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**SECTION ONE:**  
**CULTURAL STUDIES**

# AFRICAN LITERARY *TOPOI* IN MODERN AFRICAN TEXTS AND THE PROBLEMATICS OF EUROPHONE FORMS

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**Abstract:** *This article treats selected oral poems whose topoi or motifs have transcended time and space to play out themselves in modern African fictions where colonial languages and their consequent habits of thought serve as media of enunciation. Thereafter, it beams attention on African scholars and writers who have attempted, presumably, to translate the oral medium of expression into indigenous and/or colonial written form(s) while maintaining the navel-strings that linked them, through the transfer of topoi and from the local and indigenous language to the Europhone form which, though, has led to international recognition, also serves to affirm a classic consequential illustration of the zero sum game.*

**Keywords:** *African oral literature, African novel, African poetry, Europhone forms, topoi.*

## 1. Introduction

Civilisation and culture, indistinguishable at any particular time, are symbiotes – a connection largely and readily useable in any particular context. Both are ingrained in and, in turn, are affected by a people who have practised them with the aid of time, cultivation and habit. Out of the world civilization and culture, Africa has carved out its own peculiar literary tradition. It has been able to do so owing to its peoples' common ancestry with other humans as *homo sapiens*. Africa's contribution to world ancient literary culture is technically termed: African oral (traditional) poetry. It is traditional in the sense that they are handed over generationally through the oral medium, or what Strauss articulates as diffusion (209-221). Today, apart from the heydays of Okot p'Bitek whose proven skills and dexterity in translations and adaptations in Acholi, his native Ugandan language, resulting to the *Song of Lawino* (1966) and *Song of Ocol* (1970), alongside several others, before they were translated into English, on one hand, and Adeboye Babalola's seminal translations of narratives and poetry from the Yoruba to English, most works are written in modern European languages and forms in our present era.

Scholars believe that some of the present set of works has been obviously influenced by African folklore like riddles, proverbs, oral narrative story-line and so on. This is true. But they have also, surprisingly, overlooked the perceptible and somewhat imperceptible oral poetic *topoi* or motifs, the recurrent poetic formulas that these works posit. A careful probe will discover that some of the embedded oral poetic *topoi* of love, unity, power, death, death and revival, and offering, in modern African works are evident. This article intends to investigate, therefore, some modern African texts in order to identify their correlations and establish the



fact that these African works have been remotely, whether the writers were aware or not, influenced by oral poetic *topoi*. The *topoi* are by no means univalent: they are as fluid and can be readily understood as being in the vicinity of *themes*.

But what was the status of oral works before writing trapped them and before they emerged in modern African works? It is worthy of mention that despite oral poetry being a long time appurtenance of Africa's cultural life, there was a disheartening situation, the sort Senanu and Vincent calls "the unfortunate situation" "where traditional poetry as serious art worthy of attention has been ignored for a long time and has only recently commanded the attention it deserves from African scholars" (1988:12). These African scholars, foremost of whom were p'Bitek and Babalola but later Soyinka, Achebe and a host of others, were to engage in a typical rescue mission consisting of translations, adaptations, borrowings, and so forth from these oral spheres and their embedded *topoi*, exploring same in the three genres of literature in which they wrote and researched.

European (conventional literary and) stylistic containments such as language, genre, stanzas, metres and other discursive structures and conventions could really avail little in seizing and sizing up this oral works during the process of translation and transplantation because of their fluid nature. As a result, instances abound where this literature glides into songs, dance, dirges, chants, epics, lyrics, religious poetry, praise-poetry, occupational poetry, the poetry of abuse, satires, narratives, and so on, even in all the various sub-strata of the sub-genres mentioned above. Rather than take this fluidity as a disadvantage, we can say it accounts for its worthiness and richness. I have no intention to go into scheming its genres, but it is enough to state that they are poetic, rich in imagery and devoid of noviceal representation of ethical life as was once supposed. Therefore, they are not excused from the imprints of modern literary forms. Here is the view Senanu and Vincent hold concerning oral poetry (literature): "the unequivocal recognition that poetry in one form or another is a cultural heritage of all peoples who have rational conceptions of what it is" (12). Since all peoples have this heritage, no definitions could limit its nature and must have modern poetry or literature captured it. Here is how they expressed the possible damage done by any seeming misconception: "The true origin and nature of poetry tend to become blurred by the overly conscious and highly artistic written forms of modern poetry" (12).

Senanu and Vincent, above, in expressing a possible damage done to oral poetic materials using the prism of modern poetry, seem to chart a course that collapses Western stylistic definitions of poetry in order to capture that of oral literature. A set of terms counting in their favours is: "the overly conscious and highly artistic written forms of modern poetry" (12). The notion of *scribere* as emptying of subjectivity is privileged here. We may not go into the crannies of how written poetry has come to be, such as whether primordial man's language and voice are convergent issues at the point of the poet's scribbling or not. But one acknowledges, with respect to this article, that colonial and post-colonial discourses are in the colonial language (or do we have to say {post-} colonial language?) whether it is written as a translation from the vernacular language or as

a translation from one colonial language to another, as was the case with Diop's and other Francophone poets' works. The terms "colonial" and "post-colonial" are used here in their very literal and unspecialised senses.

With the infiltration of Western forms in the translation of the traditional is the problematic of the notion of 'African literature'. African and non-African scholars have asked "whether there was such a thing as 'African literature' as the new works which are now so designated were all in European languages" (Akwanya 2005:9). Akwanya offers a reason why scholars are sore with the term: "perhaps the real reason for the unease with an 'African literature' in which we encounter not an African, but a European language is that it takes away from the vernacular the element in which it might grow and renew itself" (2005:11). Because of this major challenge, African literature faces an uphill task of helping to renew the European language's Other, a sufficient reason for African languages' foreseeable extinction with the passage of time no matter how long; or to be a little more optimistic, the Other's stagnancy and eventual redundancy amidst the gradual and forceful seismic advance and encroachment of globalisation so called. In all ramifications, European languages and its forms are the overlords. Could we not begin to see glimpses of how Africans under-develop themselves culturally?

Coming back to Senanu and Vincent's assertions behind, we discover that some issues and terms raised in those assertions are very fundamental in setting the background of this article. Some of them are: "rational conceptions", "cultural heritage of all peoples", and "overly conscious and highly artistic written forms of modern poetry." We shall make out these in explicatory and expatiating terms in due course. But for poetry to be ascribed to as the "cultural heritage of all peoples" and, as Achebe puts it, "a derivative of the universal creative rondo" (2008:6), it affirms the authenticity that the object called *poetry*, that is, the art properly called poetry, may not be genre-specific after all as we know it conventionally today.

There is need to examine this generic nonspecificity because of its overall import to the direction of this paper, that is, in identifying what oral poetry is, its structure, and how it permeates modern written texts in Western forms and the attendant negative corollaries. This generic non-specificity can also be perceptible in Aristotle's account of human action (*praxis*). *Praxis*, he believes, could be "primarily imitated by histories, or verbal structures that describe specific and particular action" while *mythos* is a secondary imitation of an action as differentiated from reality and histories (Frye 1957:82, 83). *Theoria* is imitated by "discursive writing", that is, conventional writing style where words are placed alongside another in a very long string beginning from the first page and ending at the last. Now, a *dianoia* is a "secondary imitation of *thought*" (*theoria*) which is preoccupied with "typical thought, images, metaphors, diagrams, and verbal ambiguities" from where flows specific ideas (83). This adumbration forms the direction of the primitive core of our beings as humans and the appurtenance of every man as affirmed by Heidegger when he said that "the speech of genuine thinking is by nature poetic" (1971:x). Continuing, Heidegger posits in a way that is relevant to Frye's thought that the needfulness of taking "the shape of verse" is uncalled for as "the opposite of the poem is not prose", for "pure prose" if it

qualifies as literature, “is as poetic as any poem” (x). Here is Aristotle’s and Frye’s accomplice, and whose footsteps this article tows concurring that “poetry is more historical than philosophy” and more involved “in images and examples” (83). Therefore, one can surmise that the *mythos* being the *dianoia* in movement and the *dianoia* being the *mythos* in stasis, resulting in “*mimesis*”, is what is meant by “*poiesis*” (Ricoeur 1981a: 180). This is poetry of the very poetic sort irrespective of the genre it appears in. It is characteristic great classics possess in bounteousness. In a sense, the term ‘poetry’ here is transgeneric as well as pro-generic – a reason why *topoi* are recurrent and permeative. As a result, wherever *topoi*, these recurrent poetic formulas of love, unity, power, death, death and revival, and offering are evident, traceable to and from, there this article would focus its attention irrespective of the genre in which *topoi* are found.

By settling the facts that the word “poem” or “poetry” is an all-inclusive technical nomenclature and that traditional poems are serious art-forms dealing with the range of human experiences as dreams that conjure up whole worlds, embody rich figurative language and present beautiful pictures in words, we also need to acknowledge that poetry contains deep reflections about the world and man’s place in it (Achebe 2008:13). Soyinka tells us that: a thorough “examination of traditional poetry reveals that it too is built on a densely packed matrix of references. . . This progression of linked allusions towards an elucidation of the experience of reality is the language of all poets” (1975:15). Because these poems are collectively owned, they remain the product of the ethnic nationalities in which they are found as against the individual property rights ascribed to modern poems or African works of works nowadays.

A great many efforts have been made to “rewrite” this traditional literature and then, where possible, in an extreme instance, deform the Standard English in a way that makes it serve the poet indeed. This way, the earlier thought pattern would still be in place, but in a novel form, resulting in a kind of “new wine in an old skin.” The following from Gabriel Okara’s *The Voice* would probably hit home this fact:

How or where do you think you will find *it* when everybody surface-water-things tell, when things have no more root? How do you expect to find *it* when fear has locked up the insides of the low and the insides of the high are filled up with nothing but yam? Stop looking for *it*. Stop suffering yourself (1964, 34).

At another instance, we are shown that:

Only a mad man looks for *it* in this turned world. Let him look for *it* in the wide world if he can find it. But we don’t want him to stay here asking, “Have you *it*? Have you *it*? Have you *it*?” Even in our sleep we hear him asking. We do not know what *it* is. We do not want to know. Let us be as we are. We do not want our insides to be stirred like soup in a pot. We do not want to be troubled by one whose inside is filled with water. So, let us be (72).

The question of this language permeating poetry is not, in the slightest, in doubt. It is not only in prose fiction that this happens. The genre of drama and its dramaturgy is another. The dramaturgy of African plays in European languages has been vigorously debated since the 1960s (Darah 2008: xxxviii). But borrowing and debts are not new in literature either, Kristeva has called *intertextuality* while Quayson termed it *interdiscursivity* (1997: 36; 16). There have been ample instances where “European playwrights” are found to be indebted to other (earlier) traditions (Darah 2008: xxxviii). But in the above case as well as those that would be established in this article, the debt appears to be in paradoxical totality, in excess of what it borrows and, also in deficiency of what it reveals as having been borrowed. I shall take pains to explain these shortly.

Now, concerning oral poetry, the media of speaking and listening are very essential in the transmission, liveliness, and being of oral literature, the latter being “the first point of” one’s “encounter with language” (Akwanya 2005: 54). They were transmitted in African languages, a process that was unhindered by the colonial presence. For instance, Gates, Jr. pointed out this manifestation from Ben Okri’s *The Famished Road* in his review thus,

Ben Okri, by plumbing the depths of Yoruba mythology, has created a political fable about the crisis of democracy in Africa and throughout the modern world. More than that, however, he has ushered the African novel into its own post-modern era through a compelling extension of traditional oral forms that uncover the future in the past (1992).

Despite its plumbing into in colonial language, folklore can never really be apprehended, for the poetic object existing in an autochthonous domain is apprehended by an alien but familiar language and habit of thought.

The last phase of the switch, of *plumbing the depths* of indigenous mythologies and *topoi* in modern Europhone forms and languages brought about fresh problematics. This time, unlike the problems that accompany translation, they occur in both the colonial languages and the *topoi*. At a time, the audience a writer writes for was part of it until some of us came to agree with Frye, Eliot, Jung, and others, that any literary work worth its salt should be engendered in and from the common ground of homogeneous ancestry – the core literary tradition and the total body of literature from the ancients to now. These modern African writers were to appropriate European discursive structures as they mediated the ancient African idiom. One of the foremost and most effective appropriator in Black Africa in the novelistic genre is Chinua Achebe. Lloyd declares that Achebe:

consciously expropriate the European’s literary techniques, and related perceptual values, in order to postulate an African, or even anti-European, point of view. Hence he constantly borrows European historiography in order to explode the notorious myth that Africans have no history (qtd. in Sugnet 1996:89).

What he said about the deft use of the deformative technique by Chinua Achebe holds, considerably, for several other African writers irrespective of the genre their works took. In their cases, it may have been a “myth” or it could have been some other things. Definitely, these ‘some other things’ were and are at the service of some distinct variegated *topoi*, or vice versa. The *topoi* analysed in this article are by no means representative. But they do, from these analyses, indicate the serial and variegated ways in which they, from traditional African poems, have influenced modern African texts.

## 2. The *Topoi*

These *topoi* are garnered from a majority of imagery in a particular poem. The *topos* of the Ethiopian (Amharic) poem, “Love Song” is that of love. The figurative language that litters this poem of 30 lines is that of hyperboles, similes and metaphors. It is not surprising because the poem itself is a praise directed to a loved one. The range of movement is from comparisons and exaggerations to the following rapturous burst:

When she opens her heart –  
The Saviour’s image!  
And Jerusalem herself, sacred city,  
Shouts “Holy, Holy!”

The word “opens” implicates and collocates with words like “lid”, “door”, “case” and so on, but not “heart.” And it is because “open” is used with “heart” that brings about the following exclamatory and rapturous remarks that connote joy, expressing the bliss that accompanies the discovery of an oversearched and overly desired object, which in this case, is a lady’s love. The speaker’s exclaim echoes Archimedes’ legendary “Eureka”, an indication of the intensity of desire building up in the speaker towards his love-object which, at the end, privileges the *topos* of love, quest and discovery and holds the poem together that finally culminates in an outburst of ecstasy.

In an apparent discussion mode, the speaker in an untitled poem, christened “Swahili Poem” for this paper’s sake, enunciates the motif of unity: “Woman cannot exist except by man,” “cleave unto your man,” “when man goes on his road, . . . he goes with a friend, for he who/ walks alone has no good fortune,” “the sand-mote is in one’s eyes,” “a friend is needed to help remove it” and many more. If this plea for unity and togetherness is unheeded by all and sundry in the present time, at least, in their apartness and incapacity to will unity today, they, the rich man and the poor, will one day get over this schism and “join hands across the shroud” undermining their earlier wills. “Shroud” here literally means the piece of cloth with which a dead man is wrapped, but bears behind this literal meaning, a symbol of death that levels all, which the rich and the poor would forcibly and equally participate in and partake of. This participation is the unity of all. Perhaps, the realisation of unity in death which could not be achieved while they were alive is a necessary figment for observation and thought.

The *topos* of nobility, bravery and heroism prevails as well in the South African (Zulu) oral poem, “Ndela, Son of Sompisi” building up to the level where the community of selfhood defends itself from an aggression or tries to conquer another and impose a dominion. Such is Ndela, the son of Sompisi, the person by whom this poem is named. He is one of the “Rattlers of spears” whose side is “red with wound” and whose “wounds are as numerous as the huts of a large Kraal”. Consequently, he finds it difficult to lie down. This circumstance provokes echoes of his past heroic deeds and how he comes about those numerous wounds. Throughout his campaign, “they stab the Rattler but he retaliates”. Rather than relent, he attacks “people with fury” securing more wounds “in the face”. From this poem, the motif of bravery, leading to war, pain and the major characteristic of Yeats’s rough beast, the inflicting of pain, is gradually enunciated, for he is the “Great branch”. Towards the end of the poem, the motif of bravery is later reechoed, this time not in the least suggesting the dispatch to battle but the sewing of the numerous gashes. A rhetorical question suggests the magnitude of these wounds: “Have you a piece of gut long enough/To sew up Ndela’s wounds?” and also dares the courage of whoever could deem himself brave enough to come forth.

The above mentioned *topos* of nobility, heroism, and bravery is also implicated here in the Nigerian (Yoruba) poem, “Salute to the Elephant”. Although it is popularly ascribed to as an Ijala, a hunter’s chant, which is a famous and respected sequence in Yoruba oral literary culture, it is to be seen here as a panegyric poem exuding the *topos* of power, nobility, bravery and heroism, and igniting around itself, a mixture of aura of awe and joy. The principal image here is the “elephant” folklorically known as the king of animals. The remote meaning it invokes is that of “the rough beast” (Akwayana and Anohu 2001:153). The semblance in characteristics and nature are evident in the metaphors and hyperboles used in reference to the elephant: “enfolded by honour,” “demon flapping fans of war,” “Mountainous Animal,” “Huge Beast” “who tears a man like a garment,” “veritable ferry’s veritable water-jars,” “Ajanaku”, which means “killer of Ajana”, and “primeval leper.” Awe and disgust are invoked and raised from these. “O elephant” is repeated severally in honour of power and in provocation of the *topos* of power is underneath the expressions of disgust and awe in this poem.

In addition, what gathers in the space of the Nigerian (Yoruba) poem, “Incantation to Cause the Rebirth of a Dead child” are unity, deception, death and rebirth and their which are the fulcrum which are flashes of allusions and incidents mentioned in the poem. From lines 1-2, “Death” catches the “hunter with pain,” “Eshu” does same to the “herbalist in a sack . . .” In lines 3-15, “Death” or rather “death” is implicated, but in several varying ways. While Shonponna, a snake, “dies” and in the end, takes all its children with it; it uses the “invisible calabash” in *kill*ing ten score persons. The origin of the invisible calabash is traceable to Eshu, who, in line 2 gave the invisible calabash to Shonponna. “Black soil” is associated with “earth” and “red soil” to “heaven” where the gateway from one to the other is through the grave. The idea of death that commenced at the beginning

of the poem is further clarified in the last four lines when the speaker directly addresses his child:

You my child,  
Oludande, you born-to-die,  
Return from the red soil of heaven,  
Come and eat the black soil of this world.”

Now, the issue or motif of death and rebirth, or rather the cycle of birth and death (rebirth) or creation and re-creation with all its adjoining mythical implications is enunciated here.

The motif of death and rebirth or of cycle is also seen in Fulani’s “The Fulani Creation Story” where it is further stretched. The human mind imbues meaning with anything that catches his attention properly. What is found in the Fulani poem is a metaphoric space where distensions and extensions are possible forming the basis for myth creation, as it is for all people. There is constant interplay of two axes of interaction in the above poem – the vertical and the horizontal axes. While the vertical axis monitors, moderates and improves on the activities taking place in the horizontal level, the horizontal axis just proceeds altering itself as the same element is converted to some other elements in the hands of the Creator and moderator. The motifs of cycle and creation, defeat, sequence or cycle are what the interaction of the two axes enunciates.

The defeat of death, mortals’ greatest enemy and the most powerful tool of oppression, evil, and wickedness, is very thought-provoking:

Doondari descended for the third time,  
And he came as Gueno, the eternal one.  
And Gueno defeated death.”

There are implications and echoes of apocalypses and eternal supremacy of Christ and the Almighty by which the Christian religious discourse is framed and structured. One also finds the principle of the present entity always getting defeated by the potency of future ones. As a creation poem, it has veritable elements that have influenced later works by Africans.

In the context of “The Fulani Creation Story”, Death is vanquished, defeated by Gueno, and this is ably privileged in a latter chapter of time before his presence in Ghana’s (Akan’s) “Owusu” at an earlier chapter when people used to fall to his fire and power. A few words enunciating the idea of the supremacy and overlordship of the dead so destroyed by Death in (Akan’s) “Owusu” are: “father” which is repeated, “killer of hunger, My Saviour” whose “footprints are on all paths” and some verbal elements like “depend, confer, the slender arm full of kindness.” The dead rather than death are honoured here. Other vocabulary implicating the meaning of honour and praise, or if permitted, a dirge-praise, wherein, typical of Akan dirges, the dead man’s name is coupled with the names of his ancestors whose achievements are enumerated through the techniques of praise-words, adjectives, verbs and nouns. In this poem, the motif of death is still very much explored, but in the dimension in which the dead is classified as a guardian, who is very much interested in the affairs of the living who depend on him. The

dead as a protector or death as a gateway for their enhancement of fortunes is discoverable in this poem.

Unlike the motif of death-revival, the motif of power is identified in the Nigerian (Igbo) poem, "Breaking Kola Nut" where the weak, supplicates before the super-being with alternating natures. The weak's gift also possesses alternate natures. Only this gift could make a super-person glad, for since "Every man has a price" – as it is said in *A Man for all Seasons*, it is possible that every super(natural)-being has his terms. If we examine the "concept of offering," we will find that it is universal to all religions and customs. It only takes different turns and variations, but the central principle and motive which are either for placation or devotion are the same. Power and offering contest for prominence in this poem. Other sub-motifs channel their meanings to these. Offering and sacrifice have a way of co-occurring. Sometimes, one could substitute for the other. When the speaker intones the vocative, "God the Creator," dignity, reverence and almightiness are evoked altogether. After several qualifications, he lets out his purpose: "It is KOLA I bring!/ It's all I can offer!" Alongside the offering and prayers he makes for himself and his well-wishers that they be blessed. But he must qualify for those blessings; hence, he says:

And you can judge;  
If I've ever touched the wife of a relation  
Or seen the nakedness of a sister;  
If I've ever stolen what belongs to any human being  
Or oppressed a widow or cheated an orphan;  
Or borne false witness, or spoken calumny;  
If I've killed any human being  
With knife or spear,  
Or arrow or rope,  
Or poison or witch-craft,  
If I've done any of these things,  
May this our land  
And the Mother Earth EAT ME!  
But if none of these is my guilt . . .

The blessings including deliverance from his enemies and evil-intending spirit via the invocation of the principle of Hindi *karma* and Greek *nemesis* and many others which he prays for and which must flow to him from the super-being. Thereafter, he breaks "the KOLA NUT". The exploration of the situation of offering, the offeror and the offeree, reveals to us that the offeror, who is also the inferior, must be grateful and meek, while the other who is willing to accept offerings and able to bless because his is stronger than and superior to the offeror, should be able to relish the offering.

