a new language system are now considered important offering a valuable insight into the development of foreign language acquisition. Moreover, it was assumed and subsequently confirmed that, regardless of their mother tongue, most learners make similar types of errors at certain stages of learning and that there might be a 'natural route of development' in foreign language acquisition. A number of cross-sectional studies carried out in 1970s (e.g. Dulay and Burt 1973; 1974; Krashen et al 1978) investigated the order of acquisition of English morphemes and their results correlated significantly. Longitudinal studies (Hatch 1978, Fillmore 1976; 1979), however, provided the data from different points of time and offered even a stronger evidence of the natural route of development. What is particularly interesting is that some of these

studies focused on the acquisition of grammatical subsystems, such as negation (e.g. Hatch 1978; Schumann 1979), question forms (e.g. Shapira 1978; Butterworth and Hatch 1978) and relative clauses (Shuman 1980) and the results obtained in different studies confirmed the same route of development.

Unfortunately, not many studies investigating grammar subsystems have been carried out so far. Even the study presented here was done as part of another research in which data were originally obtained for other purposes and certain regularities in the acquisition of the English passive voice were then later observed.

## **2. Empirical study**

The experimental research was carried out in a secondary school in Serbia with an intention to test the efficiency of two different methods of teaching passive. The error analysis done during the research was applied so that a better and more detailed comparison of the results can be done, but it additionally provided a useful insight into the stages of learning passive.

The research lasted for 3 years and involved 171 students (87 of them in the experimental group and 84 in the control group). During the first year, 1<sup>st</sup> grade and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade students were involved (and later kept in the research) and then, in each of the subsequent school years, another generation of 1<sup>st</sup> grade students was joined, so in its final stage the research involved students from 1<sup>st</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> grade. Since the research lasted for three years, it was possible to assess the progress students made as well as to compare the achievement of the different generations of students.

All the participants were tested before and after the presentation and practice of the passive voice. Pre-tests were designed in line with the adequate syllabus and consisted of 20-30 sentences in which the students were expected to fill in the blanks with the appropriate form of a verb either in passive or in active.

The passive voice was then taught to both groups of students for the same amount of time. Teaching in the control group was the traditional one: the passive sentences were linked to their active counterparts, similarity of their meanings was emphasized and most of the exercises involved transformations.

Teaching in the experimental group was different: passive was treated as an independent structure with its specific semantic and functional properties, the difference between the use of passive and active was emphasized and contextual exercises were used instead of transformational ones.

After the presentation and practice, the same achievement tests were given to both groups of students and they were designed so as to require from the students to use passive or active both in isolated sentences and in context. The tests contained around 40-50 items.

The results obtained showed that each year the effects of the method employed in the experimental group were better and that students of the experimental group made better progress in a three-year-long period than the students of the control group. The results of error analysis, however, showed that in spite of the difference in the number of errors, there was no difference in the sequence of acquisition between the two groups of students regardless of the method employed in teaching.

### **3. Error analysis**

During the three-year-long research, around 15,500 passive sentences were analyzed and the errors found were categorized as 'tense errors' (the use of the inappropriate tense form of the passive verb), 'form errors' (the use of the inappropriate form of the *past participle* or the verb *to be*) and 'errors in use' (the use of active where passive is required and vice versa). Most of the errors students made (around 85%) were 'tense' errors. 'Form errors' and 'errors in use' were significantly less frequent (the former – 10% and the latter – 5%).

Since learning the English passive is usually a problem for most of the people who speak English as a foreign language, there was a great number of errors in the three-year-long research. This number had to be reduced by a certain criterion, to facilitate the process of error analysis and it was decided that the sentences in which more than 75% of the students of one group failed to give the right answer should be analyzed since they revealed the most difficult areas in learning passive. To make this criterion clearer, it is important to give an example: during the first year of the research, there were 23 students of the first grade and 22 students of the second grade in the control group and the items incorrectly done by 16 or 17 of them were taken for a detailed analysis. The same was repeated each year and it is important to point out that the students of different generations made a great number of errors in the same items, which proved that these were the areas of real difficulty.

The error analysis was carried out on around 2,800 sentences wrongly done by most students.

The results of the error analysis showed the following:

- The number of errors was different, depending on the generation of students and the group they belonged to (fewer errors at achievement tests were observed in the experimental group), but

the types of errors were quite similar despite the different techniques in presentation and practice.

- The number of errors decreased during the time (more significantly in the experimental group.)
- Some errors were present for a longer time in the control group (errors in the use of passive in context and in the structure of complex passives were present in this group even at the end of the research).
- Most of the errors 1<sup>st</sup> grade and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade students made were those in using the perfect and progressive tenses of passive (and the inappropriate overuse of simple tense forms instead), while most of the errors 3<sup>rd</sup> grade and 4<sup>th</sup> grade students made were those in the form of complex passives (especially with the perfect infinitive complement) and the perfect tenses of passive (especially the Past Perfect forms).
- 1<sup>st</sup> grade and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade students made errors that were mostly the result of both interlingual and intralingual transfer. Some of the errors in the control group were the result of the type of teaching (the use of passive in context which was not sufficiently practised with this group of students who were exposed to the traditional ‘transformation-based’ teaching). 3<sup>rd</sup> grade and 4<sup>th</sup> grade students made errors that were mostly the result of intralingual transfer.

**Table 1:** The most common errors:

	Pre-testing, <i>exp. group</i>	Achievement test, <i>exp. group</i>	Pre-testing, <i>control group</i>	Achievement test, <i>control group</i>
1 <sup>st</sup> grade	- wrong use of tenses, esp. perfect and progressive tenses,  - a small number of errors in form	- wrong use of perfect and progressive tenses (overuse of simple tense forms),	- wrong use of tenses, esp. perfect and progressive tenses,  - a small number of errors in form	- wrong use of perfect and progressive tenses (overuse of simple tense forms),  - a number of errors in form and use  - wrong use of passive in context
2 <sup>nd</sup> grade	- wrong use of passive in perfect and progressive tenses  - wrong structure of the complex passive	- wrong use of passive in perfect tenses  - wrong structure of the complex passive followed by the perfect infinitive	- wrong use of passive in perfect and progressive tenses  - wrong structure of the complex passive	- wrong use of passive in perfect tenses  - wrong structure of the complex passive  - wrong use of

				passive in context
3 <sup>rd</sup> grade	- wrong use of passive in perfect tenses, esp. in the Past Perfect form  - wrong structure of the complex passive in the Past Tense form or followed by the perfect infinitive	- wrong use of passive in the Past Perfect form	- wrong use of passive in perfect tenses  - wrong structure of the complex passive	- wrong use of passive in perfect tenses, esp. in the Past Perfect form  - wrong structure of the complex passive esp. when followed by the perfect infinitive or in the Past Tense form
4 <sup>th</sup> grade	- wrong use of passive in perfect tenses	- a small number of errors in the use of Past Perfect passive forms	- wrong use of passive in perfect tenses	- wrong use of passive in the Past Perfect form  - wrong structure of the complex passive esp. when followed by the perfect infinitive or in the Past Tense form

It can be seen from Table 1 that the students from both groups made similar errors at a certain time.