So far, these *topoi*: offering, power, (dis)unity, death (or rebirth), love (discovery) and bravery (war) are found in generous measures and instances in various oral African literary poems and, as this article seeks to prove, abound in modern African fiction. Again, we must not forget that these poems are written in



colonial language(s) which made them to be accessible besides the weightier fact that their original equivalents are not available. This lack of the original or the loss of the original in the translation into the language of colonial legacy has an overall effect on African literary tradition.

### 3. The *Arche* and Their Referents

From *archetype* we derive the term '*arche*' which suits the reference to earlier appearances of *topoi* in a literary tradition. The *topoi*, or motifs above – “recurrent poetic concepts or formulas,” have transcended time and space, as ancients and *arches*, to emerge play out themselves through further recreations, in modern African texts as possible *referents* (Abrams 1988:110). The *arches*, the very first serial points of the emergence of *topoi* of today, are related to *topoi*. For a case in point, the *topos* of cycle in “The Fulani Creation Story” is the operating principle of civilization and modernity which intones and connects those other oral poems in which further elucidations in modern African literary texts as we have it today is offered. This connection is in implicit ways.

Beside transcending time and space, the *topoi* in the above poems possess peculiar features of universality which are not met in the mainstream of African literature, but also in world literary traditions earning what Frye has termed, a “*characteristica universalis*” (Frye 1969, 19). For example, the *topos* of offering – acceptance/rejection of an offering – is which is found in Ayi Kwei Arma’s *The Beautiful Ones are Not Yet Born* is what elongates the plot. Although, in this case, it is not the offering of a gift to the supernatural and protector by the help-seeker and worshipper we find in “Breaking the Kolanut”, it is an offering to induce one who holds and controls a superior and beneficial booty or advantage into passing by a rule that hitherto hindered, the ‘lesser’ from having ‘abundant’ life. The man’s refusal of allurements makes him experience the leas of life and puts him in straits. At another instance, a very important but minute prop to the speedy progress in the tragic drive in Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart* can be seen to be offering. Okonkwo has to offer one thing or the other to the gods, the elders, the people, and his future in order to make progress in life and belong to the community of his forebears. Another is the offering of respect to the dead during the burial of Ogbuefi Ezeudu, the acclaimed oldest man in the clan who merits it. It is in this circumstance, at the burial of an old son of the clan, that Okonkwo murders unknowingly a young son of the clan. This is not really like offering kola nut to God as we find in “Breaking the Kola Nut”, but there is a seeming similarity in that each is believed to dwell in the same region of the unseen, an after-here, that is accessible only through death. Moreover, Okonkwo’s greatness is not got from nothing. If it were so, it would be no greatness as his father’s case was. But he offers his strength, vision, ingenuity and discipline to achieve it. So are all the elders that have got a title or two in Umuofia. In fact, this *topos* of offering is the symmetrical element that divides the society in two: the privileged and the less privileged.

The same *topos* in *Things Fall Apart* is in participation with the concept of *chi*, a kind of unseen but principally conscious entity that wields influence and

power over the individual in Okonkwo's world. The power of the *chi* implicates the *topos* of power starting from ancient oral literary culture to the modern textual enunciations of same. As is discoverable in the "Salute to the Elephant", the display of power by the elephant evoking awe and disgust and the "rough beast" is a "figure" that still pervades African literature especially in the Nigerian novel where "we can trace his movements" (Anohu and Akwanya 2001:153). "Anarchy is the consequence of the appearance of the rough beast" which lets loose blood and drowns "all ceremonies of innocence. Finally, and perhaps most crucially, is its impact on the consciousness of the individuals who survive its passage. The worst become conformed in their ways, while the best are shaken and undermined" (153).

In "Salute to the Elephant", this *topos* of power further elaborates itself in Isidore Okpewho's *The Last Duty*, Festus Iyayi's *Heroes*, Amadi Elechi's *Sunset in Biafra*, Mezu's *Behind the Rising Sun*, Soyinka's *Season of Anomy*, Nkem Nwankwo's *My Mercedes Benz is Bigger than Yours*, Gabriel Okara's *The Voice*, Achebe's *A Man of the People*, *Anthills of the Savannah*, *Arrow of God*, *Things Fall Apart* and even lately, Okpewho's *Tides*, La Guma's *A Walk in the Night*, Chimamanda Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* and *Half of a Yellow Sun*. These are novels whose discourse formations are colonialism, war, freedom-fighting and the apartheid. An *archetypal* example of this, outside Nigeria's literary borders is Alan Paton's *Cry, Beloved Country*. In these works, the individual is subjected to a type of Athol Fugard's psychosomatic trauma of the experiences they go through. The same ethos and *topos* touch on Ngugi's *The River Between*, Peter Abraham's *Mine Boy*, *A Wreath for Udomo*, John M. Coetzee's *Life and Times of Michael K*. The last is the story of a man's physical and psychological journey through a country at war.

Depending on another different reading, we can also see the *topoi* of love, unity and bravery though in varying degrees in the above mentioned texts and in those that follow. *Cry, the Beloved Country*, involves the unifying power that love possesses and the divisive force of fear. In fact, Norrdge noted that sexual love could form both a language and strategy with which to explore and contest violence (2012:18-39). The gallant traversing of the *topoi* of the rough beast through colonialism and bravery through the Mau Mau still dominates Kenya's literature. Its most powerful and lyrical voice is Ngugi's. Through him, all the other motifs (of unity, sequence, death and rebirth and love and discovery) are played out in a complex mode of inexplicability and contention where they could be seen as representatives. In *Weep Not, Child*, there is a complicity of members of the victims' group for want of gain or other privileges as they yield to the services of the figure of the rough beast, the figure of power, in order to torment and traumatise the oppressed already held captive by the beast. Jacobo, as an instrument of oppression, unites with the settlers for good in order to disrupt the shift away from the *status quo*, while to his family, he is an instrument of provision.

The exploits of the rough beast – a preeminent image of power at the service of the *topoi* of bravery and power evoking the paradoxical concepts of awe

and disgust, death and presence, with discursive structures as sediments tilting towards current political and social problems of a group is evident in a number of contemporary African writings. Among them are prominent one like *Songs in A Time of War* (1985) by Nigeria's Ken Saro-Wiwa; *The Fate of Vultures and Other Poems* (1990) by a Nigerian, Tanure Ojaide; and *The Graveyard Also Has Teeth* (1980) by Sierra Leonean Syl Cheney-Coker. Somali's Nuruddin Farah wrote of a family's struggles, thorns and thistles before and during the civil war that broke out in the novels: *Maps* (1986), *Gifts* (1992), and *Secrets* (1998). In the end, all these *topoi* are found to be linked to the *topos* of unity in the "Swahili poem," the *topos* where the powerful and powerless, the rich and the poor, the oppressed and the oppressor, in their apartness and incapacity to unite, always "join hands across the shroud" against their intentions. They achieve unity in death which they could not be achieved while alive.

Modern Lusophone African literature, mainly in poetry, combines echoes on such issues as identity, ethnicity, alienation, and language. One discovers ethnicity in the Zulu oral poem, "Ndela, Son of Sompisi" as the root cause of favouritism, corruption, tribalism, mediocrity and wars. Ndela, through whom the *topos* of bravery and war emanates, could not have gone to fight another tribe either in defence or in attack if he was not operating on this divisive principle of ethnicity. Examples of such works where we find this *topos* are those of two Angolan writers: Paula Travares, *Ritos de Passagem (Rites of Passage)*, 1985) and Ana de Santana Sabores, *Odores & Sonho (Flavours, Scents & Reveries)*, 1985). Other writers whose works exemplify this trend include Mozambique's Helder Muteia, author of *Verdades dos mitos (Truths of Myths)*, 1988), and Eduardo White, in *O país de mim (The Country That Comes from Me)*, 1989).

A novel by the Cameroonian Victor Beti Benanga, *Le miroir bleu (The Blue Mirror)*, 1990) telling the story of a man who trades a rural life of farming for unemployment in the big city implicates the remote and background underpinnings of the *topos* of cycle as found in the "Fulani Creation Story." He returns to the very first lap or stage of his ascent that he left behind. Here, his progress is self-nullifying one. With his second novel, *Le pauvre Christ de Bomba* (1956; *The Poor Christ of Bomba*, 1971), Mongo Beti established himself as an important Francophone (French-language) writer as he posits the *topos* of power through mild religion and colonialism in contrast to the severity that accompanies that of the rough beast. What started as an inspiring awe, turns out, at the very last, to be disgustful, with the complicity of the missionary in initiating, perpetuating and entrenching colonialism despite their good intentions. This *topos* implicates the missionary's upward to the colonisers and downward movement to the colonised.

From the terse and often painful and humiliating humour of Beti, we identify great passion, sometimes anger in most of Brutus' poetry. Though always restrained and controlled toward horizons of injustice, they implicate the *topos* of power or the weak before the super-being traceable to an increasingly austere precision from his prison experience. Brutus's other collections include *Poems from Algiers* (1970), *A Simple Lust* (1973), *China Poems* (1975), *Salutes and Censures* (1984), and *Airs and Tributes* (1989). The above *topos* is echoed too in

Es'kia Mphahlele's *Down Second Avenue* (1959), his second and most famous work. But unlike very many of the works where this *topos* reigns as we have it in the "Salute to the Elephant," the confronted is not overcome as a victim, but rather within that stringent atmosphere of suffocation, pain and immeasurable trauma, he comes out triumphant having survived it. Mphahlele's novel *Father Come Home* (1984) is concerned with echoes of the suffering caused by the Natives Land Act in the hands of those with whom power is a sly weapon possession.

That all these *topoi* are seen and can be traced from these modern African texts cannot be said to be much of a success as generally presumed. It is true that only very few representative texts are mentioned here, but one also dares to state that the defects which African oral literary culture carry in themselves are consequent upon the absence of a systematic written representation of thought in much of Africa. The poems treated here are translated. Acknowledging that a translation gives us "a new understanding of the original, a *performance* of it", it is also "a performance, and an occasion for a new encounter with the translator's language" (Akwanya 2005:11). It does harm to texts and the original voice thereby making the theoretic attempt to remedy the challenge seen much like a mirage. A cursory look at them will inform us that they are from varied backgrounds and languages. Some of them like the Lusophone poems have been translated twice: once from the tribal language into Portuguese and later into English. And who knows, it could, later on, be translated, for those who are interested in them amongst the French-speaking Africans, into French, at a third remove.

#### **4. "The Eye that Looks Down Shall See the Nose"**

The above statement credited to Christopher Okigbo invokes a searching idiom of introspection, retrospection and prospectation. The eye that looks down is a careful eye – certain and prospective. It is this type of an eye that sees the future. Today, as we have it, was yesterday's future. The combination of yesterday, today and tomorrow makes history. History, an issue that is as aporetic as it is somewhat inexplicable, has memory at its service. It is so because time pulls it from behind the instant, the moment. With our experience of the *topoi* of the African oral idiom present in modern African texts, or what Ricoeur terms "a relation of indebtedness which assigns to the people of the present the task of repaying their due to people of the past" (1988, :157), we now have a sure ground to project into the future of African literary works. These *topoi* have acquired power in a most vibrant and resourceful manner. Within the magnitude of their power, they in turn have the potential of enacting, re-enacting, and configuring literary culture and history, and they are at their service, either by the individual writer or by a group's literary tradition, as well as always in serious contention in wanting to "to be thought" (Ricoeur, 1981b:288). Although we need not stress too much the role of time in bringing this to pass, we must acknowledge the fact of these *topoi*'s complicity with modern African works.

With what African scholars have achieved so far, can it be said that much has been done; that the future is bright especially by perpetrating Europophone

forms through the European idiom of language and forms? The journey was not all rosy in spite of their successes. For instance, it was concerning the immediate past of African writers and their writing, say in the 90s, that Achebe referred to as a time when “it seemed as if the thing was drying up” unknown “that it was waiting for something to happen” (2008:10). This was the interregnum – between 1980 and 2005 (which marked the emergence of Chimamanda and her horde) – within which momentum was gathered and the artistic eventually launched itself as practically evidenced in works like *Purple Hibiscus*, *Yellow Yellow*, *Dizzy Angel*, all of Ben Okri’s, Ezeigbo’s and many other new generation authors’ works. All of them have given us a glimpse at some visions of troubled psyches and irredeemable selves through this (ill-fated?) medium of expression that African writers have used for some time with great success(es) by earning world acclaims.

Granted that much has been done, those that have earned us recognition globally like Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka, Ben Okri, Pius Okigbo, Festus Iyayi, Niyi Osundare, and now, Adichie Chimamanda are still being mentioned and recycled in literary media all over the world. The Nobel, Man Booker, Booker and Commonwealth Prizes have all been won and more are still coming. Achebe as a person has attracted more unprovoked publicity than all. In November, 2007, he won the Man Booker Prize for his lifetime achievement in fiction writing beating a “formidable shortlist that included Philip Roth, Salman Rushdie, V.S. Naipaul, Ian McEwan” and so on (28). Naipaul was a former Nobel Prize winner; we can appreciate the enormity of the award. He became the first African, to win the American National Arts Club Medal of Honours for Literature in November, 2007 and many more garlands hang not only on the neck of Achebe, but also of many other African literary luminaries.

But, so far, they cannot be said to have succeeded in the real sense of the word “success”. The reason is because all these were achieved through the addictive resort to the medium of English while maintaining the navel-strings that linked them to the traditional through the transfer of the *topoi* and *mythoi*, from the local and indigenous systems to the Europhone forms. The Europhone forms have really accentuated the international recognition they got. In ascending this much, they have also served as a classic example of the zero sum game where what we thought we have gained, hitherto, is equal to [if not much less than] that which we have lost. By this, I mean the gross underdevelopment of Africa’s autochthonous literary tradition and language as they are being conditioned to serve and meet the taste of global expectations through Europhone forms and languages.

Today, literature in indigenous languages and the desire for them are almost lost – a situation only translation of Africa’s [or even European] classics can remedy. Even in this respect, a conundrum of factors is impeding. For instance, the unappreciable accomplishments of the “relatively little-known” Yoruba novel informed why Emenyonu (Gates, Jr. 1992), a year before the above description, bemoans the squalid state of indigenous literary works thus: “Literature in indigenous languages is the most neglected literature in Africa today. . . . Nowhere in Africa is the retardation of indigenous literature more felt than in Nigeria” (1991, 33). He specifically mentions “literature in the Igbo language” as that which

had great prospect but has been “the most hampered and the most neglected of the three major Nigerian languages” even when “it had as good a foundation as literature in Hausa and Yoruba” (34). No one needs doubt what the future hold for indigenous literatures given the present lukewarm attitude towards it. However, Emenyonu is optimistic the table would turn if proper attention is given it in Africa, using Nigeria as model, through favourable Government intervention, worthy recognition in University curricula and the support of the “development of literature in as many written indigenous languages as possible” (35). Nigeria could still “capture great world attention in literary output” (34). At this level, indigenous authors may have the opportunity of proving to be “far more significant to contemporary African literature than what has so far been experienced with writers in English” (35). But who will begin it, when will it begin and how? Prof Chinua Achebe was reported, sometime in 1999, to have begun a project of translating great classics of the Western world into Igbo. I do not know what became of it and I also cannot tell the level of support his idea drew from those who mattered. Perhaps, no encouragement or sponsorship was given and so that dream is dying or is dead.

Unless we do a deliberate turnaround for the forthcoming generations, it remains to be challenged that they would continue tag along the track already charted by such literary elders like “Achebe, whose choice to write in English and in Western form has been very conscious” (Sugnet 1996, 89). Perhaps, a change is not foreseeable because it is already a colonial legacy, “one of the major maybe the top problems that colonial rule has left for us” (2008, 10). And I daresay literatures in indigenous languages are done for, since the notion of *scribere* will continue to provoke the polemic of representation like the issue of double audience. I have in mind, Lindfors, when, in paraphrasing Achebe, says that the English language will have to pay [and will continue to pay] the price of shedding some of its autochthonous features as it is conditioned to represent indigenous ideas in African literature (2002, 173).

The future of African literary culture today, especially as these Europhone linguistic factors linger unyoked, but rather, is accepted, given it more international acceptance, one can affirm that though it would be ‘better’ because the scholars and writers are great and good (Achebe 2008, 10). But then, this is going to be realized at the altar of the exclusion of the enrichment of our indigenous languages and the consequent deprivation of the resources with which to renew them.

## 5. Conclusion

I will conclude with a prediction or an optimism John Reed and Clive Wake made in 1964 concerning the future of poetry and, by extension, African literature which I consider as having been deflated or cut short:

Whether the future of African poetry lies mainly with the vernacular poetry or whether it lies in the development of an African tradition in French poetry and English poetry we do not know. But for many years, it is probable that some poets

will continue writing in the African languages, and some in the main European languages which are used in Africa for administration, education and international purposes . . . imitation is sometimes of African and not European traditions, and there are poets who are really adapting African vernacular literature into a European language (1964:1-2).

This optimism is dual: the indigenous literature thriving in parallel continuum with the Europhone sort. Only a section of that prediction has been fulfilled – that of writing in European languages, the other is nowhere – not even its signs are there. This is where we are. Today is that “future” of African poetry that they referred to; who knows, tomorrow will be that of today. And when tomorrow comes, when we get to that future which would be our today and from the manifestation of our literature based on our present proper grasps of our literary trend today, shall we not be worse off?

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## A BLEND OF SOUND AND IMAGE - THE MUSIC VIDEO

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**Abstract:** The focus of this paper is first of all the issue of authorship in music videos, with reference to the division of tasks between the musician and the director. Secondly, a non-narrative musical piece is analysed - The Chemical Brothers' *Star Guitar* - in relation to the narrative video created by Michel Gondry to enrich its meanings and better convey the intended message of the musicians.

**Keywords:** *authorship, musical message, video message*

### 1. Introduction

Literary critical studies have constantly been holding authorship theories under scrutiny, from voices hailing the paramount role an author has to theoretical studies committing the author to invisibility. Roland Barthes boldly denounced the limiting status of the author in the interpretation of a text, stating the necessity of abandoning the creative voice entirely: "The birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the Author" (qtd. in Caughie 1981:213).

Michael Foucault distinguished himself from Barthes by tackling the problem from another angle. By separating the indicative and designative functions of the author's name, he investigated the discourses surrounding and attached to the author's name. Extending his theories of discourses from *The Order of Things* and *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Foucault considered author as a product of discursive practices, instead of a creative subject. "In undertaking an internal and architectonic analysis of a work and in delimiting psychological and biographical references, suspicions arise concerning the absolute nature and creative role of the subject." (qtd. in Caughie 1981:290)

The author of the text may not be obvious especially when dealing with multimedia texts. Today, we commonly recognize the director as the author of a movie. This idea of authorship largely originated, and was promoted, by the influential French film magazine *Cahiers du Cinéma*. Contributors such as Éric Rohmer, François Truffaut, Jacques Rivette, Luc Moullet and André Bazin wrote influential film critiques on the politics of authorship. Many of these film critics later became filmmakers in the French New Wave, a status that gave them the possibility to experiment their ideas on authorship in their filmic works. Since then, the director has been inscribed with a paramount role in the production of a movie. John Caughie explained the debate on authorship after the introduction of semiotics and psychoanalysis:

The intervention of semiotics and psychoanalysis into the field of film theory has tended to shatter the unity of the author, scattering fragments over the whole terrain, calling into question the possibility of a theory of the author which is not

also a theory of ideologies, of discourses, of commodities and, crucially, of the subject... The author, rather than standing behind the text as a source, becomes a term in the process of reading or spectating” (1981:200).

Janet Staiger turned Judith Butler’s studies on speech-act theory into performative statements in filmic works. Through the repetition of speech within the discursive system, the statement itself becomes effective. Directors can make performative statements repeatedly within the production of movies. This is because the role of the director itself requires the director to make authorial decisions: “In films, firms hire directors to make these choices, and the division of labor places them into a work structure with specific authority to make authoring statements” (2003:50). These statements are illustrated through the *mise-en-scène* of a film. If a director can repeatedly make performative statements in his work, then the authorial traces can be identified by critical observation. “What an author *is*, is the repetition of statements” (2003:51).

David Bordwell also illustrated how this attention to style was pioneered in the works of Andrew Sarris: “One useful way to sharpen the critic’s sense of stylistic difference is to find a common problem that two directors solve in different ways... Craft conditions create shared problems; directorial personalities solve them in ways that reveal subtle difference of purpose and attitude” (Tybjerg 60 qting. Bordwell 2001:171). By combining Staiger and Sarris’ ideas, authorship can be identified as various directors’ method of solving the same problem through the practice of repetitive statements, which also allows them to distinguish themselves from their peers.

## **2. Who Makes the Music Videos?**

Since all music videos are made upon a preexisting song, does this mean the musician would have the authorial power in videos? In the essay “Authorship and Point-of-View Issues in Music Video”, Gary Burns argues that music video is generally a director’s medium, instead of a musician’s medium. In a music video production, musicians and record companies might have certain visual imagery or concepts, however they usually do not have the ability to turn those concepts into a music video. Even though there are some versatile artists who are able to create in both audio and visual medium, most musicians do not know how to make videos (Burns 1990:175).

This is also a practical problem of division of labour. Musicians can focus on their musical work while other artists, such as graphic designers and music videos directors, can worry about the artworks in other medium (e.g. CD cover and music videos). To support his argument of treating music video as a director’s medium, Burns observed that “relatively few musicians seem to have much interest in their video beyond a general concern with image” (1990:176) and for some musicians, they even turn themselves away from videos. During the time Burns published his article, it was true that some musicians, as well as fans, disliked the use of music videos. Throughout the early and mid 80s, some die-hard rock fans

considered music video as an “intrusion upon the authenticity of the musical experience and the authority of the musicians” (Cook 1998:129). Yet, this argument is less applicable to today’s music scene, as no popular musician can turn him/herself away from music videos. Unfortunately, music videos are often of a higher quality than the song they are meant to support, with audiences remembering the former rather than the latter.

Although musicians might be more aware of the significance of music videos, only a handful of musicians have turned into music videos directors. It is more common for musicians to expand their roles vertically, acting as the composer, producer and singer at the same time. Similarly in the film industry, screenwriters and actors are more likely to expand their roles vertically to become directors, with models like Charlie Chaplin, Woody Allen, Clint Eastwood or Mel Gibson. This is because artists can gain greater creative freedom in their corresponding mediums by expanding their roles vertically. It is much harder to find examples of musicians turning into directors and vice versa, as expanding roles horizontally would be an attempt in an entirely different medium.

Musicians cannot expand their freedom in musical creation by turning into music video directors that easily. Even for a musician with such a strong visual persona, Lady Gaga has been unable to obtain (complete) authority in her music videos due to her role as musician. In the “Born This Way” video, Lady Gaga used photographer Nick Knight as the director. Even though Gaga was generally satisfied with the result, there were moments where Gaga and her creative partner, choreographer Laurieann Gibson, felt their ideas were not executed as desired (Bangs, Gondry 2003).. Hence, in the following video for the song “Judas”, Lady Gaga and Gibson decided to direct the music video by themselves.

If musicians want to obtain authority in the making of music videos they must acquire the role of the director. With generally smaller budgets in music video, directors are required to be involved in more aspects of the productions. They are also encouraged to experiment with techniques and styles because the financial risk is lower. This nature of production has granted them greater freedom and authority in the production. Hence, it is actually easier for directors to make repetitive performative statements in music video than in movies. In terms of ascribing authorship, the evidence showing music video as a director’s medium is much stronger than as a musician’s medium. Since promoting the “Behind-the-scene” personnel would not increase the sales of records, there is no need to identify the director, or anyone other than the musicians (Burns 1990:175). Similarly, in terms of advertising function, any mention of the director is considered as useless information and hence discarded in the promoting the video. Discarding of the director is by no means a major drawback in studying authorship in music videos. As the name of the directors are not shown in the videos, only the industry insiders can know who directed which video. It is true that with the birth of online encyclopedia one can easily obtain a complete list of works from any director and watch the video from video sharing websites such as youtube.com and vimeo.com.

### 3. Michel Gondry – A Narrative Video for a Non-Narrative Song

Since music video is a director's medium, if one is going to study authorship, one has to turn to the work of a particular director. To name a few, David Fincher, Jonathan Glazer, Michael Bay, Anton Corbijn, Michel Gondry and Spike Jonze are some of the well-known music video directors who directed feature films in the later part of their careers and are best known for these.

Michel Gondry's music videos combine visual effects and *mise-en-scène* and twist them into dreamy worlds. Early trademarks of his style are apparent in his early work for his band, *Oui Oui*, as well as in his frequent collaborations with the singer Björk.<sup>5</sup> After making an abundant amount of music videos and commercials, Gondry gave vent to his creativity in feature films, *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* (2004) being a well-known movie with a strong critical and commercial impact.

Direct links between music and image are created not only showing the layer where music and images are in synch, but also suggesting new meanings acquired in the process. Gondry has shaped a new audiovisual relationship within the gap of visual and audio contents, which would serve as evidence of how music videos obtain their autonomy from the pre-existing music.

Such a technique is employed by many other musicians who produce electronic music, such as Fatboy Slim, The Chemical Brothers and Aphex Twin. Different from popular artists in other genres, musicians who produce electronic music rarely appear in music videos. This is because techno music producers do not have a technique to perform visually. Their talents lie in the selection of beats, mixing, and sampling of music instead of playing instruments. The process of producing music cannot provide similar visual excitement as playing a guitar or singing a song.

As a general rule, music videos do not embody traditional narratives. Unlike movies, the role of music in music videos is different:

If the intent of music-video imagery lies in drawing attention to the music... it makes sense that the image ought not to carry a story or plot in the way a feature film might. Otherwise, video-makers would run the risk of our being so engaged with the actions of the characters or so concerned with impending events that we would be pulled outside the realm of the video and become involved with other narrative possibility (Vernallis 2004:17).

Walter Ong once argued, "Sight isolates, sound incorporates. Whereas sight situates the observer outside what he views, at a distance, sound pours into the hearer" (qtd. in Vernallis 2004:175). Unlike watching a film, where we can focus on an external screen, we listen to music in a more indulging way. "Phenomenologists have claimed that one of the unique properties of music and the listener is the way that the listener and music become intertwined" (Vernallis 2004:111) The inability to separate ourselves from music makes us treat the act of

listening to music as an internal experience, while watching a film an external experience.

Michel Gondry extended the concept of responsive imagery to the French countryside in the video of “Star Guitar”. Working with an ambient electronic mix from The Chemical Brothers, Gondry composed another sensory symphony with a subtle tone. The objective view of a train passenger becomes a subjective musical journey, which takes audiences to a dreamy experience of hyper-reality.

### **3.1. *The Chemical Brothers – the Band, the Style***

Formed in 1991, The Chemical Brothers band are the electronic music duo that pioneered the music style called “big beat”. The band consists of Ed Simon and Tom Rowlands, who met in a history course when the two were studying in Manchester University. Their use of heavy synthesizer and break beats have inspired other big beat musicians such as Fatboy Slim, The Prodigy and The Crystal Method. Similar to other electronic artists in the same era, The Chemical Brothers rarely appear in their music videos. If they are appearing in videos, they often only make cameo appearances, such as being the truck drivers in “The Boxer” or as computer wallpaper in “Believe”. There is greater room for different music video directors to fabricate ideas with their music producing innovative music videos such as “Hey Boy, Hey Girl”, “Salmon Dance” and “Galvanize”.

### **3.2. *Star Guitar - the Song***

In their first collaboration on “Let Forever Be”, Gondry and The Chemical Brothers left their audiences in awe with groundbreaking visual effects in combining dream and reality. The video attracted media attention and is often considered as one of the best music videos of The Chemical Brothers. Gondry presented a seemingly natural, calm scenery to audiences. The song is sampled from an acoustic guitar melody from David Bowie’s song “Starman” hence its title “Star Guitar”. By slowing down the pace and using the synthesizer heavily “Star Guitar” becomes an instrumental number which provides a hazy, pacifying feeling to audiences.

To describe the music video in short, it is a showcase of the countryside and suburban sceneries on a train ride, backed by the music from The Chemical Brothers. There is no narrative, character or dancing in the video. Every object exists in the video for a very short spell, on and off the screen within a few seconds. If audiences watch the music video on mute, they can easily consider the video as unedited footage of a train ride. In order to analyse this music video, the nature of the song will first be illustrated.

The pace of the song is steady and melodies are often alternating between crescendo and decrescendo. Besides the bridge section where the vocal is introduced, audiences can hardly notice the changes in music sections. The window scenery of an ordinary train ride is what Gondry employs in order to represent this spacious and relaxing feeling of the music.

“The types of shots used in videos do not just reflect sonic processes, but they also suggest a listening subject as much as a viewing one... The camera’s

perspective often suffices to imply a listening subject” (Vernallis 2004:44). Although there is no narrative to explain the listening subject, audiences can interpret the subject from visual cues. The scenery on the screen is moving from right to left at a constant speed and a railway is visible for most of the video. Towards the end of the video, reflections of the train interior can be seen, which further confirm the listening subject as a train passenger. The peaceful listening experience resonates with the spacious sceneries of countryside, oil factory, suburban neighbourhood and river:

Gondry merges the sensation of spectatorship in both forms within a television context with *Star Guitar*, offering a variation of the ‘music/movement experience’ in the suggestion that the viewer is on the train listening to the Chemical Brothers song on a set of headphones (Fidler 2007:256).

With this soothing overall atmosphere, discovering the repetitive rhythmic audiovisual relationship is trickier. The static objects in “*Star Guitar*” reflect the beats of the music directly. The elements in the landscape, such as electric poles, oil storage tanks, chimneys, houses, oil trains and bridges, are all organized to match the beats of certain instruments in the song. For example, the appearance of the electric poles and huts matches the sound of the bass drum; the appearance of each person in the train station matches the singing of each word.

These audiovisual relationships are not obvious because the camera does not focus on any individual object. However, once the audience has discovered one clue of connection between music and image on the screen, they will start looking for more linkages between the two. The revelation of hidden linkages provides a pleasurable experience to the audience. As a result, the audience will be encouraged to watch the video again and again in order to reveal more connections between the two.

As the music video cinematographer Daniel Pearl has pointed out,

Videos have to be very complex in structure, because the average viewer sees them 20, 30, 40 or more times. We look for ways to photograph the unphotographable and hold onto the attention of our audience, not for just one viewing of a video, but repetitive viewing of the same video (2004:26).

The subtle linking of image to music encourages audiences to watch the music video repeatedly. Besides the direct rhythmic relationship between the visual and audio experience, the video creates a new meaning on another level. From the first glance of the video, audiences will recognize the video content as the footage of a ‘real’ train ride. However, during the course of watching the video they will start to notice the peculiarities in it. From 3:05 to 3:09, a series of small huts appear at the side of the railway which is unusually packed. Another example would be in the river section (2:29-2:53) where the same bridge appears on the screen every two seconds. These peculiar spots would have been rare, if not impossible, in real

life sceneries. Due to these peculiarities, audiences are forced to question the authenticity of this footage of the train ride.

The two lines that make up the lyrics in the song give further hints that the seemingly 'real' sceneries can be influenced or altered.

“You should feel what I feel  
You should take what I take”

With their strong connections with the rave party scene, The Chemical Brothers play a style of music often interpreted as being related to the use of psychedelic drugs. Many would interpret the above lyrics as a persuasion of drug taking. Yet, these two lines are actually equivocal and could be taken as a metaphorical reference to music instead of drugs. To The Chemical Brothers, music is exactly the reason why they do not need drugs. Tom Rowland has explained in an interview, “Music is the thing for me. It's almost like making music so people don't have to take drugs... I love it when people say, 'Wow, that made me feel like I was out of my mind and I wasn't on anything.’” They would like their music to become a substitute for drugs, which can influence people and provide psychedelic feelings. By using the terminologies like “feel” and “take”, The Chemical Brothers relate attributes of drugs and music. Music becomes something that one can “take” and produce psychedelic effects. This idea is echoed in the video as well.

Under the influence of drugs, our perceptions of reality are distorted. Similarly, the reality in the video is distorted under the influence of music. When audiences realize the connections between the image and music they will also realize that they are watching a manipulated reality. This realization has provided extra complexity to the structure of video. Essentially, watching “Star Guitar” video is an experience of hyperreality and the realization of it.

To begin with, Gondry listened to the song sections repeatedly and turned them into to a musical score. He noted the beats of each instrument on graph paper with great precision. Unlike the common staff notation that “specifies in exhaustive detail what might be termed the digital aspects of pitch and rhythm” (Cook 268), he noted the rhythm and volume, but omitted the pitch. Gondry has put the emphasis of the video upon characteristics like repetitions and magnitude, at the expense of other characters like pitches. The resulting ‘natural’ train ride is a product of computer graphics. Gondry took the train between Nîmes and Valence ten times and filmed the sceneries with a DV camera. His brother, Oliver Gondry, then used the resulting footage to recreate the sceneries according to the musical score. The result is an arbitrary representation of an ideal train ride instead of a reference to real life experience.

The comfortable, pleasant train ride, which serves as an ideal environment for experiencing the song, is later discovered as a human manipulation. This hyperreal nature of the video does not reduce any real impact to the audiences. The revelation provokes real feelings and raises real questions. It allows audiences to question their seemingly objective view of the external world, the influential nature of music and the intricate interactions between music and their perceptions.

#### 4. Conclusion

M. Gondry turned an ordinary train ride into a musical journey. He masked the connections between the visual and audio experience with the mundane scenery of the French countryside. Instead of passively watching a music video, audiences are invited to participate in this game he designed. By repeated viewings, audiences can discover the relationships between audio and visual imagery and interpret their discoveries.

The video becomes a direct response to the musical contents. Gondry highlights the musicality of visual cues and alters our listening experience. Instead of listening to the song as a complete, intact soundscape, the patterns, structures, and even interactions of different instruments can be discovered. This direct response on screen also leaves a trail for the sound, which inverts the roles of sight and sound. The corresponding objects remain on the screen even after the sound has faded away. With prolonged visual impact, the effect of music can be enriched. At first sight, the visual imageries parallels the musical arrangements. In the underlying level, new meanings are created through the complementary nature of the two media. Our perception of music has undoubtedly been altered and enriched by the power of music videos to such an extent that further critical insight is needed on how and why music videos are made.

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# ORIENTALISING THE OCCIDENT? PORTRAYALS OF THE WELSH IN 'THE INDIAN DOCTOR'

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*Abstract:* This paper seeks to analyse the portrayal of the Welsh characters in the popular 2010 BBC television comedy drama *The Indian Doctor*

*Keywords:* celticism, India, Orientalism, postcolonialism

## 1. Introduction

This paper seeks to analyse the portrayal of the Welsh characters in the popular 2010 BBC television comedy drama *The Indian Doctor*. The series, which is set in the 1960s focuses on the experiences of an Indian doctor and his wife in the Welsh mining village of Trefelin. It is argued here that, perhaps surprisingly, it is the Welsh, rather than the Indian characters, who are primarily Orientalised in the series.

Orientalist-type attitudes to the Welsh have, however, a long history, with roots stretching at least as deep as the twelfth century, and can best be understood in the context of a broader Celtic Orientalism, or Celticism, focused on the countries of the so-called 'Celtic Fringe' of the Western British Isles, encompassing Ireland and Scotland as well as Wales.

Such attitudes both villainised and romanticised the Welsh, portraying them as rural, backward, passionate and depraved, in contrast to the supposedly urban, modern, rational and sophisticated English. These stereotypes, as this paper aims to emphasise in the case of *The Indian Doctor*, have survived into the twenty-first century in film and television portrayals of Welsh characters.

## 2. The Welsh as 'Other': Quasi-Orientalist Images of a (Supposedly) Celtic People

The application of Orientalist-type discourse to the Welsh, one of the geographically most Occidental of European peoples may, at first sight, seem strange. The issue of whether the Welsh were ever colonised, and thus the debate over if they are a postcolonial people, is a controversial one, not least within Wales itself (ap Gareth 2009). While many academics argue that Wales was never colonised as such and thus cannot be considered postcolonial, others argue that it was indeed a colony. As postcolonial scholar Raymond Williams, himself a decisive influence on Said, argues, "To the extent that we are a people, we have been defeated, colonised, penetrated, incorporated" (Williams, 2003:9).

In spite of the ambiguity over Wales' postcolonial nature, it can be argued that attitudes similar to Orientalist ones have been, and perhaps continue to be widespread within Europe itself. As Lilley, for instance, argues, 'Othered' relations have also existed within Europe, and over a much longer period of time than Orientalism (2002:21). In the case of Britain, such attitudes have been focused on the so-called 'Celtic fringe' of the Western British Isles, namely Wales, Ireland and Scotland.

Regarding Orientalism, Said points out that: 'The Orient was almost a European invention, and had been since antiquity a place of romance, exotic beings, haunting memories and landscapes, remarkable experiences' (1978:1). In Said's view, then, Orientalism is a Western discourse for dominating, restructuring and having authority over the Orient (1995:3). As Jones argues, 'the sub-humanising of indigenous populations is, of course, a classic tactic of the coloniser' (2009:37). As Orientalism essentially originates out of the need to establish the Other, then the Oriental can also be defined in opposition to the European: if the European is powerful, masculine, rational, virtuous and mature the Oriental is by necessity powerless, feminine, depraved and childlike (Yeh 2000). Thus, the depiction of the Oriental as inferior, as well as solidifying the self-image of the European colonisers, served as a pretext for their colonisation

Similarly, the 'Celticist' view of the Celt was as 'pre-modern, pre-Enlightenment, superstitious, supernatural, magical, occult, irrational or pre-rational' (Jones 2009:35). Like the 'Orientals', then, the Welsh, along with the other so-called 'Celts' of the UK, have been both villified and romanticised. Such attitudes have deep roots. In fact, according to Lilley (2002), twelfth-century Anglo-Norman English writers perceived the Welsh, together with the Irish, as inferior and peripheral, and lacking the civility of the Anglo-Normans themselves. Indeed Orientalist-type views of the Celts may date back to Classical accounts, according to which the Celts 'are always cast in opposition to the dominant cultural personae of Greece and Rome' (Piccini 1996:86).

By the nineteenth century, the supposedly primitive, rural 'Celtic fringe' had come to stand for the antithesis of Anglo-Saxon civilisation, with its masculine qualities of imperial vigour, industry and progress. By contrast, the Celts were depicted as 'timeless', barbaric, inferior and backward. Moreover, such differences, according to the theories of the time were thought to be inherent racial, rather than merely cultural, characteristics (James 1999:54-55).

According to the theories of the time, it was popular to link language with 'racial' characteristics. Said, for instance, notes that in the 19th century Orientalist view, language was thought to be intimately connected with racial and behavioural features. Thus, "it was assumed that if languages were as distinct from each other as the linguists said they were, then too the language users – their minds, cultures, and even their bodies – were different in similar ways" (1995:231- 233). In this way, then, the development of the Arab, for instance, was considered to have been held back by his language. According to a 1952 essay by the psychologist Shouby, 'The Influence of the Arabic Language on the Psychology of the Arabs' Arabic is characterised by 'General Vagueness of Thought', an 'Overemphasis on Linguistic

Signs' and 'Overassertion and Exaggeration', with devastating consequences for its speakers (Said 1978:320).

Again, similar to the depiction of 'Orientals' the Welsh have, over the centuries, been depicted as depraved and immoral; this has also often been construed as an effect of their language, and put forward as a reason for imposing English on them. A particularly notable incidence of this was the 1847 Report on Education in Wales, which saw the Welsh language itself as a vehicle of immorality, backwardness and obscurintasm (Williams 1985:208). This provoked a series of articles in the London press calling for the extinction of Welsh, which was seen as. According to a *Times* editorial on the Welsh language, quoted by Matthew Arnold in 1867;

The Welsh language is the curse of Wales. Its prevalence, and the ignorance of English have excluded, and even now exclude, the Welsh people from the civilisation of their English neighbours... If it is desirable that the Welsh should talk English, it is monstrous folly to encourage them in a loving fondness for their own language. Not only the energy and power, but the intelligence and music of Europe have come mainly from Teutonic sources, and this glorification of everything Celtic, if it were not pedantry would be sheer ignorance. The sooner all Welsh specialists disappear from the face of the earth, the better (qtd. in Sykes 2006: 41).

In addition, just as, in Said's view, the Orient participates in its own Orientalising (1995:325) it is interesting that similar attitudes to the Welsh language were, indeed, adopted by many of the Welsh themselves, particularly in education, where a form of cultural genocide was carried out (Williams 1985:246). As Williams points out, in early twentieth century Wales;

A significant number of Welsh school teachers, presumably suffering from a tribal self-contempt and a species of shame, saw it their duty not simply to introduce their students to the world of the English language, but to eradicate any trace of Welshness they could get their self-justifying hands on (1985:246).

However, the Celtic fringe was also an important inspiration for the nineteenth century Romantic movement. As Said argues, the roots of Orientalism can be found in Romanticism (1995:30). Simultaneously, Wales, and the other countries of the so-called 'Celtic twilight' fed the Romantic imagination in a manner similar to that of the Orient. This is also closely related to Matthew Arnold's idea of the 'passionate Celt'. The 'discovery' of the poems of 'Ossian' in 1760, allegedly an early Highland bard but actually modern pastiches by James McPherson, sparked a hunger for 'romantic Celtic antiquity' (James 1999:49). A comparable Welsh example was that of the nineteenth century poet Iolo Morgannwg, an eccentric though talented character who passed off his own poetry as newly discovered works of the medieval bard Dafydd ap Gwilym. As Gwyn Williams points out, Morgannwg was received enthusiastically by the English Romantic poets of the day who considered him an 'original bard out of their Celtic Twilight' (1985:104-5).

A connected idea was that of the Passionate Celt, as proposed by Matthew Arnold. As Arnold argued,

... no doubt the sensibility of the Celtic nature, its nervous exaltation, having something feminine in them, and the Celt is peculiarly disposed to feeling the spell of the feminine idiosyncrasy; he has an affinity to it; he is not far from his secret (1962, 311, qtd. in Cairns and Richards 1998:48).

However, the writings of Gerald of Wales, for instance, suggest that stereotypes of the Celt as emotional and highly strung may have much older roots. Writing in the twelfth century, Gerald suggests the following differences between the English and the Welsh (British) characters. In this case, Gerald uses the myth of Welsh descent from the Trojans to support his argument (1978: 245);

The Saxons and Germans derive their cold nature from the frozen polar regions which lie adjacent to them. In the same way the English, though they now live elsewhere, still retain their outward fairness of complexion and their inward coldness of disposition from what nature had given them earlier on. The Britons, on the contrary, transplanted from the hot and arid regions of the Trojan plain, keep their dark colouring, which reminds one of the earth itself, their natural warmth of personality and their hot temper...

While such Romantic ideas of the Celt may appear to be relatively sympathetic they also reinforced the idea that Celts were inferior by depicting them as feminine and emotional, rather than masculine and rational. In this way, then, while Arnold was a frequent visitor to the National Eisteddfod, an annual series of poetry and music competitions which celebrate Welsh culture, he was also able to wish for that culture's extinction (Jones 2009:37). As Arnold argued in 1867, 'The sooner the Welsh language disappears as an instrument of the practical, political, social life of Wales, the better; the better for England, the better for Wales itself' (1867:12).

Thus, as Terence Brown points out, the Welsh, like the rest of the Celtic fringe were 'habitually seen as 'a culture of the past', one without a future, one with a mystical other worldliness exiled from the mainstream of historical processes' (8). Such attitudes persisted, for instance, among travel writing on Wales into the 20th century, which tended to depict Wales as fundamentally 'different'; as a country romantically rooted in the past, and its people as emotional rather than rational, thus rather feminine (Gruffudd *et al*, 2000:598) in contrast to the industrial, modern, logical English. Writing in the 1930s, travel writer H.V. Morton, for instance, exemplifies this view;

Wales is a beautiful and romantic land ... Its people, like all Celts, are a queer, extreme mixture of idealism and materialism, of recklessness and caution, of vanity and humility. They are quick and sensitive, with a passion that is almost Latin (Morton, 1932: 268, qtd. in Gruffudd *et al*, 2000:598)

In this context, then, the romanticisation and simultaneous villification of the Welsh and their language from the nineteenth century can be seen as an example of the Enlightenment ‘doomed races’ theory which, as Jones argues, “simultaneously sentimentalises the colonised or disenfranchised while at the same time willing their extinction by figuring them as the regrettable but inevitable losers in the dispassionate dialectics of historical progress” (2009:37).