The first stage they all went through was marked with frequent errors in the use of progressive and perfect tenses of the passive. Thus, in the sentence

- 1) The room is being cleaned at the moment.

most students used the Simple Present form instead of the progressive:

- 2) \*The room is cleaned at the moment.

Similarly, in the sentence:

- 3) Sally has been offered a new job!

the Past Tense form was often used instead of the Present Perfect:

- 4) \*Sally was offered a new job!

It is important to note that the Present Simple and Past Simple tense that are appropriately used when required are, in most cases, wrongly used instead of progressive and perfect forms. In some cases it was the result of 'generalization' (intralingual transfer) while in some cases it may have been the result of interlingual transfer and the literal translation from Serbian.

Errors regarding the use of passive in context were also observed in the control group at the beginning of the research because these students had considerably less practice of this type.

Around 10% of students made errors in the form of the past participle and wrote, for example *payed* instead of *paid* in the sentence:

- 5) The teachers will be paid higher salaries next year.

The second stage in the acquisition of passive was found to be marked by fewer errors in progressive forms, persistent numerous errors in perfect passive forms and a great number of errors in complex passive forms, like in the example:

- 6) Freddie is said to have a lover in Scotland.

which was, in most cases, done in the following way:

- 7) \*Freddie says to have a lover in Scotland.

This type of error was treated as a 'form error'.

The third stage observed in this error analysis was the one at which students generally did well in progressive tenses and the present forms of the complex passive, but frequently made errors in perfect tenses as well as in the past form of the complex passive or the present form of the complex passive followed by the perfect infinitive. The latter can be illustrated by the following example:

- 8) She is believed to have poisoned her husband.

which was wrongly done in two different ways:

- 9) \*She is believed to poison her husband.
- 10) \*She is believed to poisoned her husband.

The last stage, according to the error analysis done, was still marked with a considerable number of errors in the forms of complex passive referring to the past and with the errors in perfect tenses, especially in the Past Perfect Tense. Thus, the sentence:

- 11) She told me that he had been taken to hospital.

was often in the Past Simple form instead of the Past Perfect:

- 12) \*She told me that he was taken to hospital.

#### 4. The sequence of acquisition

Since errors students make are not sufficiently reliable in this sort of investigation, another type of analysis – a sort of ‘accuracy analysis’ was additionally carried out to investigate which passive forms were most correctly and most quickly acquired. The results revealed that simple tense passive forms as well as the passive infinitives and future passive forms (‘will’ and ‘going to’) were acquired most quickly (around 5-30% of students made errors in simple tense forms and passive infinitives and around 15-40% of them made errors in future forms).

Both types of analyses showed that the rate of acquisition was different in the two groups of students (owing to the method of teaching employed), but that the order of acquisition was similar. There were some individual learner differences as far as the order of acquisition is concerned regardless of the method of teaching and the group they belonged to. Ellis makes an important distinction between the sequence and the order of acquisition (Ellis 1994:64), the former being the natural and universal sequence of development that consists of a few stages and the latter being an individual route through these stages of development. In this case, it means that some students acquired the Past Perfect form of the passive voice before the complex passive with the perfect infinitive complement, while some did it the other way round, but generally, these two forms are acquired at around the same time.

The error analysis as well as the ‘accuracy analysis’ shows that, sooner or later, students from both groups learnt the passive forms in the following sequence:

**Table 2:** The sequence of acquisition

Stage 1*	The present form of the passive infinitive used with modal verbs, The Present Simple and Past Simple passive forms
Stage 2*	The future forms of the passive voice ( <i>will</i> and <i>going to</i> )
Stage 3	The progressive tenses of the passive voice
Stage 4	The present form of the complex passive followed by the present infinitive, Most perfect tense forms of the passive voice
Stage 5	The past forms of the complex passive The present forms of the complex passive followed by the perfect infinitive, The Past Perfect form of the passive voice

Although, the results in Table 2 show that the acquisition of simple tense forms precedes the acquisition of future forms, they should be taken cautiously. The fact is that fewer students made errors in simple tense forms than in the future forms, but on the other hand, the latter were almost never used inappropriately, while the former were heavily misused in cases where

perfect and progressive tenses were suitable, but had not been sufficiently acquired. It is true that learners usually overuse and rely on forms they have mastered successfully, as well as they rely on their mother tongue well-known to them, but it is still arguable whether the acquisition should be determined only on the basis of accurate use when it is appropriate and obligatory or some other criteria should be applied.

The acquisition of perfect tense forms was quite slow and difficult, particularly the acquisition of the Past Perfect passive form. Problems were also observed in the acquisition of the past forms of complex passive as well as in the acquisition of complex passive followed by the perfect infinitive. These problems were expected because there are no correspondent verb tenses and complex passive forms in Serbian or other Slavonic languages. Both of these forms are structurally complex and it can rightly be assumed that their acquisition is not an early and easy one even if the learners' mother tongue belongs to some other group of languages. Taking into account the problems observed, it seems necessary to plan more time for practicing such complex forms and enable students to master them more efficiently.

## **5. Conclusion**

The sequence of acquisition determined after the error analysis shows the 'natural route of development', which can be very useful in syllabus design and course planning. Traditionally, passive was taught quite late, when students had mastered most of the active forms and it was then presented to students in all the tense forms taught up to then. Alternatively, passive can be more efficiently taught stage-by stage, as it is in some modern course books (*Project English* or *Cutting Edge*, e.g.).

Since simple passive forms are acquired relatively quickly and easily, they can be taught at early stages, as Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman suggest (Celce-Murcia, Larsen-Freeman 1983: 234) when students have already learnt the active forms of Simple verb tenses and when they have come across participle forms. The acquisition of passive infinitives and future passive forms should be the next stage, immediately after the previous one and it is also likely to be quite easy and fast. A lot more attention should be devoted to progressive passive forms, not just because they are structurally more complex, but because the distinction in simple and progressive tenses is usually expressed by some other grammatical features in other languages and, thus, difficult for most learners. The final stage - the one devoted to perfect passive forms and complex passives, non-existent in most languages and structurally and semantically quite complex for an average learner, should be planned quite carefully, with numerous



meaningful exercises and revised from time to time so that the best effects can be achieved.

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# SURREPTITIOUS TEACHER DEVELOPMENT: PROMOTING CHANGE FROM WITHIN

FLORENTINA TAYLOR

University of Nottingham

*Abstract:* It is not easy to be a teacher in the Romanian secondary-school system, and – understandably – professional development is sometimes a lesser priority. However, given its essential role in successful teaching, informed individuals can encourage development from within. A 10-week awareness raising programme is suggested, with theoretical rationales and an emphasis on local solutions, peer cooperation and reflection groups.

*Keywords:* peer support, reflection groups, secondary schools, teacher development, teaching English as a foreign language.

## 1. Introduction

Despite considerable variation in defining the notions of *teacher training*, *teacher education* and *teacher development*, there seems to be significant agreement in the literature as to maintaining that *development* is *ongoing*, *holistic*, *bottom-up*, *collaborative* and *voluntary* – and therefore cannot be imposed (Crandall 2000; Head and Taylor 1997; Roberts 1998; Wallace 1991). A further point of agreement is that lifelong professional development is essential for teachers, as the quality of students' learning is a direct function of the teaching quality (Evans 2002; Feiman-Nemser and Norman 2000; Freeman 2001b; Richards and Nunan 1990; Ur 1996; Wallace 1991).