### **3. Images of Wales on Screen: The Case of *The Indian Doctor***

It has been argued that, like Orientalism itself (Said 1995: 286-287), ‘Celtic Orientalist’ attitudes have been reproduced in the world of film and television starting from the twentieth century. Jones (2009) argues that in early Hollywood horror films, including *The Wolf Man* (1941) and *The Old Dark House* (1932) Wales, like Ireland, was deployed as ‘a locus of Gothic weirdness’ in which the native Welsh were bestialised. These films represent the ‘Celtic fringe’ as ‘a world of colonial outposts, remote from one another, crumbling and falling in on themselves, under perpetual threat from the savage natives’ (Jones 2009:37-38).

Other films by English and American directors from the mid-20th century, including, among others, *How Green Was My Valley* (1941), *Proud Valley* (1940), *Valley of Song* (1953) and *A Run for your Money* (1949) also ‘Orientalised’ Wales. As Woodward argues, some of the images from these early films continue to fuel stereotypes of Wales and the Welsh today. *How Green Was My Valley* was ‘the film that spawned a million clichés about terraced streets and black faced miners, singing on their way home from the pit’ (Woodward 2006:54). As Woodward points out, although films such as *Twin Town* (1997) and *House of America* (1997) challenged these stereotypes in the 1990s other films, including some by Welsh directors including *An Englishman Who Went Up a Hill and Came Down a Mountain* (1995), *House!* (2000) and *Very Annie Mary* (2001) ‘continue a tradition of presenting an orientalised view of Wales’ by presenting Wales as a ‘geographically exoticised Other’ and the locals as ‘total buffoons’ or ‘innocent idiots’ (2006:57-58). As broadcaster John Humphreys complained in 1996;

We are defined in the English mind by our national caricature. The daftest caricature in the film director’s manual – coal dust covered men singing in perfect harmony as they trudge back to the cottages from the pit – may fade away now the pits have closed. But don’t bank on it ...And why must they all have IQs of 10 but be very very cunning? And why must half the characters sound as though they’re Peter Sellers imitating a doctor from Madras? (qtd. in Woodward 2006:56)

It is argued here that *The Indian Doctor* can be firmly placed within this tradition. At first sight, *The Indian Doctor* appears to represent a role-reversal in terms of Orientalist images in that, while the Indian characters are viewed as civilised and sophisticated, it is the European – in this case Welsh - characters who are depicted as uncivilised, weak and depraved. However, as has been argued above, the Orientalisation of the Welsh in cinema is nothing new, and can itself be

understood in the broader context of ‘Celtic Orientalism’ or ‘Celticism’ discussed in the first part of this paper.

*The Indian Doctor* focuses on the experiences of Dr. Prem Sharma and his wife Kamini, an Indian couple from a wealthy, urban background. Kamini in particular is from a well-to-do family, with connections to the British ruling class, including such figures as Lord Mountbatten, Lord Baden-Powell and Conservative politician Enoch Powell (episode 1). Following a family tragedy – the death of their daughter from meningitis – the couple seek to make a fresh start in Britain. Prem is recruited as one of the first wave of Indian doctors invited to Britain in the 1960s as part of Enoch Powell’s programme to make up the shortage of British doctors working for the National Health Service (NHS) at the time. While Kamini in particular had been hoping to settle in London, however, the couple find that they have been sent to the small Welsh mining village of Trefelin to replace the recently deceased Dr. Elwyn. The series, then, is based on the often comic, sometimes dramatic encounters between the Indian couple, the local Welsh villagers and the English mine manager, Mr. Sharpe and his local wife Sylvia.

It has been noted that the Welsh have, for centuries, been seen as an unsophisticated and rural people, and thus inferior to the urban, civilised English.. As early as the twelfth century, Gerald of Wales noted that the Welsh did not live in towns or villages like the Anglo-Normans, but instead lived ‘... a solitary existence, deep in the woods’ (qtd. in Lilley 2002). Moreover, their pastoral lifestyle was used to portray them as somewhat animal-like themselves. As Jones argues, the Welsh, like the Irish, have been repeatedly represented as animalistic or monstrous (2009:37).

Following in this tradition films including *The Wolf Man*, *A Run for Your Money* and *Very Annie Mary* have used the exceptionally long train ride/drive to the village to underscore the idea that Wales is ‘remote and far away from civilisation’ (Woodward 2006:58). Similarly, the protagonists of *The Indian Doctor* arrive in Trefelin after a seemingly interminable train ride. As they finally draw into the village, Kamini remarks: ‘What next? An ox-cart? A dog sled over the mountains?’ (episode 1).

Throughout the series, Trefelin is consistently depicted as a rural, underdeveloped backwater in the eyes of the sophisticated, urban Indian protagonists. In the first episode, Kamini tells Prem that she wants to leave Trefelin ‘Because it’s disgusting. Because the people are appalling. Because you’re too good a doctor to bury yourself in this backwater’. Similarly, she argues that, ‘It was my idea to go to London. Manchester even. Somewhere with at least a passing acquaintance with civilisation’ (episode 1).

Wales is also represented as uncivilised in a scene when a bored Kamini asks Mrs. Davies, a local shopkeeper where the local women go for entertainment (episode 3);

Kamini: Where do they go to get their minds off things?

Mrs. Davies: Pontypridd.

Kamini: Is that a big place?

Mrs. Davies: Yes

Kamini: So they've got theatres, opera, that sort of thing?

Mrs Davies: No. They've got bingo ...

The rural backwardness of Trefelin is also emphasised in a comic scene when a local farmer urges Prem to hurry to his farm as Gwyneth, presumed by Prem to be a relative, has gone into labour. After running over hill and dale, the exhausted Prem arrives at the farm to discover that Gwyneth is the farmer's prize cow. Breaking the stereotype of the 'cow-worshipping' Indian, the doctor, having never treated animals is confused and rather disgusted by Gwyneth and her bodily fluids. In contrast, for the farmer Gwyneth is 'like family' (episode 2).

Similarly, the Welsh miners, generally shown *en masse* as in earlier films such as *How Green was my Valley* (Woodward 2006:54), resemble a herd or flock in that they seem to be incapable of acting independently or making their own decisions. Interestingly, the seemingly 'macho' miners are also feminised in that they are easily dominated by women; it is only a woman, Megan, the wife of a dying miner, who appears to be able to control the flock of miners.

In addition, the Welsh characters, particularly the men, are also often portrayed as ignorant, lazy, depraved and/or drunk. The stereotype of the alcoholic Celt is as old as ancient Roman attitudes to the Gauls; Tacitus, for example, notes that they are so fond of wine that they 'drink it greedily and when they become drunk they fall into a stupor or into a maniacal disposition' (qtd. in Piccini 1996:88). In *The Indian Doctor*, the miner's leader, Owen Griffiths, for instance, is an alcoholic mess who 'borrowed' from the miners' union fund in order to pay his gambling debts, a single father who neglects Dan, his delinquent, dyslexic young son. Griffiths himself notes that his heavy drinking is a national characteristic. Invited to have a drink with him in the local pub, Prem remarks that, 'I've never seen anyone drink so fast ... or so much' while Griffiths responds that 'You're in Wales. I'm a lightweight compared to some' (episode 1).

Moreover, the villagers in *The Indian Doctor* are portrayed as naive, helpless victims of the calculating English mineowner, Mr. Sharpe. Thus, *The Indian Doctor* reiterates the theme of the contrast between the 'innocent, dim miners' and the 'cold, cunning Londoners' seen in films such as the 1949 Ealing comedy *A Run for your Money* (Woodward 2006:56). By neglecting safety regulations at the mine and exposing the miners to lung disease, Sharpe literally has the power of life or death over the miners. In addition, the miners are portrayed as rather dim and easily fooled.

As the Indian protagonists gradually settle into life in the village, they each embark on a project to rescue the villagers from their oppression, perhaps in an attempt at atonement for their feelings of guilt about the death of their daughter. Prem aims, by submitting the miners to chest X-rays, to prove Sharpe's corruption and save them from crippling lung disease. Even Mrs. Sharma, who has a particularly negative view of the villagers, acts as a protector-figure towards Dan. By claiming to give him private lessons she protects him from the truant officer, or 'whipper-in', and acts as the mother-figure he desperately needs.



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# ASPECTS OF ETHNICITY, CLASS AND RELIGION IN CASE OF SLOVAK IMMIGRANT COMMUNITIES IN THE UK

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***Abstract:** Since 2004 several tens of thousands of Slovaks arrived in the United Kingdom. A number of Slovak communities have emerged that bear the characteristic marks of diasporas. This paper displays an analysis of these immigrant groups based on online surveys and interviews. Questions of integration versus assimilation are discussed in the light of class, religious affiliation and ethnic identity.*

***Keywords:** class, education, ethnicity, religion*

## **1. Introduction**

To better understand the existence, position and evolution of any given minority group in a society it is inevitable to analyse the situation in the light of the present state of art in the field of diaspora concepts. Diaspora definitions have evolved in a maze of concepts and produced explanations that are not only difficult to conceptualize but also deform and transform under the changing influence of the sociological, political and economic understanding. “The concept [of diaspora]”, as Kokot, Tölölyan and Alfonso unanimously agree, “has become an element of self-reference and political identification wherever – by access to new channels of communication, by economic exchange or physical mobility – extraterritorial groups or organizations seek political influence in their homelands and communities of the same perceived origin, or vice versa” (2004:3). Thus it is evidently not sufficient to return to the earlier definitions that had long been associated with traumas, a forced exodus from the homeland and dispersal in a hostile majority environment inspired predominantly by the two world wars and connected with the pogroms and persecution of the Jewish communities. Modern diasporic groups may be formed on different bases and can follow a number of alternative ways of evolution. Most studies converge in the understanding of diasporas within the boundaries of de-territorialisation, transnational migration and cultural hybridism. What is more, in the light of the recent changes that have brought about and amplified a multicultural, multiethnic and a more cosmopolitan approach in connection with the development of human communities, a new understanding of identity, concepts of multiple belonging and multi-ethnicity have merged with concepts of diaspora allowing an analyst to decompose the concept in alternative ways. Thus, it seems perfectly acceptable that, “The rising significance of ‘transnationalism’ and ‘diaspora’, as terms of self-designation chosen by political, artistic and intellectual elites of diasporic communities, as well as in

Western academic discourse, is closely related to increasing relevance of representations of 'identity' and 'culture' in international politics" (Kokot; Tölölyan; Alfonso, 2004:3). It is therefore evident that any diaspora concept cannot be limited to the traditional measures of understanding it in relation to integration – assimilation anymore since it has gained a much broader space in the modern multiethnic societies. Though diaspora has long been characterized as a "unilinear and irrevocable movement from a place of origin to a new place of residence" (Kokot; Tölölyan; Alfonso; 2004:3), the limitations of this approach become disturbing as soon as the characteristics of our globalized world are taken into consideration. The once evident isolation in a bipolar world where ideological, political, economic and militaristic opposition was dominant has dissolved in the changing realities of the end of the 20th century. Borders, at least in transatlantic relation, have undergone a considerable transformation and in the structures of the ever-evolving European integration have gained new meanings. The new reality required the introduction of such concepts as transnationalism and transmigration. This fact, however did not allow any simplification of the case as the concepts of transnationalism equally to diaspora require a much more precise definition to be possible to work with. According to Landolt, "Differing from connotations of 'international' and 'multinational', 'transnationalism' focuses on lasting relationships and repeated movements across borders, the agents being not states or nations, but individual actors or associations" (1992:2). Glick Schiller's definition of 'transnationalism' concentrates on the process of constructing and actively maintaining social fields, i.e. relationships between the immigrants in their communities of residence and to their homelands, across borders (1992:2). Modern audiovisual means of communication, high level of mobility in combination with the unprecedented transparency of state borders and accessibility of a wide range of fast and cheap transportation have only contributed to the process of growing transnational communities that go beyond the traditionalistic isolationist approaches of the diaspora definitions. This results in a situation where the members of any immigrant community have easy access to information concerning the political, economic and social changes of their homelands even if the physical distance between the host country and the homeland is measured in thousands of kilometres. These communities no longer behave like isolated islands in the sea of the mainstream population, but are characterized by, "a high degree of social cohesion, and a shared repertoire of symbolic and collective representation" (Tauber 1999; Faist 2000; Alfonso 2001; Wönnenberg 2001). There is a much stronger connection between them and their homeland, which counteracts the host country's culturally erosive power in terms of assimilation. Several authors agree that Robert Cohen's typology of: victim-, trade-, labour- and colonial diasporas need further expansion and are not entirely sufficient for the understanding of modern transnational communities. In the 21st century the concept of diaspora, "cannot be [...] limited to any single type of community or historical situation" [...] but a diaspora is rather understood as, "a deep symbolical [...] relation to the homeland – be it an independent nation state or set in a quasi-mythological distant past – is maintained by reference to constructs of common language, history,

culture and – central to many cases – to religion” (Kokot, Tölölyan, Alfonso, 2004:3). The key concept in understanding the characteristics of a diasporic existence therefore lies in the understanding of the already present connections. If an immigrant group is socially coherent and is able to maintain interpersonal networks by any means, a diasporic way of life can come into existence providing a protective shield against the assimilative pressure of the majority society as well as maintaining the romantic concept of the ‘real homeland’. Tölölyan further argues that,

Diasporas must be considered within their historical as well as their spatial contexts. [...] Any diaspora is still a space of real and imagined relations between diasporic communities as well as between them and the homeland. But this space is still composed of places, of localities that are both sites of settlement and nodes in a transnational network of mobility and communication (Kokot, Tölölyan, Alfonso, 2004:5).

However charming is this concept though, still bears limitations and seems to neglect the power of virtual spaces created by the modern means of telecommunication. The availability of satellite television and radio programmes in combination with the interactive Internet communication facilities and the omnipresent and unlimited access to the latest information about the homeland such as about the host land redefine and broaden the sociological, anthropological, historical and political explanation of the diaspora concepts.

Ackermann adds that

Diasporas are disproportionately advantaged by the many changes in technology, economic organization, and modes of travel, production and communication. To the extent that travel as well as communication across long distances become easier and cheaper, more and more diaspora members can afford to keep contact on regular base. Besides telecommunication and video technology it is particularly the Internet that becomes more important in every day life. As it is affordable and thus available to a comparatively wide range of ‘users’, quite difficult to control by state authorities, and able to transport vast amounts of text, pictures and sound very quickly around the globe, irrespective of national boundaries, it constitutes a major ‘technology of diasporization’ (Ackermann, 2004:157).

As William Safran further explains, “the label [diaspora] has been stretched to cover almost any ethnic or religious minority that is dispersed physically from its original homeland, regardless of the conditions leading to the dispersion, and regardless whether, and to what extent, physical, cultural, or emotional links exist between the community and the home country (Safran, 2004:9)”. This definition may sound too broad, but Safran also emphasizes the need to differentiate between real diasporas and other ethnic groups of expatriates. Thus, a diaspora can be classified as an island community separated in many ways from the mainstream society, though the concept suggests suspicion since members of a diasporic community retain the idea that they are not or cannot be fully

accepted by the majority. It can and in many cases does create opposition and lead to greater isolation. Therefore, by conducting a further analysis of the Slovak migrant groups the author seeks to discover whether these communities have already reached the level of the above-described diasporic existence.

Separation is only one aspect of diaspora. Another important aspect is the presence and availability of institutions reflecting the communities' homeland cultural traditions, religious beliefs, political orientation, economic power, etc. The range of these institutions can be wide: reaching from simple pubs preferred by the members of the given community, even run by native citizens who are members of the majority mainstream society, through cultural centres, schools, libraries, churches, hospitals maintained by the immigrant groups to politically significant centres with strong economic background, embassies, as well as seats of international corporations that can have a direct impact on the majority society. According to Safran, "Diasporas cannot exist without facilitating institutions; but their creation and maintenance require a demographic thickness – a sufficient number of diasporas to constitute a critical mass in urban settings." (Safran, 2004:17). The active day-to-day use of these institutions can be a significant cohesive power that provides a continuous contact with the home culture enforces in-group solidarity and creates a perceivable hierarchy within the immigrant society. Naturally, the above-described extensive institutional system requires a high level of monetary independence and a sufficient influx of financial means. Whether the community alone, or with the help of the homeland is able to maintain these systems is a crucial question when analysing diasporic existence.

Safran concludes that

If we leave aside religiously 'minoritized' communities and focus on expatriated ones, we conclude that there are now many more dispersed communities than existed before. In the past half century, tens of millions of people have been leaving their native countries for a variety of political and economic reasons; they may be political refugees, expellees, displaced persons, or voluntary emigrants; but unlike traditional immigrants, most of whom have left their homelands with the full intention to assimilate into the hostland culture, members of diasporas appear to be hedging their bets: they do not wish to cut themselves off completely from their homelands, and they prefer to live, as it were 'in two worlds' (Safran 2004).

Our continuously transforming world is gradually changing into a totally interconnected space where the national traditions of the past are colliding and merging at an extraordinary speed creating the stage for the birth of a new society – a new world order – where isolation can not be a dominant characteristic mark of those groups of people that decide to continue their lives in a foreign country. Separation from the influence of the dominant culture and direct transplantation of the cultural heritage and social traditions of the home culture is impossible in a completely different, highly mixed society, however the so characteristic demand of the past decades for a total assimilation and an uncritical acceptance and

obedience of the host country's lifestyle is not as tangible and pushing as it was even twenty years ago. Since the primary targets of any immigration are usually the largest urban areas the chance that the newcomers arrive in a more cosmopolitan community that is usually characterized with a higher level of tolerance towards differences and with an accepting aptitude towards foreign habits is higher than ever before. The above-described state of affairs and Safran's description of the perception of the notion of 'diaspora' converge when he states that "The label diaspora has come to be used rather freely, because multiple identities are now more acceptable than they were before" (Safran 2004:12). Multiple identities are not only acceptable, but in many cases have simply become an unavoidable necessity in order to survive and achieve success in the globalized world. It is becoming evident that when the position of a foreigner is critically analysed, it is often the subjective judgement of the observer only that creates the picture of the expatriate associated immediately with a strong social, economic, political and cultural background – therefore considered as a fully acceptable element within the different cultural environment – on the one side with the right to define himself as separate from the mainstream, and the picture of the immigrant with a weak social position, almost immediately and unconsciously associated with a subordinate culture that is not worth preserving and is not deserving respect on the other end. As Safran continues "Former convictions about the superiority of certain national cultures have become weakened [...] in part because of the shortcomings of the [white-dominant Euro Atlantic societies once considered superior], and in part because democratic and [...] positive values found in host lands are now increasingly also found in the minorities homelands" (Safran, 2004:12). As a result the people who have decided to choose to live and build up a venerable life in a different country – even with a considerably different cultural environment – have the full right to define themselves in terms of mixed or double identities and retain their homeland culture. As Taylor adds, "National boundaries have become more permeable, a development that has enabled minority communities to receive infusions of culture from abroad" (Taylor 1994). Therefore the once so depressing feeling of being a foreigner, an outcast and an incompatible member of the host land's society is being considerably softened and the present situation provides space and time for the immigrants to regenerate, accommodate and find their place in the new environment. Despite the lately re-emerging anti-immigrant feelings generated mostly by the heavy burden of the world economic crisis, most of the western democracies have developed and integrated cultural pluralism as part of their national politics and the basic aptitude towards the newcomers is essentially welcoming. Globalization is not restricted to the economic affairs. The total interconnection of cultures is perceivable in the diffusion of languages and lifestyles, in the gradual penetration of culinary traditions and folk customs, in the vast amount of cultural interchange fully supported by universities providing education for quantities of students originating practically from all corners of the world, in the breath-taking rhythm and speed at which communication facilities are developing. The inevitable result of these processes is the development of a more homogenous culture, a global and almost

omnipresent standard where "...the retention of minority cultures facilitated by a connection with an anterior 'homeland', provides a modicum of uniqueness, authenticity and autonomy for the community in question, which has contributed to the maintenance of diasporas (Safran 2004:12).

## 2. Methodology of Research

Research is based on surveys and interviews, developed and used in social sciences, notably in sociology. According to Émil Durkheim social sciences are a logical continuation of the natural science disciplines and they should retain the same objectivity, rationalism, and approach to causality as natural sciences (Outhwite, 2006 pp.507-510). Encyclopaedia Britannica further declares that sociology is

viewed, along with economics and political science, as a reaction against speculative philosophy and folklore [...] a social science that studies human societies, their interactions, and the processes that preserve and change them. It [sociology] does this by examining the dynamics of constituent parts of societies such as institutions, communities, populations, and gender, racial, or age groups. Sociology also studies social status or stratification, social movements, and social change, as well as societal disorder in the form of crime, deviance, and revolution (Britannica, 2007: sociology).

Though this paper investigates questions that are close to the areas of sociology, the author would not dare call it a *true* sociological investigation since it might not fit all criteria of the discipline. Definitely, there is a perceivable flavour of sociology in the work as the author thrives to exploit his knowledge of the discipline to obtain usable data that might describe and better understand the position of Slovak immigrants within the British cultural environment. It is inevitable, however, to depict and describe in details the fields that are involved in research explaining the criteria according to which the work is planned, the research is designed and the results are evaluated. To narrow down the field of research three tangible domains were selected and examined in details: class, religion, and ethnicity and the following research plan was developed:

In the first phase, in the form of desk research, the situation of immigration in the United Kingdom was analysed with a special emphasis on Accession 8 immigrants. Emphasis was put on the following variables:

- *Number* of immigrants in the United Kingdom since 1989 and the fluctuations in immigration patterns were put to investigation between 1989 and 2010, while a special emphasis was put to make clear distinction between short-term immigrants who plan to stay in the target country only for a limited period of time. The time span for temporary visitors was set to 6 months in accordance with the UK Border Agency regulations.
- *Geographical distribution* was considered as the following factor. National Insurance Numbers statistics, General Practitioner Registration Figures,

and Total International Immigration statistics among other statistical data were studied, compared and contrasted to obtain a comprehensive overview of the geographical distribution of Accession 8 immigrants, with a special emphasis on the Slovak nationals.