However, the literature seems of little help with regard to teachers who simply *do not want to develop* – neither on a voluntary, nor on an imposed basis; teachers who are either content with immutable knowledge transmission, or who are simply too overwhelmed by burnout to change anything. Would it be possible, perhaps, in such a case to induce professional development *surreptitiously* for the undeniable benefit of the students?

It is this possibility that I will explore in the present paper, as an invitation for my fellow teachers from Romania to promote change from within, in alternative ways that would work in their particular contexts. I will start with a background description of the Romanian teacher-training/education system and the secondary school where I taught English full-time for three years, I will then bring in support from the literature to propose some areas of development that I believe are needed in many

Romanian schools, and I will end by sketching a programme for covertly-induced professional development in the same context.

## **2. Background**

It takes nearly four years to qualify as a teacher in Romania, normally in parallel with an undergraduate degree. The EFL teaching-training curriculum covers generous areas such as methodology, educational psychology, pedagogy, learning strategies, intercultural communication and applied linguistics. However, many classes are spent in lecturing and note dictation, with hardly any practicum and no active personal contribution from the students. In order to obtain a tenured teaching job, graduates sit a national examination after which they are assigned to schools. They are only considered fully qualified after two years, when they sit another examination – followed by another one, four years later. Interestingly, all three examinations have broadly the same procedures and the same (rather dated) bibliography, encouraging mere reproduction of information previously memorised. After yet four years, teachers are expected to write a methodological paper under the supervision of a university professor. All these stages are optional, but given that they can guarantee a teaching post for life, most teachers prefer to pursue them.

In the school where I taught English for three years, there was no sign of professional development as defined in the literature. One was simply considered *a good teacher* after several years in the job, when one knew exactly what lesson they would teach to each group every day, and even on what page it could be found in the textbook. Nobody talked about fresh teaching ideas, nobody read any specialised literature, nobody knew what the others did in class, nobody wrote lesson plans except when expecting inspections – for which lessons were always rehearsed in advance – and I was once asked by a teacher who had been in that school for 8 years from what document I took my lesson objectives.

I believe most of the teachers in that school had sound knowledge of their subject matter, but judging by my perception and by the students' reports, there was no sign of meaningful tasks, differentiation or learner psychology, nor of much awareness of language acquisition principles.

The frustration accumulated seeing many brilliant students lose interest and invest great amounts of effort and creativity in *avoiding* involvement in class has determined me to explore the problem and its possible solutions further. After experiencing a different educational and professional environment abroad, I believe one possible solution lies in teachers promoting change from within, by raising awareness of several

areas that I consider of crucial importance for a fruitful classroom atmosphere.

### **3. Necessary areas of development in the context given**

I believe that, in order to bring real benefits to my former colleagues and many other teachers caught in the same vicious circle, any programme of professional development would have to fulfil three conditions: local solutions to local problems, peer cooperation and reflection groups.

First, as many authors emphasise, ‘one size fits all’ courses cannot be expected to bring serious local benefits (Feiman-Nemser and Norman 2000; Kumaravadivelu 2006; McMorrow 2007). If any improvement is to be expected, the programme must start from the respective teachers’ needs – either through somebody who knows the context very well, or by implementing a process syllabus whereby the individuals themselves establish and negotiate their desired areas of development (Roberts 1998; Tudor 2001, 2003; Williams and Burden 1997).

Second, while teacher development can occur individually, in order for it to really make an impact on the quality of the teaching in that school, it needs to be implemented through trustful peer collaboration and support (Feiman-Nemser and Norman 2000; Korthagen, Loughran and Russell 2006; Ross and Bruce 2007; Schnellert, Butler and Higginson 2008).

And third, for teachers who, like my former colleagues, have both received knowledge and experiential knowledge (Wallace 1991: 13-17), the best method of improvement is reflection starting from their own teaching experience, their own beliefs and assumptions (Crandall 2000; Evans 2002; Poulou 2005; Pozzo 1997; Schnellert et al. 2008; Stanley 1999). Reflection, as Poulou (2005: 562) puts it, offers ‘*a means of scaffolding teachers’ prior theories, perceptions, attributions and intentions and integrating them into teaching decisions*’, while some of the advantages of implementing a peer reflection group would be, according to Pozzo (1997: 49), that:

- it fosters exploratory thinking and creativity;
- it helps teachers to reflect on their own situation rather than adopt stock answers;
- it helps teachers see that sometimes the process of discovery is more important than the answer itself;
- it demands and develops flexibility, a quality highly needed in the teaching profession where each situation is different and where fresh ideas need to be generated all the time.

I believe a teacher development programme that would meet the three conditions above would only benefit teachers in the context described if it covered the essential areas of teacher beliefs, as well as principles of general and foreign language learning.

### **3.1. Teacher beliefs**

The importance of teacher beliefs, assumptions and values in the classroom cannot be emphasised enough, as many authors have underlined (Crandall 2000; Freeman 2001a; Gebhard 1996; Pozzo 1997; Roberts 1998; Stanley 1999; Tudor, 2001; Underhill 1999). Even when teachers act spontaneously or out of habit in class, Williams and Burden (1997: 57) explain, the prompts of their actions are always deeply rooted beliefs, and these will always be stronger than any methodology teachers may be told to adopt or any course book they may have to follow. And it is only by raising people's awareness of their profound beliefs which trigger their actions, that change can occur. In Underhill's (1999: 131) words, 'new techniques with old attitudes may amount to no change, while new attitudes even with old techniques can lead to significant change', while turning habits into choice by becoming aware of them will always be a successful approach to teacher development (Underhill 1999: 133).

### **3.2. Principles of learning and foreign language learning**

Feiman-Nemser and Norman (2000), Poulou (2005), Smith (2001) or Williams and Burden (1997) are only a few of the numerous authors who have emphasised that, in order to be really effective teachers, we need to understand the mechanisms of (foreign language) learning and their psychological implications.

Of the vast amount of information pertaining to the field, I believe teachers in similar circumstances to the ones described above would benefit enormously if they were aware of at least these four aspects:

a) *Social constructivism*. 'Telling is not teaching, listening is not learning', Korthagen et al. (2006: 1029) have emphasised, and many other authors explain that students do not simply learn what they are taught, but what suits their own understanding of the world and makes personal sense to them, learning always occurring as a social phenomenon (Arnold 1999; Fox 1996; Freeman 2001a; Gebhard 1996; Hutchinson and Waters 1987; Lightbown and Spada 1999; Smith 2001; Schnellert et al. 2008; Steff and Gale 1995; Williams and Burden, 1997). Teachers may not be right, in consequence, to expect students to remember exactly what they have been told, as every one of us remembers and learns what suits our personal

schemata of the world, knowledge itself being socially constructed rather than an abstract entity.