- *Age distribution* of the Slovak immigrants was considered as the following variable. This research variable also exploited the publicly available data sources of Workers Registration Schemes in combination with further relevant sources, for instance Jobseekers' Allowance, etc. This variable allowed to narrow the research field and exclude the age groups (under 25) in which the overwhelming majority of migrants belong to the group for which high mobility and temporary residence is characteristic.

Beyond the above-described variables, contacting permanent immigrants in the United Kingdom allowed further relevant quantitative data collection. The first phase was followed by quantitative data collection and analysis based on a questionnaire containing 25 questions. Using the data obtained as the result of the preceding desktop research a series of multiple-choice and multiple answer questions were designed with the aim to map the situation and motifs of immigrant Slovaks (with a special emphasis on immigrant Slovak families) in Britain. The prepared questionnaire was consulted with professionals in sociology and their comments were incorporated in the final form. The questions used in the actual data sheet can be grouped along the following criteria:

- 1) General data concerning the informant's status: age, place of origin in Slovakia, level of education (obtained in Slovak institutions), level of mastery in English etc. These pieces of information served the goal to build a frame of reference along which further data processing might have been realisable.

- 2) Further, a series of questions analyzing certain class markers were incorporated indirectly into the questionnaire in the form of multiple-choice questions. The following areas were deeper analysed from the point of class: *Residence in the UK* serves as an important class marker. A series of authors, emphasize the importance of the place and conditions of residence in this aspects. Previous research of the relevant literature showed that there *are* concrete, well-defined areas in the UK urban structures, which can be clearly associated with the distribution of the population along class structures. These data were later contrasted with the 'popularity charts' of British residential areas (e.g. Millionaires Neighbourhood Report) and the statistical data presenting the poorest parliamentary constituencies of the country (published by the Child Poverty Action Group) in order to estimate the class conditions of the informants.

*Jobs* done in the UK in contrast with the qualification of the informant and further to his/her employment situation in Slovakia were the second marker. Jobs, similar to residence can clearly mark class belonging, as job positions are closely associated with income perspectives – a further important class marker. Saturation of jobs – notably how often one changes or has to change his/her job position – also plays an important role in the analysis. *Income* and the financial situation of



the informants are defined indirectly, in terms of level of 'satisfaction', taking into consideration the sensitivity of the question.

3) Questions connected with ethnicity and the problem of integration form a separate group in the questionnaire. Since active participation in social life – at least at the level of following the Slovak media – might serve as an excellent marker of identity definition questions investigating this field were incorporated into the used questionnaire. The following areas were put to detailed investigation: *Social networks*, in this respect not identical with the Internet term, were mapped. The questionnaire was designed to find answer for the following questions: whether the informant has been able to build and maintain active relationship with British 'friends'; and whether the informant still maintains some form of social contact with Slovak immigrants or friends and family members from the state of origin. These data can be excellent markers of the diaspora formation processes. Further investigation in this direction is realised by means of interviews. *Access to the media of the homeland* is a further criterion that is part of the research questions, since connectivity to the homeland can be maintained by this means of information channels. The will or wish to follow Slovak media is an important marker of the identity formation process revealing affection or ignorance towards the social and political happenings of the land of origin. *Efforts preserving Slovak as a mother tongue* is also part of the questionnaire. This is a crucial point from the point of further analysis as retaining Slovak national identity requires the use of the language of the homeland. Though different analyses show that identity is not language dependent since a lot of second and third generation immigrants, who are not able to use the language of their ancestors' (Americans of Irish, Italian and other origins, European immigrants from Arabic and African countries, etc.) still define themselves as 100% belonging to the given culture, efforts made to preserve language as an important heritage can reveal a lot about the state and level of integration or assimilation. Further, sentiments and romantic images connected with the national folklore and mythology were put to analysis as part of the interviews. The very effort to hand down language of the homeland to the next generation was considered as a clear identity marker.

4) Questions concerning *religion* constituted only a minor part of the questionnaire. They were primarily incorporated to map the religious affiliation of the informants to the religious group they belonged in their homeland. Since religion is considered by many authors as an important cohesive power and a great protective barrier against the cultural erosion of the majority society the two questions investigating this field are rather processed as identity markers of ethnicity. The fact, whether the children in the family attend religious education and participate in common worship is also put to test, however clear contexts of religious practice can have been revealed only through further analysis that is part of the interview processes.

5) Nine questions in the questionnaire: 16-24 were designed to analyse the status of the children in contexts of education, immigration, integration and building national identities. Question 16 is the opening gate in this context asking for marital status. If the informant were single the further questions were omitted.

This part of the questionnaire is used to narrow down the number of informants and filter families who were predicted to face problems of integration from a specific point of view. Notably, established families when decided to move to the United Kingdom were predicted to be less mobile and the attitudes of the parents and children could serve as excellent bases for further analysis of integration problems. *Level of Slovak language mastery of the children* was one of the analysed areas. By investigating this area the author hoped to discover cultural continuity and the ability or will of the family to preserve Slovak language. The following three questions (19, 20, 21) were designed to map the location of the education institution the children go to and the general knowledge of the parents about the schools and the British system of education. Further on, the interview part was designed to deeper analyse questions of education and to gain an overall knowledge on the choice making process from the point of class context primarily. The fact that ethnicity is 'publicized' or not is investigated in question 22. The choice to declare ethnic belonging openly reveals much of the attitudes of the given family towards the British and the Slovak society, too. Public declaration of ethnic belonging may show the will to be unique and to be considered as 'somebody' in the community; refusal, on the other hand, may suggest will of integration and openness towards assimilative processes. The following question, 23, is designed to analyse the will of the parents to maintain Slovak identity and their will to stay in contact with the homeland analysing the will of the parents to teach their children their mother tongue.

The primary quantitative data collection method applied in this research was based on a survey. Though Robson defines a survey as "...a research *strategy* rather than a method or technique" (1993:123) this seemed to be the appropriate choice offering applicability and by realising it as a computer based self-administered questionnaire in combination with Skype-based interviews also providing a high level of accessibility and flexibility. Bearing in mind that "It is [...] difficult to give a concise definition (of a survey) precisely because of the wide range of studies that have been labelled as surveys" (Robson, 1993:123) the author made an effort to design a usable questionnaire that might provide the grounds for a data collection process that follows the general characteristics of a survey. Robson states that "The central features of the survey strategy were presented [...] as: the collection of a small amount of data in standardized form, from a relatively large number of individuals and the selection of samples of individuals from known populations (1993:123). Further, Bryman stresses "...that survey research is almost always conducted in order to provide a *quantitative* picture of the individuals, or other units concerned" (Robson, 1993:123). The goal of this phase of the research was to collect a usable amount of data in order to be able to generalize and extrapolate the results on the investigated population. This effort was supported and based on Robson's statement when he underlines that "The typical survey is passive in that it seeks to describe and/or analyse the world out there *as it is*. This often includes or even focuses totally on what the individuals surveyed think or feel about the topic" (1993:124). The primary goal was to transform the attitudes, feelings and thoughts of the Slovak immigrant population

into manageable quantitative units as well as filter the attitude elements and concentrate on areas that are primarily characterised by conduct and not by attitudes, feelings and opinions. If we accept that "...the survey studies the sample not in its own right but as a means of understanding the population from which it is drawn" (Robson, 1993:125) it is easy to see that this research method is the right choice for conducting quantitative data collection though a series of problems should be clearly defined and eliminated as much as possible to achieve the highest possible level of reliability. Robson underlines that "In its simplest form, the survey involves collecting the same standardized data from an undifferentiated group of respondents over a short period of time" (1993:130). Thus standardization of the data collection process is one of the key questions when thinking about reliability of the process. The author agrees with Robson's statement that similar surveys are "... perfectly adequate if all you are seeking to do is to find information about the incidence and distribution of particular characteristics, and of possible relationships among them" (Robson, 1993:130-131). Also, "As the group of respondents is likely to incorporate naturally occurring variables with several levels (e.g. sex as female/male; or age as 15-20, 20-24, 29-29, etc.) it is also possible to view this as a 'comparison group' survey" (Robson, 1993:131).

Some of the biggest problems with questionnaire based surveys can be their *internal validity problem*:

when we are not obtaining valid information about the respondents and what they are thinking, feeling or whatever. [...] [Because] [...] the findings are seen as product of largely uninvolved respondents whose answers owe more to some unknown mixture of politeness, boredom, desire to be seen in good light, etc. than their true feelings, beliefs or behaviour (Robson, 1993:125).

This problem is omnipresent with surveys and a series of steps were taken to minimize internal validity problems. First, the questionnaire was designed as short as possible to make it manageable for the respondents. Second, though the majority of the questions offered the option to the respondents to write the answer with their own words, the respondents were offered a series of multiple answers to choose from to cover the needs of the data collection and produce a more manageable database. Third, during the design process the questionnaire was analysed and commented by experts on sociology and their advice and comments were incorporated to achieve a usable final version eliminating elementary mistakes. External validity problems, on the other hand, may spring from the faulty sampling leading to the case when generalization of our findings is impossible. This problem was more difficult to eliminate. It also has to be emphasized that probably the scope of this work does not offer the space and time for a large, general analysis that might involve years of data collection and processing. Also, the method of data collection – computer-based questionnaire accessible on the Internet – has its limitations allowing to participate in the survey only for those informants who have Internet connection, are able to use a computer and can

communicate in English at least on a basic level. Therefore, a compromise was accepted and, though the results are valid, due to the time limitation and the above-described circumstances it has to be underlined that it is not possible to extrapolate the results on the whole population of Slovak immigrants in the UK. It is necessary to emphasize that the informants represent the group of immigrants who are able to use a computer, have Internet access, and can communicate in English at least at a basic level. Consequently, the results are not representative for the total population of Slovaks in the UK. On the other hand, the above-described problems cannot be considered as critical, since the primary goal of this research was to find the segment of population that is already established a solid standard of life in the UK and possesses the means that enable them to join the survey. The author therefore declares that though the survey results are not representative for the total population of the Slovak immigrants living in the UK, they truly reflect the attitudes, lifestyle and behaviour of those Slovaks, who already live in the UK under stable and well-established circumstances; are permanent residents and already achieved a certain standard of life compared to the British average. Robson emphasizes, "The lack of relation between *attitude* and *behaviour* is notorious" (Robson, 1993:126) in surveys. If it is true, than it becomes rather complicated to make a clear distinction between the opinions stated by the respondents and their true acts and conduct in real life situation based on the answers in surveys. To minimize the problem Robson suggests the following: "By presenting all respondents with the same standardized questions carefully worded after piloting, it is possible to obtain high reliability of response" (Robson, 1993:126). Thus the questionnaire was designed as a standardized form containing clear, understandable and manageable closed questions with a series of options only partially completed with the option to add self-designed answers. The very design was also preceded by a piloting phase, which was primarily based on unstructured interview-like discussions with a limited number of respondents bearing in mind that "Surveys work best with standardized questions where we have confidence that the questions mean the same thing to different respondents..." (Robson, 1993:127).

A further critical aspect of survey is sampling that "... is closely linked to the *experimental validity or generalizability* of the findings in an enquiry; the extent to which what we have found in a particular situation at a particular time applies more generally" (Robson, 1993:135). By considering further aspects it is possible to agree with Robson when he underlines that "A sample is a selection from a population" (Robson, 1993:136). Generally speaking the bigger the sample the highest the validity of the survey. In this case however, the goal of the research was not to map and analyse the attitudes, beliefs and lifestyle of a whole population, but rather to select the 'successful' ones who already achieved a certain level of integration in the British society and have already been faced with the dilemma of integration or assimilation. Therefore the author relies on Robson's words when he states, "It should not be assumed [...] that a full census is necessarily superior to a well-thought-out sample survey" (1993:136). Sampling in the survey was a combination of different techniques. The primary method was

based on 'Snowball sampling'. Robson describes snowball sampling as a process where "[...] the researcher identifies one or more individuals from the population of interest. After they have been interviewed, they are used as informants to identify other members of the population who are themselves used as informants and so on" (Robson, 1993: 142). In the piloting phase the 'key people' of the community were addressed. These people are: leaders of Internet forums, editors of Slovak newspapers, leaders of different Slovak communities living abroad, managers of Slovak language schools, libraries and other institutions in the UK and pastors of Slovak communities. As they are usually the hubs, the central personalities of a given community, the probability that they will join with other informants was much higher. Sampling can also be partially described as Stratified Random Sampling because this involves dividing the population into a number of groups or *strata*, where members of a group share a particular characteristic or characteristics. In our case the different groups can be formed along the lines of geographical distribution, or age groups and the common characteristics are represented by the fact that all respondents were Slovak nationals. The sampling process can also be described as Disproportionate sampling, because this allowed the researcher "...to 'oversample' a small but important stratum or to ensure that there is at least some representation of certain 'rare species' even to the extent of including all examples" (Robson, 1993:137). Thus it can be said that the final questionnaire incorporated the characteristics of different sampling methods in order to provide usable database for further processing. This is also in accordance with Robson's statement that "Sampling theory shows that in some circumstances stratified random sampling can be more efficient than simple random sampling, in the sense that for a given sample size, the means of stratified samples are likely to be closer to the population mean. This occurs when there is a relatively small amount of variability in whatever characteristic is being measured in the survey *within* the stratum, compared to variability across data strata" (Robson, 1993:138). The survey and the used questionnaire can also be described as non-probability or purposive sample because as Robson marks small-scale surveys commonly employ non-probability samples. They are usually less complicated to set up and are acceptable when there is no intention or need to make a statistical generalization to any population beyond the sample surveyed. While in purposive sampling "A sample is built up which enables the researcher to satisfy his/her specific needs in a project" (Robson, 1993: 141). Both of the latter described sampling methods characterize the used questionnaire and the survey process.

### **3. Quantitative Data Analysis**

The objective of this paper is to present quantitative data obtained by the means of a questionnaire containing 25 questions. The questionnaire is outlined to collect data from volunteer Slovak immigrants from well-defined areas of their lives from the perspective of class, religion and ethnicity. Conclusions and assumptions are based on correlations among the answers, when the questionnaire is designed to obtain data utilizing cross questioning techniques, notably a series of

questions investigate aspects of class, religion and ethnicity from different points of view. Thus, the result is a complex database, where tendencies can be deduced by combination of answers given to different questions. The goal of this technique is to better describe and clarify the situation of the Slovak immigrants in the British cultural environment. The main aim of this text is to present a thorough analysis of quantitative data that will serve primarily as a solid basis for further qualitative analysis – as the research is primarily based on a combined research technique using the data from the questionnaire in combination with the data collected by Skype interviews – as well as reveal the factual aspects of the integration process the Slovak immigrants are confronted with in the UK.

What is possible to deduct from the data has a rather informative character and the author bears in mind that such a small-scale survey can hardly be the basis of wider generalisations; on the other hand it can serve as a peephole allowing the researcher to point out some tendencies in general while underlying the necessity of further, more extensive sociological researches including a much greater sample. While confessing that the data gained are not fully representative strictly from sociological point of view, it also has to be emphasized that the final results allow the author for drawing a series of conclusions and enable at least a rough sketch of the actual situation in the area of immigration and successful integration of Slovak immigrants in the UK which is still lacking basic research at the moment.

Data analysis is based on the frequency and the distribution of the markers that are observable in the answers provided by the informants. The more respondents choose a given pre-designed option in a multiple answer scale the more dominant the given aspect from the point of the analysis. The higher the frequency of an attitude represented by the answer the more possible to state that the given phenomenon is generally accepted, widespread, practiced and followed by the respondents and the wider public, too. As the questions were designed in order to interlock and complete each other, correlations and tendencies will be described as similar patterns appearing in different questions strengthening each other or in some cases opposing the forecasts. By this technique the author tries to present a coherent data analysis that might form the solid foundations needed for further qualitative replenishment.

One of the elementary characteristics that can serve as the basis for further conclusions is the age of the responding persons. The total number of the respondents reached 95. The age of the respondents spread from 19 the youngest to 61 the oldest. There were several dominant age groups identifiable. In the biggest group, belonged 24 respondents between 31-35. In the second most significant group belonged 22 respondents representing the age group 36-40. The third most significant age group with 21 respondents was the group of 26-30 years old respondents. There were recognisable further age groups with lower significance, for example: there were 12 respondents belonging to the age group of 21-25. There were originally three age groups created for the respondents between 41-60, but the low answer rate and the relatively small representation of this age group allow to treat these people as one coherent group where 9 respondents belong the age group

41-45 and 6 respondents in the age group 46 plus. The average age of the respondents was 34 years, which also correlates with the most significant group of the respondents according to the statistical distribution of the data. When comparing the appearing age groups with the data published regularly by the Home Office some significant overlaps and differences are observable in the age distribution of Accession 8 immigrants. Home Office data emphasize that the biggest group of immigrants belong in the under 25 category, and only the second most significant group was the 25-34 years old. It is however, necessary to emphasize that the under 25-age group is characterized with much higher fluctuation rates concerning jobs, residence and plans for settling down. The younger people, though more significant in statistical findings in numbers do not represent the target group of this research: established families that have long-term plans and are characterized by lower rates of mobility. Therefore the biggest group in the survey, the 26-30-35-40 age group, can be characterised as the most relevant one from the point of further analysis as this produced the most significant answer rate in the survey, too.

The second category, the place of origin in Slovakia, was incorporated in the questionnaire with the intention to gain an overall picture of the Slovak immigration scheme from a domestic geographical aspect. The data were summarized and processed according to the districts of Slovakia. The goal of this data collection was to test whether the push-pull model analysed in the previous theoretical chapters is tangible in the immigration schemes. Notably, if the districts of Slovakia with lower economic power and productivity are more represented in the overall immigration schemes. The total number of respondents who entered the location of their home town was 92. The answers revealed the following facts: The majority of the respondents arrived from the areas with higher unemployment rates in Slovakia, 32 respondents originate from Eastern Slovakia and 15 from Central Slovakia. South-North distribution was not taken into consideration. According to the statistical data published by the Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family in Slovakia (available at: [http://www.upsvar.sk/media/medialne-spravy/miera-vidovanej-nezamestnanosti-jun-2010.html?page\\_id=21115](http://www.upsvar.sk/media/medialne-spravy/miera-vidovanej-nezamestnanosti-jun-2010.html?page_id=21115) [accessed: July 6 2010]) the rate of unemployment reached 19,7 per cent in the District of Banská Bystrica and 18,3 per cent in the District of Prešov in 2010. This seems to underline the prediction that the push-pull effect is perceivable at least at the level of economic disparities. 51% of the informants marked the place of origin in Slovakia was a settlement in Central or Eastern Slovak districts. There were 30 respondents from the West Slovak regions without Bratislava. Thus, the well-known fact that the central and eastern Slovak regions with lower economic and productivity rates and higher levels of unemployment produce higher levels of immigration is verified. An interesting phenomenon is also revealed by the statistical summarization of the answers. Bratislava, the economically most advanced region in Slovakia with the lowest unemployment rate that in 2010 reached 4,4%, gave 16% of the informants. This fact allows for the assumption that there are further factors, not primarily of economic character, that may contribute

to immigration: developing linguistic competences, adventure, travelling, etc. (see answers to question 8).

A further aspect of the push-pull effect is analysed by question (2) of the survey investigating whether the respondents were employed in Slovakia before the leave. The data show that two-third of the respondents were employed. 64 of the total 95 respondents marked that they had had a permanent job before they left for the UK. 31 respondents were unemployed. When we compare these data with the answers that mark the highest level of education we see another correlation. 20 out of the 95 respondents that were unemployed had university degree. Only 7 respondents indicate secondary school as their highest level of education had been unemployed before their arrival in the UK. The evidence points out at least two possible conclusions. First, the respondents with university degree may be more mobile to search for better possibilities abroad and did not even want to be employed in Slovakia. Further, universities may not provide practical skills that are needed and well honoured by the Slovak market thus enforcing migration.

Question 7 is designed to gain further information about the economic situation of the respondents asking not only about employment but requiring a categorisation of their previous job on a quality scale. This question offered many options to define the reasons for immigration in a more sophisticated way. The distribution of the answers, however present a surprising result. 25% of the respondents stated that they had had a very pleasant and well-paid job before moving to the UK. This is a surprisingly high percentage even in the light of the fact that 36% of the respondents was unemployed. When only employment is taken into consideration the results show that 51 respondents out of 95 had been employed in Slovakia before immigration the majority defining their jobs as well-paid or pleasant but low-paid. The major problem with their jobs was marked as the low level of wages and the mismatch of the level of qualification and the actual job done at home. 64% of the respondents, however, did have a job in their home country and 36% respondents were unemployed.

As it can be seen from the answers given to the third category, place of residence in the UK, most of the respondents live in London and Central England. 36, out of 95 respondents marked London as his/her place of residence in England. 9 respondents live in Brighton, 3 in Aldershot, 2 in Edinburgh, 2 in Didcot, and 2 in Basingstoke. The rest of the answers marked different urban areas, which are relatively close to London (approximately within a 100 km circle). The most popular areas are Central England west from London. 13 respondents marked a settlement as their permanent residential area in this region. Naturally, the situation is very similar in case of other areas close to the east, north and south of London. This fact correlates with the data presented by the Local Governments Association in 2008 under the title: 'where have recent in-migrants gone?' in that they mark that the most popular destinations except London are the territories around Birmingham, Leeds and the North-East of England. There are only three respondents who mark their place of residence outside England; Edinburg and Inverness in Scotland and Oswestry in Wales appear almost accidentally in the list. This allows for the following conclusion: London is still the most popular



destination for immigration from the Accession 8 countries, however in contrast with the total number of respondents it is evident that long-term immigrants more frequently choose their place of residence outside of but close to the British capital.