*b) Motivation.* The implications of the teaching quality over the degree of motivation that students manifest in class is another topic that has generated massive research, among the authors who discuss the subject being: Arnold (1999), Chambers (1993), Deci and Ryan (1985), Dörnyei (2001a, 2001b); Ellis (1997), Hutchinson and Waters (1987), Lightbown and Spada (1999), Murdock and Miller (2003), Williams and Burden (1997). As self-determination theory convincingly explains, if students' personal contribution is not valued in class, they are subject to controlling teacher behaviour and are hardly given any choice in their own learning process, they will finally become amotivated (Deci and Ryan 1985; Reeve, Bolt and Cai 1999; Reeve, Jang, Carrell, Jeon and Barch 2004), if not even helpless (Arnold 1999; Dweck and Licht 1980; Urdan and Midgley 2001). This is when avoidance behaviours emerge, determining students to resort to all imaginable ruses that will ensure they are left alone (Rollett 1987; Seifert and O'Keefe 2001; Williams and Burden 1997).

*c) Learner internal syllabus.* Every teacher knows how frustrating it can be when, after explaining a language item in great detail, few students remember it the next day or week. However, it is important for us to be aware of the learners' internal syllabus, which prevents them from acquiring any given item of foreign language before they are ready to assimilate it (Ellis 1997; Lightbown and Spada 1999; Mitchell and Myles 1998). Given that learners do not go through their developmental stages at the same time and at the same pace (Ellis 1997; Nunan 2001), their networks of knowledge that enables new information to be processed and stored are different and highly personal (Hutchinson and Waters 1987: 82-83). Therefore, only by starting from such understanding can a teacher apply genuine differentiation in class and help the learners acquire what they are ready for at any given moment.

*d) Interlanguage.* I believe it is also essential for teachers to be aware that the process of acquiring a language constitutes an 'interlanguage continuum' (Ellis 1997; Williams and Burden 1997), in which older knowledge is permanently restructured so as to accommodate new information. In addition, it is important for teachers to understand the difference between mistakes and errors (Ellis 1997; Lightbown and Spada 1999) and to realise that errors are an actually sign of active learning, and the very proof of the restructuring process mentioned above, in which learners produce their own transitional rules and structures that help them make sense of the new information in a personal constructive way.

#### **4. Outline of a suggested teacher development programme**

Below is a suggested outline for a 10-week development programme that would be easy to implement through one-hour weekly sessions. (The departmental meeting that takes place every week in many schools would be an excellent starting point.) These sessions could consist of informal relaxed discussions that would start from usual problems that English teachers encounter in their everyday activities and move on gradually towards a desired understanding of the psychological and theoretical principles discussed briefly above. This outline is presented here as a mere initial idea that teachers can develop and adapt to their particular contexts.

WEEK 1: Discussing problematic situations that the teachers in the English department have encountered in class over the past month, with a focus on the actual behaviours of teachers and students and what alternative behaviours could have occurred.

WEEK 2: Discussing the same situations from Week 1, with an accent on possible reasons why the students and teachers acted the way they did. Sharing short key passages with possible explanations from the literature reviewed.

WEEK 3: Analysing some significant case studies in the light of the previous discussions, again with support from key anecdotic paragraphs from the literature.

WEEK 4: Talking about one's own experience of learning (in various contexts), referring to preferred modes of learning and possible (psychological) causes.

WEEK 5: Discussing the results of a short motivation questionnaire that has been applied in class during the week. Teachers would be expected (or encouraged) to bring into discussion arguments from the literature mentioned previously.

WEEK 6: Analysing a selection of essays produced by the school students and trying to categorise the mistakes and errors, discussing the difference between the two, as well as possible causes and deciding which would be worth correcting and which would not. Teachers would be encouraged to think about their own perceptions of mistakes/ errors as language learners in the past.

WEEK 7: Discussing the importance of fluency versus accuracy in learning a foreign language, with audio/ video examples for both situations (e.g., somebody who speaks with high grammatical accuracy but hesitates and pauses before every word versus somebody who makes grammatical mistakes but communicates fluently with a foreigner).

WEEK 8: Reading and analysing a controversial journal article in the light of its applicability in that particular school.

WEEK 9: Watching a video recording of an English class (perhaps one of the teachers has volunteered to be filmed) and discussing the participation and involvement of the students. Teachers would be encouraged to express their creativity and empathy in imagining little scenarios about the students' actual experience in class (what they felt, whether they answered or asked questions, what they thought about while the teacher or other students were speaking etc.).

WEEK 10: Rounding up the previous weeks, emphasising any benefit that the teachers feel they have attained and setting up an agenda for the future (perhaps moving on to peer observation, action research etc.).

## 5. Conclusion

The outline above is only a perfunctory example which could be infinitely improved through careful consideration of the teachers' needs and circumstances. I believe, however, that it has the potential to induce change for the better without producing negative reactions in the teachers. Should they be told by the head teacher that they are expected to participate in sessions of professional development every week, teachers may be reluctant and manifest the very same avoidance behaviours as their students. But if the initiative starts from among their own colleagues as a plea for discussing local problems and sharing local solutions, it is very likely to be received positively. Once a 'reflection group' has started, teachers would then become increasingly interested and involved. And, as Ur (1996: 318) maintains, this can be the difference between doing an effective job and dropping out.

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# LITERATURE AND MEDICINE COURSES FOR ARABIC LANGUAGE SPEAKERS

ALAN S. WEBER

Weill Cornell Medical College of Qatar

***Abstract:** This presentation explores teaching literature and medicine courses at the Weill Cornell Medical College - Qatar which delivers an American-style college English curriculum to Islamic students. Literature and medicine seeks to integrate literature, philosophy and sociology into medical training. The author has taken two successful approaches: teaching short stories with medical themes, and an Islamic medical history course.*

***Keywords:** literature and medicine, medical humanities – Arabic speakers, medical education – Islam, medical education – Qatar.*

## 1. Introduction

The growing field of Literature and Medicine seeks to investigate the interconnections between linguistic and literary endeavour and the practice of medicine. Literature can be used in the training of health care personnel to teach doctor-patient empathy, close observation, and attention to narrative detail in medical case histories and bioethics litigation. Stories about disease, trauma, and recovery can themselves be transformed into tools for healing and education in group therapy and public health campaigns. Teaching literature and medicine in English to Islamic medical students presents several unique challenges, including student perceptions of fiction and religious and political attitudes toward western cultural influence, globalization, and the secularization of education. This contribution describes several successful approaches to teaching Literature and Medicine to primarily Muslim premedical students at the Weill Cornell Medical College in Qatar.

## 2. The Weill Cornell Medical College in Qatar / First Year Writing Seminars

Qatar is a hydrocarbon-rich Persian Gulf emirate of approximately 1.5 million inhabitants, only 200,000 of whom hold national citizenship. Qatar currently boasts one of the world's highest per capita GDPs of \$103,500 (2008 est.; *CIA Factbook*). In 2006, the Emir HH Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani pledged 2.8% of Qatar's total GDP to research, and money has been lavished on knowledge-economy projects such as Education City. Beginning in 1998, the following American universities were invited to open programs in a complex West of Doha collectively

known as Education City: Carnegie Mellon University, Virginia Commonwealth, Texas A & M, Georgetown School of Foreign Service, Northwestern University and Weill Cornell Medical College, where I currently teach writing, literature, and the history of medicine.

Weill Cornell Medical College in Qatar was established in 2002 with an agreement between the Qatar Foundation, headed by Sheikha Moza bint Nasser al-Missned, the wife of the current Emir of Qatar, and the New York City branch of the Weill Cornell Medical College. The college recently graduated its first class of MD degree students in May of 2008.