Another aspect of class belonging may occur when the places of residence of the Slovak immigrants are compared with the list of the most popular, or most expensive or most or least deprived areas of the United Kingdom represented by the Millionaires Neighbourhood Reports or produced by the Child Poverty Action Group. If we roughly compare the settlements' list with the maps of the CPAG 2010 report (available at: <http://www.cpag.org.nz/resources/>) we can see that the Slovaks live mostly in the areas where poverty is average or is below the average. The Millionaires Neighbourhood Report in 2010 revealed that the 200 most expensive streets are in London and in the South East of England. The majority of the Slovak respondents marked London and the urban areas close to London as their permanent residents, which indicates that these people belong among the wealthier stratum of the population and the families rent or own their homes in 'better' areas. Thus, we can draw the conclusion that one important class marker – the place of residence – suggests that the responding immigrant Slovak families represent a group the members of which are able to maintain a lifestyle that characterises middle classes in the United Kingdom.

The time, already spent in the UK was the next quantitative element of the questionnaire. As emphasized in the chapter discussing methodology, only respondents with at least 6 months of continuous stay in the UK were taken into consideration in accordance with the regulations of the British government's immigration authorities, which underlines that people living and working longer than half a year in the UK can be defined as immigrants. Shorter stay indicates migration, but only of temporary character in general. The average time spent in the UK by the Slovak respondents according to the questionnaire is 8 years and 6 months. The shortest time marked was 8 months and the longest was 44 years. There were 29 respondents who spent more than 10 years in the UK as legal residents. 40 respondents have already spent more than 5 years in the UK. The data indicate that these people can be characterised as long-term residents according to the criteria of this research. Consequently, their answers are accepted as relevant and sufficient for further investigation of the characteristics of long-term immigration, diaspora formation processes and cultural erosion.

Level of education was incorporated in the questionnaire for a series of reasons. Primarily, class and education is considered as two very tightly connected factors. Most of the reputed authors (e.g. Bourdieu) emphasize the fact that education might be one of the most relevant factors that define class belonging and is one of the cardinal prerequisites of social mobility. The level of education of the respondents is not analysed separately from the other questions in the survey. It can tell a lot about class belonging, when compared with questions that try to investigate financial situation, satisfaction and life perspectives. To establish the framework for the time being it is sufficient to underline that there were no respondents with only elementary education. The overwhelming majority of the respondents had gained some diploma. There were 58 respondents with university

degrees. They constituted the 61% of the total. 34 respondents marked secondary school as the highest level of education. The findings make it evident that with higher level of education the level of geographical mobility clearly rises. Higher level of education therefore can be considered as at least a contributing pull factor. When comparing this fact with the questions that analyse job positions, language abilities and long-term plans in the UK the survey reveals evident correlations.

Level of English mastery is an important factor in the process of successful integration in the British society. Though the British authorities do not define a concrete level of language mastery as a prerequisite for immigration into The United Kingdom it is, however, definitely inevitable for success and rises the chance of quick accommodation to the foreign cultural environment. Out of the 95 respondents the overwhelming majority classified language level as advanced testified by certificates. It is 44% of the total number of respondents. When we compare level of education with level of English mastery evident correlations can be observed. The majority of the respondents that marked their highest level of education as university type own a certificate of language proficiency and mark their level of English as very advanced. There is, however, a further fact revealed by the data: 11 respondents with university or secondary school education levels, who have been granted a certificate about language mastery were unemployed in Slovakia before their leave. This can be interpreted as an important correlation of pull and push factors. Being unemployed as well as highly educated with language mastery seem to be the perfect combination that supports immigration to the UK. A further fact is also important to emphasize, notably that the majority of the respondents characterized language mastery as very good, good, and sufficient for work in the UK. Only 4 respondents marked their language level as poor. 3 of them have a university degree and only one respondent with secondary level education marked that his/her level of English is not sufficient. This also suggests that language mastery is not an obstacle when deciding for immigration. In summary, the majority of the respondents, 62 people, marked their level of English as very good or good. Since the average time the respondents have spent in the United Kingdom is 8 years and 6 months we can state that high level of language mastery and successful integration in the British society show correlation.

Language preferences show an even distribution. The majority of the respondents marked that use Slovak language. Slovak is used in families and in private communication. 20 respondents stated that English is the exclusive language they use privately and in everyday professional communication. This constitutes 21% of all the respondents. Roughly three quarters of the total respondents use Slovak for private communication and 14 respondents marked that Slovak is the exclusive language that is used for home communication. These data show affiliation to Slovak language and culture when compared to further points of the survey.

The use of communication channels in combination with language preferences in the family show the general attitudes and the level of cultural erosion, too. 25% of the informants watch Slovak TV channels and listen to Slovak radio stations. The majority of those who follow Slovak media use Slovak as the

dominant language in the family, too. This fact can be considered as a mark of isolationist attitude that might contribute to diaspora formation processes. Further research is needed to clarify it, though. A relatively significant level of assimilation is represented by the high level of responses marking that regardless the respondents have access to Slovak media they do not use it. 47, out of 95 respondents, the biggest group, marked this option in the survey. If we add the 12 respondents who marked there is no access to Slovak media but they do not even want to have one the number of Slovaks who virtually show no interest in following the media of the home country is rather high. 61% of the respondents show little or no interest at all in Slovak media. 12 respondents chose the option that they would like to watch and listen to Slovak channels if they had a chance, which is 13% of the total. Thus it can be concluded that the majority of Slovaks living in the United Kingdom is rather reluctant or indifferent in connection with the political, cultural and popular events that are accessible via the media in the United Kingdom.

Many studies emphasize the fact that an important pull factor for the new immigrants is the already existent network of friends and acquaintances in the target country. The survey, however, does not discover a surprising fact in this aspect. 52% of the respondents answered they had friends and acquaintances in the country before they arrived. Though, this is a slight majority it is definitely not sufficient to allow us to state that Slovak immigrants pull further waves of Slovaks to the country. According to the equal distribution of the answers this statement is not supported neither contradicted. Networks of acquaintances do not seem to be a definite pull factor for Slovak immigration.

What is more significant in this respect is connected with language and travel. Question 8 investigates what do the informants consider to be the most important factor that contributed to their move to the UK. Since the respondents were allowed to choose more than one option the cumulative results can add up to more than 100%, but the distribution of the answers show that the primary reason for the move was the will to study the language and to see the country. Naturally, economic reasons are also visible since the third biggest group of the answers clearly mark that quite a significant group moved to earn more money than in Slovakia. These people were employed and therefore, though the financial motif is undeniably present it is possible to assume that direct unemployment cannot be considered as the main motivating factor of Slovak immigration to the UK for the respondents of the survey. This is underlined by the fact that only 14 respondents, 15% of the total left the country to find *some* job without concrete plans.

Question 9 analysed the level of integration in the British society. The majority of the respondents have an extensive network of friends and acquaintances both British and Slovak. 45 people, that is 47% of the respondents belong into this group. 32%, 30 informants expressed that the majority of their friends are British and that they have less or much less Slovak friends. The high level of mixed group friendship and the size of the group with more British friends allows for the assumption that the Slovaks have already reached a high level of integration in the British society which excludes the chance or at least relatively

hardens the formation and maintenance of diasporas. This leads to the conclusion that Slovak immigrants build social networks openly and successfully adapt to the foreign cultural environment. 14 people, 20% of the informants have more Slovak friends and acquaintances than British. When the data are examined in the light of the time already spent in the UK and in contrast with the level of language mastery there is observable some slight, but not very marked correlation. The average time the respondents have – who have many Slovak, but not very many British friends – spent in the UK is approximately 6 years. This seems to be insufficient for building extensive networks of friendship with the native population. Furthermore, the majority of the respondents categorised their English language mastery at a lower level, with the exception of 7, who stated they use English at an advanced level. Therefore, it seems to be valid to state that lower level of language mastery can contribute isolationist attitudes.

There is a relatively even distribution of answers concerning long-term plans and staying in the UK or returning home. 31 respondents, 33% would like to return home after 2-5 years, 35 respondents, 37%, would like to stay in the UK for at least 10 years. A relatively large number of respondents, 29 people, would like to stay in the UK definitely. This may indicate that the majority of the respondents still observe Slovakia as a possible shelter to return to if their financial situation allows this. Immigration studies however indicate and underline that the ‘myth to return’ is a widely perceivable phenomenon among first generation immigrants. Some answers of the Slovaks who clearly marked their intention to stay in the UK forever show that the Slovak parents see better chances for their children in the UK and therefore are ready to give up plans of return or postpone it to a much later time.

When we compare return plans and answers expressing general satisfaction of the respondents it is immediately perceivable that the UK seems to be and will remain for a long time a very attractive country for the Slovaks. 29 people expressed great satisfaction and happiness in connection to their general situation in the UK. This is 31% of the respondents. 20 respondents chose the option that indicated satisfaction and stated that their situation is better in the UK than in Slovakia. Only 7 respondents marked their situation as not very satisfying. None of the respondents commented this question in a negative way expressing complete dissatisfaction. The level of satisfaction is highlighted by the answers given to question 12 that investigated the level of satisfaction in connection to the job facilities. 52% of the respondents answered that had a very well paid job in the UK that fully matched their qualifications. This is an amazing bias indicating a very high level of success in integration and clearly contradicting to the statements of some British experts who emphasize that immigrants from the Eastern European countries may be a burden for the United Kingdom. The saturation of jobs, which was investigated in question thirteen, shows an even distribution. 19% of the respondents have had more than 5 jobs, 44% have had at least 3 jobs, 20% have had 2 jobs, but 17% have been working in his/her first job position since the arrival to the United Kingdom. Though, a higher job saturation may indicate difficulty in the accommodation process in the foreign language and cultural environment, the

general saturation of job changes is within a lower range. Approximately 3-4 jobs in 8 and a half-year average time of stay in the UK is not an extreme.

The description of different job positions revealed that the majority of the respondents is a professional and is doing a job that matches their qualification. 37% of the informants belonged in this group. When the answers to question 14 and the answers to question 12 (Do you have a good job?) are paralleled interesting correlations can be discovered. 28 respondents declared that they have university degree and did jobs that fully matched their qualification. 29% of the respondents thus show a high level of successful integration and satisfaction. A further 8 respondents belonged into the group who declared to have a well-paid job that fully matches their qualification. Together this adds up to 37% who were satisfied with their status quo, payment, and job position that fully matched their qualification.

14 respondents declared that they own a diploma, but their job in the UK did not match their level of qualification. This group produces the higher level showing dissatisfaction with their job as far as payment was considered. 9 respondents out of 14 declared dissatisfaction. This fact seems to support status-inconsistency theories described in chapter. The high level of satisfaction 52% in question 12 combined with the fact that in question 14 51% declared that their job is well-paid fully matching their qualification (university or blue collar) testifies the success of the integration processes. Generally, it can be declared that the majority of the Slovak immigrants successfully integrate not only socially, but in the world of work as well. They are able to find jobs that match their qualification and become regular tax-paying citizens. Thus, theories that highlight the possibility that Accession 8 immigrants might mean a burden for the British society are at a great extent contradictory. When combining these results with the distribution of answers for question 15 the evidence becomes even more perceivable where 55% of the respondents declared that they were very satisfied with their earnings and were able to lead a decent and very comfortable lifestyle. A further 34% of the respondents also expressed that they earn enough money to enjoy life in the UK. 4% of the respondents even felt that they belonged among the rich in the UK and only 4% declared that felt as a poor member of the society.

The following part of the questionnaire was designed to collect data from people who live in marriage (or in civil partnership) and raise children. 31 respondents had children from whom 22 respondents declared they lived in a common household with a Slovak person and 14 had British partners.

Question 18 was designed to map the level of Slovak language mastery at the children. 15 respondents declared that their children could speak English and Slovak equally well. 9 respondents declared that their children speak better English than Slovak and 6 stated that their children's Slovak is better than English. The question whether these children live in mixed marriages can be answered when comparing question 16 with question 18. 6 out of the 9 children who could speak better English than Slovak came from mixed marriages, however 3 were from families where the mother and the father were both Slovaks. There was one family, mixed marriage, where the children could not speak Slovak at all. These data

allow for the assumption that assimilation processes are relatively strong even in the families where both parents are of Slovak origin. When these data are put in contrast with the results presented in question 5, which investigated the respondents' will or wish to follow the Slovak media, it is possible to declare that interest in Slovak media and Slovak language is lower at the second generation of the Slovak immigrants. There is, however very little correlation between the Slovak language mastery of the children and the media usage of their parents.

Further aspects can be deduced when comparing the parents' will to teach Slovak language to their children. In question 23, which question was incorporated to map the parents' behaviour, 13 parents declared that their children speak Slovak, but the parents do not teach them the language. 12 parents declared that their children speak Slovak and they also teach them the language. 2 parents try to teach Slovak to their children who do not speak the language and 1 informant, whose children don't speak Slovak, does not teach the language at all. It can be assumed that there is a relatively weak effort from the side of the parents to hand down Slovak language to the next generation which underlines the conjecture that there is a relatively rapid assimilation process among the Slovaks living in the UK.

As far as education facilities are concerned, the overwhelming majority of the parents declared that their children study in state-maintained schools. 23 out of 25 parents marked this possibility in the questionnaire. When this result is put into contrast with question 20 it is visible that only 3 respondents chose a distant school of higher quality. Time and distance thus seem to play an important role in these families' lives which, according to Bourdeau and others, suggest working-class behaviour in the majority of the cases and shorter-term planning schemes when the future of the children is concerned. There were only 3 respondents declaring that their children travel longer distance for better education. On the other hand the majority of the respondents, 12, declared that the local school their children are studying at belonged among the prestigious ones. Further investigation is needed to clarify the concept of 'prestigious' in the respondents' understanding.

When the quality of education in the British school was investigated 60 responses had to be analysed. To make a distinction between the comments from the respondents with and without children the answers were contrasted with parts of the questionnaire that were designed to map the couples with children and their answers are analysed separately from those ones that answered this question on the basis of their personal experience with one or more educational institution. It was thus possible to clarify the difference between adult education and elementary/secondary education. The comparative analysis of the answers revealed the following facts:

The majority of the responding parents, 11, declared that the British schools are worse than the Slovak schools. 5 of them stated that the British schools are better and 9 parents see the two systems as equal.

The respondents without children showed the following pattern:

4 informants with no children declared that the British schools are worse, 3 saw them as equal with the Slovak schools and 4 consider British schools as better ones.

4 respondents did not make clear declarations but commented on the question emphasizing that the British schools are different from the Slovak schools mainly in the fact that in Britain the schools concentrate on creative work manifested in projects while the Slovak system enforces memorizing and encyclopaedic knowledge.

Naturally the results in this form are rather superficial and need clarification which is part of the qualitative analysis.

The overall results show that out of 60 respondents 15 respondents (9 with children) evidently see the British schools as worse than their Slovak equivalents. 13 declared the schools are equal and only 7 (5 with children) see British schools are better than the Slovak ones. The results reveal an important fact, notably the schools and education can hardly be considered as a significant pull factor for the immigrants.

As far as national belonging is considered 29 respondents answered the question whether the classmates of their children know about their Slovak origin. The overwhelming majority, 27 declared that the children know this information. It suggests that different nationality does not mean an obstacle and the schools are tolerant towards differences.

As far as religion and religious education is concerned, question 25 provided the following answers:

Out of 25 respondents 11 parents declared that their children receive religious education at school and they consider it as an important factor. 10 respondents declared that their children do not receive religious education and they do not consider this kind of education to be important. Further 3 respondents declared that their children did receive religious education, but they did not consider this type of education important. One respondent stated that he/she would wish his/her child received religious education, but it was not possible in their location. These facts reveal that there is still a relatively strong conviction from the parents' side that religion and religious education is important for their children. The fact that almost half of the respondents gave reluctant answers for this question allows for the assumption, however, that religion does not play a crucial role in the life of immigrant Slovaks and cannot be considered as a powerful cohesive power. Thus it cannot contribute to diaspora-formation processes, which is not characteristic for the Slovak communities in Britain if we compare this fact with the previous answers investigating social networks and friendships.

#### **4. Discussion**

This paper came to existence along the intersection of two extensive fields of cultural studies: education and immigration. The objective was to gain a comprehensive overview about the life of Slovak immigrants in the United Kingdom during a complex integration process in a culturally distinct environment. This work concentrates on the aspects of ethnicity, class, and religion and their interactions in the British system of education in order to understand and interpret

the manifestation and impacts of these concepts on the integration process of Slovak immigrants in the United Kingdom. This part brings together the various findings of a multiple method exploration and contrasts it with the processes of change within the British education system in order to evaluate them against the research questions and the established literature. The limitations of the study and ideas for future research are also presented here.

#### **4.1. Ethnicity**

Research revealed, and the results of this investigation support that there is an evident need for reevaluation of concepts in the field of ethnic belonging and the characteristics of diasporic existence. The present open and, to a great extent, multi-ethnic societies – and the United Kingdom is evidently a shining example of one – perceive ethnicity differently than it was viewed in the pre 1989 period as Safran, Kokot, Tölölyan, Alfonso and others suggest (2004). Ethnicity, in the modern democracies, is not an exclusive term any more but a possibility to precisely define identity in multiple spheres. Diasporas – perceived as the ultimate representations of minority existence – do not behave as isolated communities in the sea of the majority culture but are open constructions that organically integrate into the majority society while preserving a considerable part of their original identity and are able to present their connection with the homeland as a symbolical relation (see Kokot, Tölölyan, Alfonso, 2004:3) while maintaining active connections with the majority society. This observation is clearly supported by the research results. Evidence shows that there exist at least two groupings of Slovak immigrants (one in Aldershot and a following one in London) that bear the characteristics of this modern understanding of diaspora. Quantitative research revealed that the majority of the Slovak immigrants who participated on data collection have developed extensive social networks in the UK, where there is almost no evidence of observing themselves as separate from the mainstream society. This finding is greatly supported by the results of quantitative analysis where the informants emphasized the importance of integration on one hand while within close social interaction were able to successfully maintain national identity on purely ethnic basis. Ackerman's observation on diasporas exploiting the advantages of modern telecommunication technologies is also observable in the light of the research (see Kokot, Tölölyan, Alfonso, 2004:5). Results show that existing Slovak diasporic communities have access to the modern telecommunication facilities and their members actively maintain contact with their families in the homeland on a daily basis. It is also possible to follow political, cultural and popular events of the homeland in Slovak language in the UK via satellite transmission which contributes to the stabilization and strengthening of the Slovak identity. According to the research results only a smaller proportion of the informants use these facilities actively, though the possibility is present and this fact definitely contributes to the preservation of the homeland culture – at least in case of the first generation immigrants. It was also discovered that due to the use of the modern communication facilities Slovak diasporas were able to expand into the Internet world where connections are easier



to maintain and the members are able to exchange information more effectively. Thus, Safran's observation about the 'critical mass' (2004:17) should be expanded in the direction of the cyber world. Real physical presence is not inevitable anymore when talking about diasporic communities; the concept can be better characterized when Internet communities are taken into consideration, too. The numerous Slovak communities in the UK that present themselves on the web are the shining example of this change. This only underlines Safran's observation that "The label diaspora has come to be used rather freely, because multiple identities are now more acceptable than they were before" (Safran 2004:12). The results of quantitative and qualitative data collection support this statement at least in case of the British cultural environment where the Slovaks have the full right to define their diasporic groups as the highest form of minority existence that is able to go beyond separation and isolation that was so much characteristic for the earlier, trauma-motivated, concepts of dispora.

As far as education is concerned the results of the research proved a high level of integration, in a number of cases assimilation, among Slovaks. Primary importance was assigned to language mastery. The respondents, almost unanimously, underlined that language skills play a crucial role in successful integration; moreover language learning in its natural environment appeared as one of the key pull factors when motifs for immigration were analysed. When language mastery has achieved a sufficient level there usually appeared the need to obtain comparable and compatible education with the British one, though the respondents underlined the differences in the perception of the role of education for career building.

The second generation showed a higher level of integration-assimilation, where knowledge of English language does not mean a problem any more. On the other hand, fast integration processes are perceivable among the respondents that contribute to a rapid change of Slovak identity into a British one. It is not only the extensive legislative background that clearly contributes to the tolerance towards ethnic minorities in the British schools, since quantitative research revealed that the respondents do not feel the need to hide their Slovak identity. The majority of the respondents underlined that the classmates of their children know about their Slovak origin. This finding partially underline the success of the existing multicultural educational model in Britain and to a great extent contributes to the successful integration (in a number of cases assimilation) of the Slovak children.

In summary, the extensive and detailed legislative framework that governs and ensures tolerant and welcoming atmosphere in the British educational and other social institutions as well as the evident effort of the Slovak immigrants to successfully integrate into the structures of the British social frameworks contribute to a high level of integration among Slovaks, while the expanded possibilities of diasporic existence enable successful identity building maintaining the cultural heritage of the homeland and active communication among the members.

#### **4.2. Religion**

Being an integral element of diaspora concepts as well as a dominant characteristic of the British system of education, religion and religious education play a crucial role when developing the complex picture of the state of art in the field of education. Religion cannot be treated separately from ethnicity in a society, where legal documents govern and regulate the process of religious education and common worship. This environment, however, is under close legislative control and research underlined the observation of Grace Davie, who defines Britain as “an advanced industrial society with Christian tradition” (1994:7). The role of religion in maintaining cohesion among the members of the British society has undergone a considerable shift and present legislation points to the direction where securing religious freedom for all members is one of the primary objectives. The British society has completed a long journey since the first Relief Act in 1778 and the present legislation does not enforce Protestantism as the one exclusively acceptable religious practice. Tradition, however, underlines the role of Christian teachings and the present legislation feels the need to adhere to it by defining the ‘correct form’ of religious education on ‘broadly Christian bases’.

Religion, however, does not seem to play a crucial role in the life of Slovak immigrants. Results of the conducted research revealed a relatively high level of reluctance towards religious practices. The majority of the respondents do not perceive religion as one crucial element of their identity and qualitative research revealed that religious traditions (e.g. Easter festival organised by social clubs of the Slovak immigrants) has transformed into a possibility to meet other members of the community and enjoy each others community rather than strict following of the religious traditions and teachings. A similar tendency was observable in connection with the educational practice. Only a minor proportion considered religious education an important factor for their children, while qualitative research revealed that there is a perceivable bias towards Catholic schools, which springs from the perception that these institutions provide ‘higher quality’ education and is not connected with religious conviction or tradition.

To sum up, religious conviction and religious education do not seem to play a crucial role for Slovak immigrants neither in educational relations nor in the minority existence. Though, a smaller proportion of the respondents follow religious traditions these have rather personal character serving primarily as interesting elements of a cultural heritage than a strong cohesive factor as far as diaspora is concerned.

#### **4.3. Class**

Class has been perceived differently in the UK and in the post-war Czechoslovakia. While western theorists went beyond the Marxist explanation of class, Eastern Europe – having been devoted to the building of communism as the ultimately ideal social system – rigidly refused the validity of class stratification and social differentiation on class bases. The concept of a classless society, however, is much older and goes back as far as the 15<sup>th</sup> century in the Czech and Slovak understanding, when Petr Chelčický first preached about pacifism and a

classless society (Routledge Encyclopaedia of Philosophy: available at: <http://www.rep.routledge.com/article/N010>, accessed 17 September 2012). Research proved that immigrant Slovaks mostly ignore the concept of class and define their social status mostly on the ground of 'success' where the concept of success is imagined as the interaction of factors such as: ability to integrate into the British society (learn the language and find a job); ability to gain suitable education in Britain (i.e. which is equivalent or comparable with the British education); ability to develop extensive social networks of friendships with the British; and ability to settle down in a 'pleasant' region of the UK. Income and language mastery are the two crucial factors that actually count when defining the social status. Thus it is possible to agree with Levin stating that "Status honour is normally expressed by the fact that above all else a specific style of life is expected from all those who wish to belong to the circle" (Levin, 1998:49). Research underlined the validity of this statement. There has not passed possibly a long enough time that would have enabled the stratification of the Slovak immigrant groups according to the lines of status honour. This tendency is, however, vaguely perceivable as – at least at the level of diasporic groups – it is possible to differentiate 'leaders' and 'members' or the ones who have deeper integrated in the British society, for example respondents from mixed marriages.

Elements of defining minority existence along class lines are, however, perceivable when education is concerned. The respondents clearly perceived differences between the state-maintained and private educational institutions. A further class element that appeared during the investigation was the geographical location of schools. Respondents were aware with the 'qualitative differences' that sprung from the disadvantaged location of some state maintained educational institutions. A further factor that reveals how Slovak immigrants observe class within education was connected with the fact that among the respondents there was only a statistically insignificant minority who could afford private school education for their children.

Ball's discovery that "Ideas about school were often subordinated to considerations of family, and locality..." (Ball, 2006:162) was partially proved by the conducted research. Slovak immigrant families choose the education institutions for their children primarily according to the lines of practical considerations of time and space – providing that financial situation is not included as a main decisive factor. This follows very much the British working class patterns. Ball's statement that "Family life, and things such as school choice is, are played out within, and over against, a space and time budget" (Ball 2006:163) is perceivable when analyzing the research results. Ball's observation that "Parental aspirations are often vague and are often limited by the wants and needs of the children themselves" (Ball 2006:164) is also valid as Slovak immigrant families often follow this pattern when choosing schools. Mixed marriage families showed different tendency. They were more likely to invest time and money when education is concerned. The most important factors for them that determine school choice were: reputation, size of school, direct contact with the school, the image of schools conveyed by their students, school ethos and climate, etc. This type of

thinking requires higher level of integration into the British society and for first generation immigrant families is not accessible as it requires long-term and extensive social networks which enable the transfer of information in connection with experiences and myths in connection to the educational institutions. . As Ball in accordance with Bourdieu and Edwards underline “[middle-class] parents are often able to employ forms of direct contact and negotiation which can be vital in accessing ... [a] school” (Ball, 2006:170) which is simply unimaginable for ‘fresh’ immigrants living in the UK no longer than 6-10 years.

In conclusion, class consciousness of Slovak immigrants can be considered rather vague. The relatively short term of existence and active participation in the British society have not allowed for a perceivable class stratification of the already existing communities. Decision making, when choosing a suitable educational institution is not as much conscious among the immigrant Slovaks as for example among the respondents who live in mixed marriages. Limited social networks and lack of tradition in this respect block the development of a more sophisticated choice-making.

## **5. Conclusion**

In the light of the theoretical framework of this paper as well as based on the data found through the data collection phase the following conclusions can be drawn: tradition and historical experience forced the British society to accommodate to the situation when the UK is perceived by many nations as a highly developed and very open democratic society that offers almost ‘unlimited’ chances for better life. British lawmakers – mainly from the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century – made an effort to prepare the legal framework of a multicultural society ensuring minority rights and enforcing education for those who primarily get into contact with the immigrant groups. Since cultural differences are not very much striking as far as Slovak immigrants are concerned it is possible to state that the process of integration of Slovak immigrants is less complicated than for example the integration of visible minorities. This fact, however, greatly contributes to a faster assimilation process that is clearly perceivable at the second generation. Therefore, it can be stated that the British society is prepared to deal with the problems that are connected with the integration of the Slovak immigrants; open and democratic and the actual legal framework is sufficient to handle these problems.

Slovak immigrant groups do exist in the United Kingdom. They are not extensive or numerous and their members maintain rather loose connections within the groups. Religion and religious tradition do not play a crucial role in the lifestyle of the immigrant Slovaks. Being of Christian character it is not in conflict with the mainstream society’s concepts of religious practice. The traditions that are practiced within the diasporic groups are of rather ‘informative’ character and serve primarily the need to handle down the cultural heritage and Slovak identity to the next generations.

As the research results underlined education is not the key to become 'fully British' but evidently is among the necessary requirements. What kind of education is available for the immigrant Slovaks is however a much more important question that might have a significant impact on their integration process. Regional differences and financial possibilities can have a crucial impact on the level of their Britishness. The choice of school for the second generation may be a crucial element as it greatly influences the future possibilities and prospects for the children to achieve and maintain at least a solid middle-class status. At this moment, however, rather impossible for Slovak immigrants to enter the world of prestigious public schools or other privately operated educational institutions. Most of the Slovak immigrant parents are not aware with the traditional connections between the different elementary and secondary educational institutions and therefore their only possibility is to rely on the publicly available data about the schools concerning purely GCSE statistics or OFSTED reports.

As far as legal framework is concerned the different acts that govern the functioning of the British schools ensure unbiased and fair approach towards the Slovak immigrant children and their parents. The number of these children, however, does not allow to design specialised programs for them which has the definite consequence that the children are unintentionally 'forced to assimilate'. Slovak identity is accepted and neither the parents nor the children have problems to confess it openly in the schools, but the possibilities of these institutions are rather limited when special 'Slovak' programs are concerned and the only available way to maintain Slovak identity for these children is connected exclusively with the social clubs where they have a chance to meet partners with similar ethnic background.

### **Limitations**

When evaluating the possible scope and impact of this research it is important to underline that certain limitations must be taken into consideration: Firstly, extensive research concerning the actual life of Slovak immigrants does not exist or has not been published yet, which means that the amount of available data is rather limited to draw valid generalizations. Secondly, Slovak diasporic groups have had a short tradition in the UK. Slovak immigrants live rather scattered in the United Kingdom which hardens the establishment and maintenance of such communities. Moreover, Slovak immigrants are characterized by a relatively high level of mobility that also hardens the process of contacting them even when using the most modern communication facilities.

Therefore the present research should be understood as a springboard which at best might serve as inspiration for further investigation in the different fields that describe the life of Slovak immigrants in the United Kingdom. Aspects of class, religion and ethnicity have been analyzed in relation to education which does not allow to include a series of factors that might be useful for further investigation. Therefore, the present work should be seen as an initial effort to broaden the scope of immigration research towards the aspects of life of Accession 8 immigrants in the United Kingdom.

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**SECTION TWO:**  
**ELT STUDIES**



# THE PERCEIVED ROLE OF L2 ENGLISH IN THE PROCESS OF LEARNING L3 GERMAN

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***Abstract:** The central aim of my research is to investigate the third language learning processes of L1 Hungarian high-school learners learning L2 English and L3 German. More specifically, I aim at revealing to what extent Hungarian learners rely on their knowledge of their L1 and L2 as well as on the learning strategies they have developed while learning their L2.*

***Keywords:** English, German, Hungarian, perceived distance, third language acquisition, third language learning*

## 1. Introduction

The past two decades have witnessed an increasing interest in the field of third language acquisition (TLA) research. This interest is rooted in the fact that the majority of the world's population is multilingual (e.g. Crystal 1997) rather than monolingual, and present-day research is focussed on the processes prevailing in multilingual communities and/or among multilingual individuals.

In the past few years, researchers studying third language acquisition processes in the multilingual mind from an educational point of view have concluded that an additional language learnt beyond the mother tongue and the first foreign language makes a qualitative difference, not only a quantitative one. The complexity of TLA is best explained by Cenoz and Genesee's claim that TLA is much more complex than SLA because of the greater number of languages involved, and because of 'the factors and processes associated with second language acquisition and bilingualism as well as unique and potentially more complex factors and effects associated with the interactions that can take place among the multiple languages being learned, and the processes of learning them' (1998:16).

There are several factors that influence third language acquisition processes (e.g., Cenoz 2001, De Angelis 2007, Hall and Ecke 2003, Jarvis and Pavlenko 2007, Odlin 1989). From the point of view of third language learners, cross-linguistic influence seems to be one of the most decisive phenomena due to several reasons. First of all, the existence of similarities and differences between languages in a linguistic sense can occur at basically all linguistic levels; some of the levels, such as the level of lexis, orthography and phonology have been studied more extensively from the perspective of TLA, while others, such as that of syntax, semantics and morphology are explored to lesser degrees. Secondly, beyond the similarities and differences between languages in a linguistic sense, the importance of the language learners' own perceptions need to be emphasised; it is the

perceived similarities and differences between languages that play a role when recognising novel elements of a target language.

The present paper is intended as a contribution to TLA literature with the involvement of L1 Hungarian learners learning L2 English and L3 German. Hungary is a fundamentally monolingual country where a significant number of people are involved in multilingual processes. This is especially true for language learners in the Hungarian education system most of whom have to learn two foreign languages either simultaneously or in succession. While the Hungarian National Core Curriculum regulates the number of languages and the target levels that learners have to reach by the end of their high school education, it does not prescribe any harmonisation of the learning processes of the two compulsory foreign languages. Therefore, foreign languages are typically taught as if the language in question were the only foreign language ever learnt by the learner.

The research results presented in this paper are parts of a larger research project that aims at understanding Hungarian learners' third language learning processes with a long-term aim to contribute to creating a curriculum that acknowledges the differences between learning (and teaching) a foreign language as a second or as a third (or fourth, etc.) language, and thus possibly facilitates and makes more effective the complex task of language learning.

The longitudinal study designed for the above purposes had a dual aim: first, to design materials based on comparing and contrasting the structures and the vocabulary of English and German, and second, to use these materials with two groups of secondary school language learners representing two different age groups and two different levels of proficiency, that is with the two treatment groups of this study. Both the learners' own perceptions of their learning process as well as their objective development were tested at regular intervals in the course of four months. The data presented in this study provides information about the subjects' own subjective evaluation of their learning process.

## **2. Research Question**

The general question I aim to answer is whether L1 Hungarian language learners benefit from a special teaching material designed with the purpose of outlining cross-linguistic similarities and differences between the two foreign languages learnt by them, namely, their L2 English and L3 German. In the present paper I aim to answer the following sub-questions:

- a) What is the learners' own perception of the effects of their L1 and L2 on their third language learning? Do language learners rely more on their L1 Hungarian, at which they are more proficient, or their L2 English, which is typologically closer to their L3 German? Will their perception change as the result of the instruction?
- b) Does the length of time spent on learning languages (both L2s and L3s) as well as proficiency level have an impact on the foreign language awareness and the language learning strategies of learners? That is, is there a difference between more versus less experienced learners?

### **3. Methodology**

#### **3.1 Subjects**

As I have mentioned above, it is secondary school learners who frequently learn two languages simultaneously, therefore, I have chosen the following groups of secondary school learners as subjects of my research:

1. *Treatment group 1, henceforth Group T1*: 15 secondary school learners in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade with English L2 at the start of learning L3 German.
2. *Treatment group 2, henceforth Group T2*: 10 secondary school learners in the 11<sup>th</sup> grade, who have been studying L2 English and L3 German simultaneously for at least 2.5 years.

When selecting the groups, the most important consideration was Lindemann's (1998:164-165) suggestion, that longitudinal studies should optimally be conducted with learner groups who are as homogenous as possible from the point of view of their linguistic biographies in order to eliminate the effects of languages beyond the L1 and L2. Here, the learners within the groups were at very similar levels in German, since the groups were created as beginner German language groups by the school and were instructed by the same German teacher. As regards their English lessons, the learners were regrouped in different English language groups, therefore their knowledge of English shows a greater variety, but all the learners are more proficient in English and in German.

#### **3.2 Procedure**

The research was conducted in the 2009/2010 academic year. The four-month data collection period in the spring semester (February through May, 2010) was preceded by a preparatory phase in the fall semester (September through December). At the start of the spring semester, in February, 2010, all subjects were asked to fill in a questionnaire on their linguistic biographies and placement tests both in English and in German. The information on the linguistic biographies and the proficiency levels of the subjects was analysed in order to ascertain that the subjects within the individual groups are similar and that the groups are comparable.

As the next research phase, the special treatment sessions started with Groups T1 and T2, whom I met on 10–12 occasions throughout the spring semester for a 45-minute session in one of their German lessons approximately once in a fortnight. The learners in each group had three German lessons a week, meaning that I met the treatment groups for the special sessions approximately every sixth lesson. I instructed them with the help of a teaching material designed in a way that English and German were constantly compared and contrasted, but at the same time, as regards the contents (both grammatical and lexical), it fit the curriculum. (This was especially important, as the two treatment groups' achievement was contrasted against those of two control groups. The results of this comparison are, however, not reported in the present paper.)

### **3.3 Research Instruments**

The subjects' own perception of their learning processes was assessed with the help of questionnaires. Using Winters-Ohle and Seipp's (2001) questionnaire as a basis, I asked the subjects to report on their own views in connection with influence from other languages. The questionnaire was filled in three times by both groups (at the beginning, in the middle and at the end of the data collection period). The results of the Likert-scale type of questionnaire are compared across the two groups as well as within the treatment groups in order to trace the changes in the learning strategies of the subjects as a result of the instruction.

The questionnaire contains information on the learners' own perceptions on the roles of their L1 Hungarian and L2 English while learning L3 German. The answers to the questions on understanding a new word, learning a new word, learning grammatical rules, spelling and pronunciation were expressed by the subjects in terms of a numerical scale, frequency was indicated as 1 = (almost) never, 2 = rarely, 3 = sometimes, 4 = often and 5 = (almost) always. In order to answer the research questions, the group means achieved by the treatment groups were analysed in all ten aspects across the three data recordings.

## **4. Results**

I will present the data obtained with the help of the questionnaires as follows: in section 4.1 the results of the younger and less advanced treatment group (T1) will be presented, while in 4.2 the results of the older and more advanced group (T2) will be discussed. Finally, the difference in the results of the two treatment groups, T1 and T2 will be contrasted in 4.3.

### **4.1 Results of Group T1**

I have summarised the results achieved by Group T1 in the individual categories in Tables 1 and 2. In the first line of Table 1 information is presented on the facilitating role of English and Hungarian on learning German as perceived by the subjects in Group T1 prior to the treatment sessions in February 2010. In the second and third lines of Table 1 we can see how the values have changed by the middle of April 2010, that is, by the middle of the data collection period, after the subjects have participated in five comparative sessions, and by the end of May 2010, after the data collection period ended. In Table 2 we can see the values reflecting the perceived hindering role of English and Hungarian on learning German across the same three periods of time that is February, April and May 2010. Tests of statistical significance were carried out at  $p \leq .05$  in order to see whether there was a significant change between the initial February results compared to the final results in May.

Table 1 reveals that at the time of the first assessment (and prior to starting the teaching sessions), in February 2010, the members of Group T1 on average found that, on a scale of 1 to 5, English helped them to a greater extent than Hungarian in four out of the five aspects, that is, when trying to understand new German words, when trying to learn new German words, when learning spelling

and pronunciation, but that, however, Hungarian had a greater facilitating role when learning grammar rules than English. On the whole, by the end of the treatment period, there was a statistically significant increase in T1 subjects' perception of the facilitating role of English, whereas there is a non-significant extent of decrease in T1 subjects' perception of the facilitating role of Hungarian. Analysing the results in detail, if we consider the values associated with the facilitating role of English, we can find that it is in connection with vocabulary – both as regards understanding and learning – that the learners have reported the highest values. Compared to the means on the facilitating role of English when understanding and learning German vocabulary, the subjects in Group T1 perceived the helping role of English to lesser degrees.

The questionnaire was re-administered for the second time in April 2010 after five comparative sessions designed with the intention of instructing the subjects on the similarities and differences in English and German. A comparison of the February and the April lines of Tables 1 and 2 reveals that changes in the subjects' perceptions about the role of English in their learning German have started to operate. There is a conspicuous increase in the T1 group means in all aspects, both regarding the helping and the hindering factors. The total means scores assessing the helping role of English increased by 0.45 points, while the totals means of the hindering role increased by 0.35 points (Tables 1 and 2).

Although the purpose of the comparative lessons primarily was to facilitate L3 language learning with the help of the L2, it seems that the conscious comparison and contrasting of the two languages resulted in a raised awareness in the relationship between the two languages, with the result that not only the facilitating role increased, but also the difficulties, although the latter did only to a lesser extent.

By the time the questionnaire was administered for the third time, at the end of May 2010, all the treatment sessions were over. As regards the facilitating nature of English, the results show a remarkable tendency, namely, that after a major increase at the time of the second data collection, the values decreased somewhat to reach higher levels than the initial February results. As the mean column of Table 1 shows, the total mean started out at 2.68, shot as high as 3.13, and finally settled at 3.01. In my opinion, the increase between the first and the second data collection sessions can be explained by the initial interest of the subjects in the new method and the heightened levels of awareness in the new method's wake. The fact that no linear increase can be pointed out may be attributable to the method losing its 'novelty' in the eyes of the subjects and becoming a regular and routine-like way of approaching language. However, it needs to be emphasised that all five of the values describing the helping function of L2 English when learning L3 German are higher at the end of the experiment and the difference between the February and the May results. With the help of paired sample T-tests I calculated whether the differences between the February and the April results reveal a significant difference concerning mean scores. The alpha decision level was set at  $p \leq .05$ . The results indicate that the differences between the February and April results are significant at the 0.05 level in the case of Group

T1. Comparing the February results with the ones in May – despite the drop in the scores – they still remained significant at the 0.05 level.

As we have seen above, the L2 English seems to play a more important role in L3 learners' German than their Hungarian mother tongue, and this role seems to have gained even more significance by the end of the treatment period. As the data reveals, however, there have also been changes in the learners' perception of the role of their L1 Hungarian during their German studies. It needs to be emphasised that the treatment sessions did not include any material on the comparison and contrast of Hungarian and German (nor Hungarian and English). If we compare the February results in Tables 1 and 2, as presented above, we can see that even initially, prior to the treatment sessions, the learners themselves assigned a higher facilitating role to their L2 English than to their L1 Hungarian. The values are higher in four categories (understanding and learning new words, spelling and grammar) and lower.

T1	when trying to understand a new German word		when trying to learn a new German word		when learning grammar rules		with German spelling		with German pronunciation		MEAN	
	EN helps	HU helps	EN helps	HU helps	EN helps	HU helps	EN helps	HU helps	EN helps	HU helps	EN helps	HU helps
February	3.47	3.00	3.20	3.14	2.43	2.64	2.29	2.07	2.00	1.86	<b>2.68</b>	<b>2.54</b>
April	3.80	3.20	3.53	3.33	3.27	3.07	2.53	2.40	2.53	2.40	<b>3.13</b>	<b>2.88</b>
May	3.67	2.67	3.47	2.87	3.13	2.33	2.40	2.07	2.40	2.00	<b>3.01</b>	<b>2.39</b>
p (Febr. – May)											<b>0.038*</b>	<b>0.932</b>

Table 1. The facilitating effect of L1 Hungarian and L2 English while learning L3 German (Group T1). Results that are statistically significant at  $p \leq .05$  are marked with an asterisk (\*).

T1	when trying to understand a new German word		when trying to learn a new German word		when learning grammar rules		with German spelling		with German pronunciation		MEAN	
	EN causes difficulty	HU causes difficulty	EN causes difficulty	HU causes difficulty	EN causes difficulty	HU causes difficulty	EN causes difficulty	HU causes difficulty	EN causes difficulty	HU causes difficulty	EN causes difficulty	HU causes difficulty
February	2.57	1.86	2.29	1.43	<b>2.53</b>	2.15	3.14	2.15	2.79	1.92	<b>2.66</b>	<b>1.90</b>
April	2.87	2.40	3.00	2.40	<b>2.60</b>	2.27	3.47	2.27	3.13	2.40	<b>3.01</b>	<b>2.35</b>
May	2.47	1.93	2.60	1.80	<b>2.73</b>	1.93	3.20	1.73	3.27	2.00	<b>2.85</b>	<b>1.88</b>
p (Febr. – May)											<b>0.484</b>	<b>0.531</b>

Table 2. The hindering effect of L1 Hungarian and L2 English while learning L3 German (Group T1). The results are statistically not significant at  $p \leq .05$ .

only in the category of learning grammar. The patterns of the values obtained at the second and third data collection are the same, as in the case of the facilitating factor of English when learning German, that is, they are significantly higher at the second time and fall back at the third time. It is interesting to note, however, that the values in the case of the facilitating effect of Hungarian all drop under or to the same level as the February values (except for the case of pronunciation). If we compare the May results with the February scores, we can see that by the end of the treatment period the facilitating effect of Hungarian was perceived at lower rates than that of English.

Regarding four of the factors associated with L1 Hungarian causing difficulties when learning L3 German, the same phenomenon can be observed as with the facilitating factors: after the increase in April, they fall back to results higher than originally in three cases (learning new German words, spelling and pronunciation) and fall below the original score in one case (understanding new German words), while there is a more linear increase in the perception of difficulties when learning German grammar. A possible reason for this pattern of the results will be discussed later, when T1 and T2 are compared in section 4.3.