But formalized secular education is relatively new in Qatar. Before the discovery of oil in 1939, Qatar's entire educational system consisted of several scattered, gender-segregated Qur'an schools called Khutub (Al-Misnad 1985: 30). Memorization of Holy Qur'an, Hadith and Sunna, along with basic literacy and mathematical reckoning comprised the curriculum of the Khutab, attended primarily by wealthy Sheikhs.

The first public school in Qatar opened in 1951/52 (Mohammad 1992: 12). Higher education began with the establishment of Qatar University in 1977 and classes there are taught primarily in Arabic on a gender-segregated campus. Thus, the introduction of American style university curriculum in Education City constituted a profound change in Qatar's higher education system. Weill Cornell Medical College in Qatar provides the exact same American curriculum as the main branch of the school in New York City: several classes are taught by streaming video live from the U.S. All Cornell undergraduate students in the United States and Qatar are required to take two First Year Writing Seminars on any topic. Therefore, introducing a relatively new critical methodology—Literature and Medicine—which is unfamiliar even to native-born American undergraduate students, presents an extra challenge in an international educational context.

### **3. What is Literature and Medicine?**

In the United States, medical schools began to realize the importance of the humanities in medical education the late 1960s, and humanities departments were established at the Pennsylvania State University College of Medicine in 1967 and Southern Illinois University School of Medicine in 1969. The field has drawn an interdisciplinary faculty from Medicine, Law, Anthropology, Nursing, Literature, Bioethics, and Philosophy departments. The primary journal in the field, *Literature and Medicine*, began publishing in 1982 at Johns Hopkins University, an institution known for its strong history of medicine program. The Literature, Arts and Medicine Database created in 1993 at New York University now

lists over 4,500 individual items. About 1/3 of all medical schools in the U.S. offer literature and medicine courses (Hawkins and McEntyre 2000: 4).

As a practical methodology, Literature and Medicine promotes the use of literature in the training of medical personnel to help doctors to understand increasingly diverse patient populations, the social and cultural dimensions of disease (most importantly, the role of poverty in illness), and to document and elaborate on their own experiences as developing health care practitioners through journals and reflective writing. Survivor stories can be effectively used in group therapy, and street theatre and plays about health issues such as AIDs and smoking can be one of the most effective means of transmitting public health information to the population at large, especially in regions of low literacy. In widely respected and replicated research, James W. Pennebaker et al. at the University of Texas have spent decades gathering evidence demonstrating that writing about traumatic events can aid the healing process, lower stress levels and prevent the recurrence of chronic illness (Pennebaker et al. 1999, 1995, 1988, 1986).

As a critical methodology, Literature and Medicine investigates the narrative, philosophical, and linguistic aspects of medical discourse. For example, some Literature and Medicine scholars working in the field of semeiotics and linguistics believe that a fundamental analogy exists between the act of reading and medical diagnosis. And some doctors agree: physician Stephen Hoffmann, for example, argues that "a doctor is in essence a literary critic. Invited to hear a tale every time a patient comes to see him, he must evaluate each person's story in the same way that a trained reader would approach a literary work" (Hoffmann 1986: 170). For Hoffman, the body becomes text, and some of the basic literary strategies familiar to literary critics, such as looking for difference, decoding the sign, etc. can be directly applied to the tissues of the body, which are marked by the signs of diseases. It is no accident that both practitioners (critics, doctors) use the same term—the *sign*—for their *techne*.

#### **4. Adapting Literature and Medicine Pedagogical Approaches for Muslim Students**

Since stories in the context of the earlier religious schools, the Khutub, had been used as exempla, teaching moral guidance, concerns often arise from both parents and students about stories from the West that might depict such topics as adultery, the drinking of alcohol, and other non-Islamic behaviour. Students and parents fear that these stories might teach inappropriate ethos. A serious incident several years ago at the Medical

College arose when students were exposed to a story depicting homosexual behaviour.

Some of our younger students (WCMC-Q admits a small number of 14–16 year olds; our youngest doctor recently graduated at the age of 22), especially those who have attended an Arabic-speaking science-intensive high school with little or no experience in reading literature in any language—enter the premedical program with charmingly naïve perceptions of fiction, such as the surprised notion that someone would write something that ‘didn’t actually happen.’

The native population of Qatar is descended from Bedouin tribes from the Nejd region of Saudi Arabia and the Rub-al-Khali adhering to Wahhabi-influenced Sunni Islam with a rich oral tradition of stories (Rahman 2005: 1-15). However, there is almost no written heritage among these peoples. In fact, among the older generations, there is a pronounced uncomfortableness with non-religious books, since one book, the Holy Quran, provides in their opinion all of the wisdom necessary to lead a proper life. An older Qatari, for example, might be surprised that his granddaughter is reading a book of sociology that analyzes human behaviour. For the older generations, ethics, morality and human behaviour have been traditionally clearly outlined in Holy Quran, Sunna or the acts of Prophet, and Hadith, the sayings of the Prophet (Melikian 1978: 24). Despite this traditionalist view of written texts, however, according to a 2007 Qatar government-sponsored study of the effect of literature on medical education, 82% of the Class of 2013 at WCMC-Q believed that the literature-based writing seminars taught there should be a mandatory part of the curriculum (Weber et al. 2007: 11).

So first there is a challenge to overcoming some still existing student misconceptions concerning both non-fiction and fiction. Some students adopt the simplified Platonic view that fiction is untrue, hence suspect – it talks about things that never happened. While globalization is often depicted in positive terms in world media, the export of American and European educational models, which has been occurring all over the Gulf in the last 15 years, raises the old spectre of cultural imperialism. No literature or language is value-neutral, and a certain sector of Qatari society views American military bases, American educational systems and curriculum and the increasing adoption of English with some alarm. A widely respected international voice in Sunni Islam and a resident of Qatar since 1961, Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi warned recently in his Friday sermon, “that sending children to schools using a foreign language [English] as its medium of instruction would only ‘produce a generation alienated from its Arabic and Islamic roots’” (Elshamy 2009: 1). He added that children would

grow up in Qatar learning British history and the British perception of the world.

One way to relax these fears is to provide culturally sensitive stories for Muslim students such as *The Hajji* by Ahmed Essop (1978), a popular story in our writing classes at the Medical College since it is well adapted to the Arab world context. The story revolves around two South African Muslim brothers, one who rejects his younger brother because he has married a white non-Muslim woman. When the disgraced brother falls terminally ill and requests that his brother forgive him and provide him with a proper burial, the other brother cannot forgive him even on his deathbed. The story is perfect for introducing a Literature and Medicine approach to critical thinking to Muslim students, because it is written in a strongly Islamic context and stimulates class discussion on medically-related topics such as end of life issues, patient care, and the role of families in disease and trauma. So one productive approach to teaching Literature and Medicine for Muslim students is very simple – providing culturally sensitive materials with a medical slant which can foster discussion on health care in the Muslim context.

Another successful project in Literature and Medicine for Muslim students is to examine the rhetoric of medical documents themselves. By closely examining the Hippocratic Oath, for example, Muslim students are encouraged to see how medical knowledge is culturally situated, instead of value-neutral and absolutely objective as they often approach scientific discourse in their physics, chemistry and anatomy classes.

Medical students should be aware that there are several distinct variants of the Hippocratic Oath, as well as other accepted oaths such as the Declaration of Geneva, The Stanford Affirmation, The Prayer of Maimonides, etc. There was a curious resurgence of interest in the Hippocratic Oath in the 20th century. In 1928, only 24% of the medical schools in the U.S. and Canada administered a medical oath (Kao 2000: 885). Today all accredited medical schools in the United States administer some form of medical oath. In 2000, Kao and Parsi surveyed all accredited allopathic and osteopathic schools in the U.S. about their medical oaths. Only 1 of the 141 schools required the Hippocratic oath in its original wording; 59 required a modified Hippocratic oath, while 28 required the Declaration of Geneva or a modified form of it. The 30 remaining schools offered a student or faculty authored oath (Kao 2000: 883).

Most western doctors have taken some form of the Hippocratic Oath and most of these same doctors believe mistakenly that the Hippocratic oath is monolithic, embodying perennial ethical precepts of the medical profession, and recited in the very same words handed down directly from

Hippocrates. A simple glance at the very different medical oaths administered at the top U.S. medical schools indicates that the original oath has undergone many changes. In the medieval Islamic World, Ibn abi Usayb'ia translated the Hippocratic Oath into Arabic in 1269 (Rosenthal 1956: 52; Usayb'ia 1884). The Islamic Organization for Medical Sciences has also developed an "Oath of the Doctor" and The Islamic Medical Association of North America (IMANA) officially adopted the "Oath of a Muslim Physician" in 1977. As a recent essay on "Adolescent Ethics" published by WCMC-Q medical student Anayah Sarkar indicates, well-accepted western principles of medical ethics, such as patient autonomy, confidentiality, and informed consent manifest subtle variations in the Islamic world. For example, families often demand to be involved in treatment decisions of adult family members, even when the patient requests confidentiality (Sarkar 2008: 29–34).

In a three-week-long module in my writing seminar, students were asked to look at a wide variety of these Muslim and non-Muslim medical oaths including The Declaration of Geneva, the Maxim of Kung Hsin from the 16th century Ming Dynasty, the Jewish Oath of Asaph and Yohanan of the 6th century, and modern student and faculty-authored oaths. Then students were asked to write their own medical oath from a Muslim perspective after class discussions on what the proper ethics and behavior of the medical practitioner should be. Students were very engaged in the assignment and the original Hippocratic Oath generated lively class discussions on several biomedical and bioethical concepts such as abortion, euthanasia, patient confidentiality, the economic aspects of health care, and medical education.

Each student took a very individual approach – some attempted to write international oaths that would satisfy a broad interdenominational and multi-ethnic medical constituency, while some wrote specifically Islamic oaths, based on Usayb'ia's translation of Hippocrates and the oath of the Islamic Medical Association of North America. A few students wrote oaths only for themselves personally. I was surprised at the diversity of work that this project inspired. One student argued successfully that sayings found in the Qur'an and in Hadith comprehensively spelled out how the Muslim should behave both in a private and professional context.

Thus the goals of the Hippocratic Oath project were for students to historically situate medical knowledge, and to critique the simplistic notion that medicine is the accumulation of facts built up over the centuries and that medical knowledge stands outside culture and history. Medical ethics must change in accordance with changes in culture. The assignment taught them to see the social and religious aspects of the profession of medicine,



and to think about how as a Muslim physician they could provide the best possible patient care, particularly with the multi-ethnic patient population found in Qatar where most of them will eventually be practicing.

## 5. Conclusion

The methodological approach of Literature and Medicine can provide an excellent introduction to the humanities for medical students and fulfils a number of key educational goals at medical institutions: sensitizing young doctors-to-be to the cultures and private lives of their diverse patient populations, teaching close reading skills that are directly applicable to medical diagnosis (reading of signs / symptoms; assembling diverse elements into coherent medical meaning), providing a broader sense of how therapeutics intersect with social and economic concerns, and encouraging a more thorough enjoyment of the wide range of human experience. These benefits are particularly important to the Muslim doctors who will be practicing in the multi-lingual, multi-ethnic, and religiously diverse State of Qatar.

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# VOICES FROM STUDENTS: A STUDY ON SOME POSSIBLE SOURCES OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE SPEAKING ANXIETY

ÖZGE GÜL ZEREY

Mustafa Kemal University

***Abstract:** The study aims to explore ELT students' foreign language speaking anxiety level and some possible sources behind this negative and debilitating feeling. A descriptive study was conducted with 39 second-year students in English Language Teacher Training Department at Mustafa Kemal University. Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope, 1986) was conducted with students to reveal their foreign language speaking anxiety level. In addition, a semi-structured interview was held to support the questionnaire results and to gain more insights into the students' perspectives on some possible sources of their foreign language speaking anxiety which may not be obtained through quantitative tools.*

***Keywords:** foreign language anxiety, foreign language speaking anxiety, students' perspectives.*

## 1. Introduction

Anxiety studies have gained much interest in recent years with the advent of the significance of the impact of affective factors in foreign language learning which deal with “the emotional reactions and motivations of the learner”. And these factors signal “the arousal of the limbic system and its direct intervention in the task of learning” (Scovel 1991: 16). Therefore, it is claimed that affective factors bring personality factors to the fore in language learning and comprise of “the emotional side of human behaviour” (Brown 1994: 135). Among the other affective factors suggested by Brown as “self-esteem, inhibition, risk-taking, empathy, extroversion, and motivation”, anxiety is most likely considered to play a determining role upon learners' foreign language performance and achievement as consistently indicated in a variety of anxiety researches conducted in the field of educational psychology and second language learning.

As a result of this large body of research, foreign language anxiety is considered as a complex psychological phenomenon and most commonly defined as a “distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process” (Horwitz et al. 1986: 130). This illustration implies that students attribute their feelings of frustration and anxiety to foreign language learning which makes their anxiety unique to the language learning process singling it out from other types of anxiety.

Foreign language anxiety is mostly found to create debilitating effects upon students in many aspects of language learning process. For, according to Krashen (1982: 99), anxiety contributes to the “affective filter” which is defined as a “mental block” that “prevents” language students “from achieving total competence in the second language”. He further adds that a variety of factors can lead to the occurrence of this block such as students’ being anxious or nervous, “over-concerned” about their performance in the second language, experiencing negative feelings toward the speakers of the language and their lacking of self-confidence. As implied, anxiety raises the affective filter which, in turn, causes students not to fully comprehend the available language messages. And this situation naturally inhibits the learning process generating negative effects upon them. This lends us to support that whether in a high or low level, anxiety exists in foreign language learning process and “to deny the reality of foreign language anxiety is illogical as well as insensitive to the experience and needs of many language learners and teachers” (Horwitz 2000: 258). Therefore, as a result of careful examination, anxiety studies in the literature are found to aim at exploring the effects and sources of foreign language anxiety rather than proving its existence.

Thus, it appears plausible to infer that anxiety is responsible for generating “individual differences in both language learning and communication” (MacIntyre 1995: 90). These individual differences may manifest themselves in many aspects of the learning process. From another perspective, anxiety also has some inhibiting academic effects. For instance, although the anxious students make much effort to become successful, their low grades do not reflect that effort invested to obtain them (Horwitz et al. 1986). It is claimed that they study much more than their low anxious classmates, yet they cannot prevent the deficits and negative effects to their performance caused by the anxiety-arousal interfered with the language learning process at the input, processing and output stages of learning.

In a similar vein, speaking in the foreign language is found to be a major anxiety-provoking situation by a great deal of researches conducted on foreign language anxiety (e.g. Woodrow, 2006; Cheng, et al., 1999). In these studies, anxiety is mostly associated with the oral aspects of language and oral practice is found to be the most threatening aspect of foreign language learning. Also, it is proved that oral activities and speaking the target language in class are most problematic and create more anxiety than such other language skills as reading, listening and writing. The relative importance of the negative effects of anxiety particularly on speaking in many educational contexts is acknowledged by many authorities (e.g. Horwitz, 2000; Phillips, 1992; Matsuda and Gobel, 2004).

All these negative effects of foreign language anxiety both upon students' personality and academic success and on specific stages of language learning process lead the researchers and language educators to initiate a search to find out some common sources of foreign language speaking anxiety. Therefore, this study focuses on exploring the reasons of these negative and inhibiting feelings which frustrate students' performance while speaking the target language in many aspects of language learning process.

### **1.1. Statement of the Problem**

Among the four skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking), speaking is found to be the most anxiety-provoking skill in a language classroom (e.g. Horwitz, et al., 1986; Gregersen and Horwitz, 1999). And together with this, it is most commonly agreed by students and language teachers that speaking is the most neglected skill since teachers mostly adopt grammar-based approach to language teaching during the high school education because of the university entrance system in Turkey. Therefore, students solely prepare for a three-hour multiple choice exam and get accustomed to developing test-taking competence rather than communicative competence to use the language for practical purposes. This aspect is also confirmed in the SWOT analysis study of İçbay (2005: 134) who explores the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the university entrance system in Turkey. He emphasizes that "students tend to disregard the parts of secondary education curricula that are not assessed in the examination" and for this reason "[t]hose neglected parts in the curricula have become unattractive and dysfunctional for the students in the long term". Here, it may be inferred that this situation is also true for the students at foreign language departments in high school as they do not focus upon the communicative aspect of the language for which they are not responsible in the Foreign Language University Entrance Exam. For this reason, they do not experience many opportunities to practice English and they are left with a lack of self-confidence and courage in speaking the foreign language in front of others. This situation gradually causes them to generate some sort of anxious feelings related to speaking in class when they have been accepted to a university causing them to avoid participating in language activities or improving their language skills, especially speaking.

### **1.2. Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the present study is to determine to what extent the second-year ELT students feel foreign language speaking anxiety while speaking English in class and to search for some possible sources behind

this feeling. Thus, the study aims to answer the following questions: 1. Do the second-year ELT students at Mustafa Kemal University have foreign language speaking anxiety?, 2. What are the factors that lead to foreign language speaking anxiety?.

## **2. Methodology**

This study is based on descriptive research design since it aims at exploring students' perceptions on some possible sources of foreign language speaking anxiety. The study was conducted at Mustafa Kemal University, Department of English Language Teaching in the first term of academic year 2007-2008. In order to find out the anxiety level of the students, 39 second-year students participated in the data collection phase of the study. Yet, for the interview 15 students with higher speaking anxiety were chosen using purposeful sampling strategy. Therefore, the participants were selected based on the results of their language anxiety scores obtained through the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) items measuring the speaking anxiety level. As anxiety is considered as an abstract psychological phenomenon, in most of the researches conducted in this field, questionnaires, self-reports and interviews are the most common data collection tools. Similarly, this study includes both qualitative and quantitative research elements. The quantitative data collection instrument used in this study was Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) which was developed by Horwitz, et al. (1986) in order to provide researchers with a standard instrument to capture the specific anxiety reaction of a learner to a foreign language learning setting (Aida 1994). The FLCAS is a five-point Likert scale which consists of 33 items. The responses to this scale change from (a) "strongly disagree" to (e) "strongly agree".

The qualitative part of the study aims at eliciting the sources of students' speaking anxiety which may not be obtained through quantitative data collection tools. In the present study interview questions were prepared by taking the research questions into consideration so as to obtain information on why the students feel anxious while speaking English in class, what their concerns were. Another aim of the researcher in conducting the interviews was to gather data that cannot be elicited through the scale or questionnaire and to verify the findings identified by these quantitative instruments.

The FLCAS was analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Foreign language speaking anxiety level of the students was determined with the total scores of each student's answers to the FLCAS. Also, the responses to each item in the questionnaire were analyzed

calculating the individual item means. The data gathered from the analysis of the interviews were exposed to content analysis technique and the steps proposed by Baş Collins (2000: 64-72) were followed throughout the analysis process. These are transcribing, coding/ labelling, clustering, looking for interrelationships between categories, and the last one write-up.

### **3. Findings and Discussion**

In this section, each research question is handled with regard to the findings of the present study.

This first question investigated whether the second-year ELT students at Mustafa Kemal University felt foreign language speaking anxiety or not and the extent they felt it. In order to find out their speaking anxiety level, the scale consisting of the thirteen FLCAS items which were determined to measure the speaking anxiety level was administered to the 39 second-year ELT students. The FLCAS scores of the subjects ranged from 54 to 21 which meant that there were students with both high and low level of anxiety. In other words, the majority of students experience a certain level of foreign language speaking anxiety. This indicates that speaking anxiety is commonly felt by students not only at lower levels but at university level as well.

In this aspect, the findings of this study with regard to the speaking anxiety level of the students conform to the findings of other studies conducted to determine the anxiety level of students at university level and conceptualization of the speaking anxiety (e.g. Woodrow, 2006; Dereshiwsky, 2001). For example, Dereshiwsky (2001) investigates the perceived levels of anxiety experienced by students in a regular university setting. The findings leads the researcher to conclude that beginner classes experience some levels of anxiety and this level does not decrease in the following semester. Similarly, in her study which is conducted with the university students to shed light on speaking anxiety, Woodrow (2006) finds that second language speaking anxiety is a significant predictor of oral achievement and the data from the interview indicate that forty (85%) of the participants experience second language speaking anxiety to some extent. In line with these findings, another evidence for the existence of speaking anxiety at university level comes from Karimkhanlui (2006) who conducts a study with university students from medicine department to explore the effect of anxiety on speaking and the common sources. The findings indicate that the majority of the participants experience some form of anxiety when speaking foreign language in classroom. In line with these results, it might be stated that the findings of the present study conform to the findings of other studies on speaking anxiety.

In the current study, the majority of the participants (60%) state that they never feel quite sure of themselves while speaking in foreign language in class. Together with this, upon the other item, the majority of the participants (60%) agree that they tremble when they know that they will be called on to speak in foreign language. As for the third item related to speaking without preparation in class, most of the students with the percentage of 66.7% (n=10) agree with the statement and 46.7% (n=7) of the participants feel nervous in class. The percentage of the participants who feel themselves confident is 6.7% (n=1) compared to 60% (n=9) of the participants who disagree with this statement. When the answers related to the negative feelings experienced when its students' turn to speak are considered, the findings indicate that 66.7% (n=10) of the participants agree that their heart pounds when they are asked to speak in class. Related to the next item, most of the participants (73.3%) agree that they feel self-conscious about speaking English in class which is the indicator of higher speaking anxiety level. Considering item 10 that is related to feeling nervousness and confusion when speaking in class, most of the participants (80%) agree with this statement while 6.7% (n=1) disagree. Upon the item related to being afraid of the other students' laughing while speaking English in class, most of the participants (40%) disagree with that statement while 33.3% (n=5) agree that they are afraid of being laughed at while speaking in class. 6.7% strongly agree with the statement.

In brief, these findings lend us to support that speaking anxiety exists in language classrooms even at the higher levels of proficiency and the majority of the students experience a certain level of speaking anxiety due to various personal reasons ranging from not being quite sure while speaking, feeling nervous, not feeling confident, feeling heart pound to feeling confused, and fear of their peers' laughing while speaking. And concerning the percentage of each item, it can clearly be noticed that the majority of the students indicated evidences of feeling speaking anxiety.

To support the findings from the scale, in the interview, the participants were also asked whether they experienced foreign language speaking anxiety in class. The aim was to see whether they were aware of their anxiety indicated in the FLCAS scores and the reasons behind their speaking anxiety to better understand the effects of theatre application upon this negative feeling. This would allow reaching further insights and descriptive information which may not easily obtained through empirical research.

According to the content analysis of the interview, most of the participants (n=10) admitted that they felt anxiety when speaking English in class. There were also some students (n=3) who mentioned that they



sometimes felt speaking anxiety and the one who stated that he rarely felt speaking anxiety. One other student explained that it was changeable; that is, it changes from instructor to instructor and subject to subject. Related to the possible reasons of their speaking anxiety, the more frequently expressed source was their “lack of self-confidence” (n=6) as found in the findings from the scale. And the other common sources of their speaking anxiety were found as “fear of failure” or “low self-esteem”, “feeling of self-consciousness” and “feeling of excitement while speaking English in class”, “lack of vocabulary knowledge”, “being graded”, “having high expectations” and “the effect of instructor and the subject”. It was found that the students’ speaking anxiety mostly came out of some personal psychological reasons or some personal inadequacies. The reasons of these psychological effects may stem from students’ inability of getting accustomed to speaking English at secondary or high school classes. Speaking may be the most neglected of the four skills since the university entrance system requires students to take paper pencil test. Therefore, until they pass this exam and enter the university, their primary concern is to have full grammar knowledge and study on as much tests as they can. Therefore, they hardly overcome their fears of speaking English.

All these possible sources experienced by the students in this study are also in line with the findings of other studies which investigate the common sources of foreign language speaking anxiety. For instance, in their article entitled “Anxiety and predictors of performance in the foreign language classroom” Matsuda, Gobel (2004: 22) put forth the link between self-confidence and anxiety. According to them, the confident students feel less anxiety, whereas the less confident students experience higher anxiety. Similarly, in their study which investigates the links between second language classroom anxiety and second language writing anxiety as well as their associations with second language speaking and writing achievement, Cheng et al., 1999: 426) find that low self-confidence is an important component of both speaking anxiety and writing anxiety. This component is found to be the reason of students’ “negative thoughts and emotional responses in stressful English-learning situations”.

In a similar vein, some of the causes of speaking anxiety are also found in Karimkhanlui’s (2006: 6) study investigating the common sources of speaking anxiety. One of them is learners’ psychological attributes which include “learners’ own psychological status and feeling, ... the presence or absence of worry, nervousness and heart pound in classroom situation”.

Another source of students’ speaking anxiety was found as “fear of failure” or “low self-esteem”. Students frequently mentioned that they were afraid of making mistakes in front of their classmates and they worried

about other students' judgements about them. This finding complies with Young's (1991) study upon the sources of foreign language anxiety which poses low self-esteem as one of the sources of anxiety experienced in language classrooms. Similarly, Horwitz et al (1986) find fear of failure as a factor that causes learners to experience language anxiety.

In this study, "having high expectations" also emerged as one of the anxiety-generating factors. The participants stated in the interviews that this feeling manifested itself when they thought that they should be perfect. These unrealistic expectations cause them to feel more anxious while speaking in class. This finding in this aspect shows similarities with the results of the study conducted by Horwitz (1989). In the study it is found that learner beliefs about language learning process have much effect upon the anxiety they experience in language classrooms.

"Instructor's and the subject's influence" was found as another anxiety-generating element mentioned by the students in the present study. They stated that their anxiety level indicated differences with the different instructors and subjects; that is, some instructors' behaviours naturally cause them feel anxious and the subjects that do not attract their attention generate some sort of speaking anxiety. In line with this finding, Young (1991) emphasizes instructors' influence upon students' language anxiety and postulates that their error correction preferences, points of view related to the nature of the language learning atmosphere and the way they approach the teaching of foreign language naturally generate an influence upon the students' effort in doing a task in class.

#### **4. Pedagogical Implications**

The present study indicated that even the students in ELT department might feel anxiety to some extent when it's their turn to speak English in front of the other students in class. And as one of the findings of this study, instructors should be informed that anxiety leads to a detrimental effect upon the students' speaking English even if they are advanced level students. And also, instructors should be informed about this negative effect before attributing students' failure in speaking to their low motivation and the lack of competence or their being fed up with the lesson. Some anxiety reducing activities may help students overcome the negative feelings they bring together to the foreign language class. Upon this issue, Young (1991) suggests instructors and educators to make students work in small groups or pairs, use self-talk and participate in support groups. Since most of the students' speaking anxiety stems from some personal reasons such as lack of self-confidence, and courage to speak and feeling self-consciousness while speaking in front of the class, instructors had better arrange activities

in such a way that they increase students' self-confidence and discard the self-consciousness providing them with a non-threatening environment in which students get the chance of practicing the foreign language in front of other students and thus decrease their self-consciousness.

Furthermore, this study indicated that teachers' attitudes in class and the subjects the students would talk about might also create anxiety while they are speaking. Therefore, supportive and friendly environment should be created for students to feel themselves comfortable. For this reason, some training programs or seminars can be arranged for teachers on how to motivate their students to speak foreign language and how to react while they are speaking in terms of choosing the right error correction strategy and organizing the class in a way that other students do not criticize each other or laugh at someone's mistake. Besides, teachers may bring some interesting subjects to the class so as to motivate students to speak English.

## **5. Conclusion**

The negative consequences anxiety can generate upon students' achievement and performance in second language learning lead some authorities and language methodologists to consciously identify anxiety and explore the possible sources and its effects upon students. As indicated in many studies in the literature on foreign language anxiety, this study also finds that students experience foreign language speaking anxiety to some extent mostly because of some personal reasons regardless of their proficiency level. And general foreign language anxiety is found to contain a strong speaking anxiety element (Cheng et al. 1999). In brief, based upon the findings from the FLCAS (Horwitz et al. 1986) and interviews in the present study, it is clear that students feel these negative feelings because of various reasons such as lacking of self-confidence, instructor's influence, fear of failure or low self-esteem, feeling of self-consciousness while speaking the target language, lack of vocabulary knowledge, being graded, and having high expectations about language learning process. Such kind of factors naturally cause anxious students to avoid participation in the classroom activities and hinder them from improving their language skills. Therefore, it is crucial for educators to find ways to reduce students' anxiety level for an effective and conducive teaching environment.

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