The results on the role of L1 Hungarian can be explained by the fact that even though Hungarian is the learners' mother tongue, and, therefore, their Hungarian proficiency is at a native level, because of the typological distance of Hungarian from both English and German, it causes less (positive or negative) cross-linguistic influence in the learners' minds. Therefore, I argue that research question (a) with respect to Group T1 can be answered in a way that typological closeness seems to be the decisive factor for them when attempting to find facilitating factors when learning L3 German; thus, this part of the hypothesis is verified. The instruction results in an increased awareness of the facilitating role of English; however, at the same time, the perception of the hindering effects of English also increases. The English-German instruction seems to have caused a change in the awareness of the role of Hungarian, too. As regards both the facilitating and the hindering factors, the role of Hungarian decreased by the end of the data collection period.

#### **4.2 Results of Group T2**

Tables 3 and 4 represent the mean scores of Group T2 in the individual categories associated with the facilitating and hindering roles of L1 Hungarian and L2 English across the three testing periods. As we can see, in two categories (understanding and learning new German words) the scores slightly decreased by April and reached the original levels again in May. There is a linear increase as regards the values in grammar, and an increase and a decrease to levels above the original values in spelling and pronunciation. None of the values are significant at the 0.05 level.

As far as the difficulties caused by English are concerned, we can see that as the result of the treatment sessions, the subjects perceived more difficulties by the end of the treatment period than initially in four categories (understanding new words, learning grammar, spelling and pronunciation), the only decrease occurred



in the category of 'learning new words'. Again, the results are not significant at the 0.05 level.

As regards the facilitating effect of L1 Hungarian when learning L3 German in Group T2, as we can see in Tables 3 and 4, there is only a minor decrease between the February and the May results. The results indicate that in the case of four factors (understanding and learning new words, learning grammar and spelling) the values are lower than those describing the facilitating effect of L2 English. In the case of pronunciation, subjects in Group T2 perceived initially that their L1 Hungarian helps more when pronouncing German words than their L2 English. These values equalized by the end of the data collection period and, therefore, the difference is not significant statistically.

At the same time, the values describing the hindering effects of Hungarian changed in different directions from February to May. With a minor decrease in April, the values for L1 Hungarian causing difficulties when understanding new L3 German words remained unchanged. L1 Hungarian's hindering effect decreased by April, but increased again by May in learning new German words and in pronunciation, while the values increased linearly in spelling. There is, however, an obvious decreasing tendency of Hungarian's hindering effect on learning German grammar.

If we compare the values representing the hindering effect of L1 Hungarian with those describing the hindering effects of L2 English on learning L3 German, we can find that the values are higher as regards the hindering role of English in the case of all factors in all three stages of the data collection, with only two exceptions. The February values for the hindering effect of English versus Hungarian on the German pronunciation are the same, however, while the hindering role of Hungarian decreased, the hindering role of English increased by the end of the data collection period. The other exception is the factor of the hindering effects in learning the German grammar rules. Prior to the treatment period, the learners in Group T2 perceived higher values as regards the hindering role of their L1 Hungarian in learning L3 German than that of their L2 English. The results indicate that values regarding the hindering role of Hungarian decreased by the end of the data collection period, while those regarding the hindering role of English increased.

Based on the above, I claim that research question (a) with respect to Group T2 can be answered in the same way as in the case of Group T1, namely, that typological closeness seems to play a more important role when attempting to find facilitating factors when learning L3 German. It is interesting to note that the comparative instruction seems to have had no effect on T2 subjects on the lexical level; the general increase was brought by the increase of the remaining three factors with a special emphasis on grammar. Just as in the case of the younger treatment group, the instruction results in an increased awareness of the facilitating role of English in general and, at the same time, the role of the hindering effects of English also increases. As regards both the facilitating and the hindering factors, the role of Hungarian decreased slightly by the end of the data collection period.

T2	when trying to understand a new German word		when trying to learn a new German word		when learning grammar rules		with German spelling		with German pronunciation		MEAN	
	EN helps	HU helps	EN helps	HU helps	EN helps	HU helps	EN helps	HU helps	EN helps	HU helps	EN helps	HU helps
<b>February</b>	3.40	2.40	3.20	2.70	2.30	2.00	1.80	1.60	1.40	2.00	<b>2.42</b>	<b>2.14</b>
<b>April</b>	3.20	2.60	3.10	2.40	2.90	2.50	2.50	2.40	2.30	2.50	<b>2.80</b>	<b>2.48</b>
<b>May</b>	3.40	2.40	3.20	2.30	3.10	2.20	2.00	1.70	1.70	1.70	<b>2.68</b>	<b>2.06</b>
<b>p (Febr. – May)</b>											<b>0.081</b>	<b>0.661</b>

Table 3. The facilitating effect of L1Hungarian and L2 English while learning L3 German (Group T2). The results are not statistically significant at  $p \leq .05$ .

T2	when trying to understand a new German word		when trying to learn a new German word		when learning grammar rules		with German spelling		with German pronunciation		MEAN	
	EN causes difficulty	HU causes difficulty	EN causes difficulty	HU causes difficulty	EN causes difficulty	HU causes difficulty	EN causes difficulty	HU causes difficulty	EN causes difficulty	HU causes difficulty	EN causes difficulty	HU causes difficulty
<b>February</b>	2.50	2.10	3.20	1.90	2.33	3.50	3.10	1.80	2.50	2.50	<b>2.73</b>	<b>2.36</b>
<b>April</b>	2.80	2.00	2.80	1.70	2.80	2.60	3.50	2.10	3.20	2.10	<b>3.02</b>	<b>2.10</b>
<b>May</b>	2.60	2.10	3.00	2.00	3.20	2.70	3.20	2.60	3.20	2.30	<b>3.04</b>	<b>2.34</b>
<b>p (Febr. – May)</b>											<b>0.403</b>	<b>0.951</b>

Table 4. The hindering effect of L1Hungarian and L2 English while learning L3 German (Group T2). The results are not statistically significant at  $p \leq .0$

### **4.3 Comparison of T1 and T2**

In order to find out about differences between L3 learners as regards their age and/or proficiency level, Groups T1 and T2's members own perceptions about the effects of their L1 Hungarian and L2 English need to be compared. In the present section I will show, by presenting the gain scores achieved by Groups T1 and T2, what the differences of the facilitating role that L1 Hungarian and L2 English are in the language learning processes of Group T1 and Group T2.

#### **4.3.1 A Comparison of the Facilitating Factors**

A comparison of the values recorded at the time of the initial, February data collection in Groups T1 (Table 1) and T2 (Table 3), we can see that three of the factors (the facilitating effect of L2 English when trying to understand and learn new L3 German words and learning L3 German grammar rules) are evaluated similarly by the two groups. In the case of the remaining two factors (the facilitating effect of L2 English on L3 German spelling and pronunciation) the difference between the two treatment groups was greater: in both cases Group T1 achieved higher values. This indicates that initially Group T1 attributed a larger facilitating role to their L2 English than Group T2.

Similarly, the members of Group T1 (Table 1) scored higher when evaluating the facilitating role of their L1 Hungarian mother tongue than subjects in Group T2 (Table 3) in all aspects at significant levels.

In my view, a possible explanation for the differences between Groups T1 and T2 is that the majority of the members of Group T1 started learning German a few months before the data collection began. Learning German was a new and interesting experience for them, their motivation was clearly visible in the observed lessons. Because of their lower proficiency level in German they are used to making continuous efforts to make discoveries in the new language, and, while doing so, they rely on their knowledge of other languages familiar to them. The above results indicate that while they activate their knowledge of L1 Hungarian and L2 English, they are often successful. The April results are indicators of the processes that started to take place in the subjects' minds, however, more important is the data collected at the end of the treatment period, in May. If we look at the May rows of Tables 1 and 3, we find that Group T1's values increased in all five aspects, while Group T2's values increased in three of the aspects and settled on their original values in two other aspects. The differences of the initial February and the final May values are summarised as gain scores in Tables 5 (the facilitating effect of L2 English) and 6 (the

facilitating effect of L1 Hungarian). The figures are marked positive (+) in the tables if there was an increase in the values, marked negative (-) if there was a decrease, and marked zero (0) if there was no change in the given period.

As we can see, the values of Group T1 increased to a significant extent, while those of Group T2 remained unchanged in the case of the facilitating effect of L2 English on understanding and learning new words in German and on the German pronunciation. In the case of grammar and spelling, the values of Group T2 rose to a greater extent, however, the increase did not reach a statistically significant level. This suggests that during the treatment period the subjects in Group T2 did not perceive development as regards their judgment on how their knowledge of English helps them when encountering and learning new German words. Possibly, by the third year of their German studies they have had plenty of experience with German and, therefore, they are accustomed to a certain amount and way in which they benefit from their English vocabulary knowledge. The values in spelling and in pronunciation, however, did increase in the case of both treatment groups, indicating that a conscious comparison of e.g. the sound-letter correspondences in both languages has proved to be advantageous for the learners.

English helps...: difference between the February and May values							
T1- T2	understand a new German word	Learn a new German word	learn grammar	German spelling	German pron.	MEAN	p
T1	+0.20	+0.47	+0.70	+0.11	+0.40	<b>+0.33</b>	0.038 *
T2	0	0	+0.80	+0.20	+0.30	<b>+0.26</b>	0.081

Table 5. Differences in the initial and final values of the facilitating effect of L2 English while learning L3 German (Treatment groups T1 and T2). The results that are statistically significant at  $p \leq .05$  are marked with an asterisk (\*).

The values indicating the increase in the perception of the facilitating factor of L2 English grammar rose highest in the case of both treatment groups as a result of the treatment sessions. The reason for this might be the fact that while the word-to-word correspondences can in many cases be considered salient, overseeing similarities in the grammatical structures may require more practice and insight into how the languages are structured.

It is interesting to note that while there was an increase in the perception of the facilitating effect of the L2 English over the treatment

period, the facilitating effect of Hungarian has slightly decreased in both treatment groups overall (Table 6). It seems that as the treatment sessions' primary aim was to compare L2 English and L3 German, the role of the mother tongue somewhat withdrew by the end of the treatment period.

<b>Hungarian helps...: difference between the February and May values</b>							
	understand	learn a	learn	German	German	MEAN	p
T1- T2	a new German word	new German word	grammar rules	spelling	pronunciation		
T1	-0.33	-0.27	-0.31	0	+0.14	<b>-0.15</b>	0.932
T2	0	-0.40	+0.20	+0.10	-0.30	<b>-0.08</b>	0.661

Table 6. Differences in the initial and final values of the facilitating effect of L1 Hungarian while learning L3 German (Groups T1 and T2). The results are not statistically significant at  $p \leq .05$ .

#### 4.3.2 Comparison of the Hindering Factors

A comparison of the February values in Tables 2 and 4 reveal the differences between the two treatment groups prior to starting the treatment sessions. As we can see, in four factors Group T1 experienced negative cross-linguistic influence to slightly greater degrees than Group T2 prior to the data collection.

By the end of the data collection period in May, there was an increase in four of the values in both groups to varying degrees and a decrease in one factor in each group. This means that the treatment sessions did not only contribute to the subjects' discovery of the facilitating effect of L2 English when learning L3 German, but, as a negative outcome, the perceived negative cross-linguistic influence also increased. If we compare the total means in Tables 1 and 2, we can see that the extent of increase in the facilitating factors exceeds the hindering ones in the case of Group T1, but the hindering factors are slightly higher in the results of Group T2 (see Tables 3 and 4). This latter result is due to the fact that the perceived hindering effect of the English grammar while learning German grammar rules is particularly high. This is an interesting and contradictory finding, since, as we have seen, the perceived facilitating role of the English grammar is similarly high.

<b>English causes difficulty...: difference between the February and May values</b>							
	understand	learn a	learn	German	German	MEAN	p
T1- T2	a new German	new German	grammar rules	spelling	pronunciation		

	word	word					
<b>T1</b>	-0.10	+0.31	+0.20	+0.06	+0.48	<b>+0.19</b>	0.484
<b>T2</b>	+0.10	-0.20	+0.87	+0.10	+0.70	<b>+0.31</b>	0.403

Table 7. Differences in the initial and final values of the hindering effect of L2 English while learning L3 German (Treatment groups T1 and T2). The results are not statistically significant at  $p \leq .05$ .

As regards the hindering role of L1 Hungarian, a comparison of the February values in Treatment groups T1 and T2 shows that both in February and in May, Group T1 attributed lower values to the hindering role of Hungarian (Tables 2 and 4). Comparing the initial and the final values we can find that the total means only changed to the extent of minus 0.02, however, there is considerable variation in the individual values, as indicated in Table 8.

Hungarian causes difficulty...difference between the February and May values							
T1-	understand	learn a	learn	German	German	MEAN	p
T2	a new	new	grammar	spelling	pronunciation		
	German	German	rules				
	word	word					
T1	+0.07	+0.37	-0.22	-0.42	+0.08	<b>-0.02</b>	0.531
T2	0	+0.10	-0.80	+0.80	-0.20	<b>-0.02</b>	0.951

Table 8. Differences in the initial and final values of the hindering effect of L1 Hungarian while learning L3 German (Treatment groups T1 and T2). The results are not statistically significant at  $p \leq .05$ .

## 5. Conclusion

The findings in the present paper indicate that L3 German learners attribute greater facilitating roles to their L2 English than to their L1 Hungarian. The facilitation can be enhanced with special instruction that compares the learners' L2 and L3. The results show that the comparative instruction has different roles at the various stages of instruction, and that it facilitates L3 learning especially at an earlier stage of instruction.

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## **AFFIX ACQUISITION ORDER IN SERBIAN EFL LEARNERS**

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***Abstract:** Given that affix knowledge plays a vital role in the development of L1/L2 knowledge, the aim of this paper is to explore Mochizuki and Aizawa's (2000) notion about the order of affix acquisition in the Serbian EFL context. We will attempt to analyze correlations between the EFL learners' vocabulary size and their affix knowledge and postulate the order of affix acquisition.*

***Keywords:** affixes, derivation, production, reception, vocabulary size*

### **1. Introduction: the Nexus between Vocabulary and Morphology**

The past twenty years or so have witnessed a proliferation of studies in the field of vocabulary learning which have, inter alia, ascertained the crucial role of morphological awareness in the process of vocabulary acquisition. Not only does affix knowledge account for the number of new words a learner can understand (Nagy et al. 1993), but it also contributes to the expansion of L1 learner's vocabulary – it grows rapidly from the fourth grade through high school, adding circa 3,000 words a year, that is at a rate of several words per day (Nagy and Herman 1987). Although, to our knowledge, there are no similar studies with regard to L2 vocabulary learning, teaching of affixes is often recommended (Schmitt and Zimmerman 2002, Milton 2009) and included in EFL pedagogical material in the form of short explanations or instruction on the use of prefixes and suffixes. Researchers nowadays agree that the growth of L2 derivational knowledge, alongside general language proficiency, is also an incremental process, albeit one which can be considered relatively under-researched.

L1 researchers have, on the other hand, explored this issue in depth. Some of the most significant findings that have accumulated over the years include the following: pre-school children and first-graders have poor ability to produce appropriate derived forms (Berko 1958, Carlisle and Nomanbhoy 1993); fourth-graders can recognize base morphemes in unfamiliar derivatives (Tyler and Nagy 1989), while eighth-graders can recognize the relationship between low frequency words and their suffixed derivatives (Wysocki and Jenkins 1987). According to Nagy et al. (1993)

mastering the use of affixation may continue well into high school, yet even adult native speakers seem to have incomplete knowledge of derivational morphology (Schmitt and Zimmerman 2002). The fact that affixes differ in terms of frequency, regularity, predictability and productivity, i.e. that affix accessibility and learnability is higher for some affixes than others, prompted Bauer and Nation (1993) to develop a seven-level affix order that can facilitate reading and function as a basis for guided teaching and learning. This list served as a reference point in a few articles focusing on L2 affix acquisition, some of which we will elaborate on in the next couple of paragraphs.

Given that the development of vocabulary knowledge is inextricably linked to morphological awareness, more and more attention is nowadays being paid to various aspects of this relationship in L2 learning and teaching. Among the pioneers in this area of research were Schmitt and Meara (1997) who sought to investigate suffix and word association knowledge on both receptive and productive tasks, together with vocabulary size and general L2 proficiency of Japanese EFL learners, over a period of a single academic year. The results they obtained showed that the subjects generally had weak awareness of derivational affixes, performing best on inflectional affixes, although their ability to recognize and produce suffixes did improve by 4% on the receptive task (from 63 to 67%) and 5% on the productive task (from 42 to 47%). More importantly, Schmitt and Meara (1997) found a statistically significant correlation between vocabulary size and affix knowledge ( $r = 0.41$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) which they interpreted as an indication that greater suffix knowledge contributes to greater vocabulary knowledge. More recently, Hayashi and Murphy (2011) compared the interrelatedness of vocabulary knowledge and morphological awareness in both Japanese ESL learners and English native speakers by means of the receptive/productive vocabulary size test (Schmitt, Schmitt and Clapham 2001, Laufer and Nation 1995) and receptive/productive derivational affix test which they themselves had designed. The data collected corroborated Schmitt and Meara's (1997) findings in that inflectional morphology was once better known than derivational morphology in L2 learners, who also demonstrated stronger receptive morphological awareness than productive while the reverse was, in this regard, found to be true for English native speakers. At the same time, the statistical analyses showed that productive derivational knowledge correlated highly with both receptive ( $r = 0.84$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and productive vocabulary size ( $r = 0.83$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) for Japanese ESL learners but not native speakers of English. Following Schmitt and Meara's (1997) line of reasoning, the authors surmise that the growth of productive morphological awareness can accelerate the development of receptive and productive vocabulary.

## 2. Research Background

The first to explore the issue of L2 affix acquisition in a practical manner, by determining the degree of understanding of both prefixes and suffixes, was Mochizuki (1998a). His empirical work sought to determine a potential order of affix acquisition in the Japanese EFL learning context. He targeted 82 affixes from Umeda's (1983) lists of important prefixes and suffixes and designed the affix knowledge tests on the following premises: the main function of prefixes is the attachment of lexical meaning to the base whereas the primary function of suffixes is the change of word class. In other words, learners can be said to have mastered prefixes if they understand their lexical meaning whereas to show that they have mastered suffixes, they need to be able to understand their syntactic role. Each of the 26 prefixes was exemplified in a set of three English words, followed by a choice of four different meanings which the prefix might have, all of which were in Japanese, e.g.

submarine                      substandard                      subdivision  
1. *yobino* [extra]   2. *fukuno* [vice]   3. *shitano* [under]   4. *umoreta* [buried]

The suffixes were, similarly, presented in three exemplary English words alongside four word class options: verb, noun, adverb or adjective, e.g.

discordance                      vigilance                      surveillance  
1. noun                      2. verb                      3. adjective                      4. adverb

The results of the tests taken by 127 first-year English majors demonstrated that the learners were, on average, able to solve correctly 63% of the items on the prefix test, as well as 65% of those on the suffix test. What is more, their understanding of affixes varied significantly, thus making it possible for an accuracy order to be set up. This order implied that some affixes were easier to learn than others, that is, that the differing learning burden associated with English affixes could be put to use in L2 pedagogy. However, given that this study was based on the use of real, existent words of English, as the author himself admitted (Mochizuki 1998a), the subjects who were familiar with the exemplary lexemes could have had an unfair advantage over others, which undermined the reliability of his data.

Therefore, Mochizuki decided to redesign his tests and expand his research to the interrelatedness of vocabulary and morphological knowledge, in another attempt to establish the affix acquisition order for Japanese EFL learners (Mochizuki and Aizawa 2000). This time pseudo-words were used as prompts rather than real words, and the selection of targeted affixes was narrowed down to 29. In addition to two morphological tests aimed to gauge prefix and suffix knowledge, 403 Japanese high-school and university students who participated in the study took a receptive

vocabulary size test (Mochizuki 1998b). The latter was a modified version of Nation's (1990) Vocabulary Levels Test consisting of five sections that measured learners' knowledge of up to 7,000 words. On average, the subjects answered correctly 57% of the questions on the prefix test and 56% on the suffix test. The results demonstrated a statistically significant correlation between receptive vocabulary size and prefix knowledge (0.58), as well as receptive vocabulary size and suffix knowledge (0.65). Moreover, learners whose vocabulary was larger scored better on affix knowledge tests (Table 1), which in turn means that affix knowledge increases in proportion to vocabulary growth.

Group	Prefixes	% of correct responses	Vocabulary size	Bauer and Nation list
1	<i>re-, un-, pre-</i>	80%+	3000+	5, 3, 6
2	<i>non-, ex-</i>	80%+	4000+	3, 5
3	<i>anti-</i>	80%+	5000+	5
4	<i>semi-, en-, post-</i>	60%+	4000+	5, 5, 5
5	<i>inter-, counter-, in-</i>	40%+	5000+	5, 5, 5
6	<i>ante-</i>	little improvement irrespective of vocabulary size		5
<b>Suffixes</b>				
1	<i>-ation, -ful, -ment</i>	80%+	3000+	4, 4, 4
2	<i>-ist, -er, -ize, -al, -ly</i>	80%+	4000+	4, 3, 4, 4, 3
3	<i>-ous, -ness, -ism, -able</i>	80%+	5000+	4, 3, 4, 3
4	<i>-less, -ity</i>	60%+	4000+	3, 4
5	<i>-ish, -y</i>	little improvement irrespective of vocabulary size		6

Table 1. Summary of Mochizuki and Aizawa's (2000) results which can be viewed as the order of affix acquisition (source: Milton 2009:144)

### 3. The Study

Inspired by the work of Mochizuki and Aizawa (2000) and the fact that their research implied that there was a correlation between receptive vocabulary size and affix knowledge whereas Hayashi and Murphy's (2011) indicated that both productive and receptive vocabulary size correlated with affix knowledge in L2 learners, we

attempted to investigate the relationship between Serbian upper-intermediate EFL learners' receptive/productive vocabulary size and their affix knowledge. Additionally, as Mochizuki and Aizawa (2000) have interpreted the nexus between lexical and morphological knowledge as an indication of the order of affix acquisition, we aimed to explore this issue and postulate a tentative affix acquisition order for Serbian EFL learners, then compare our results with those obtained in the Japanese EFL learning context (ibid.).

### **3.1. Participants**

The subjects who participated in the study were 62 students enrolled in the first year of the English language and literature program at the Faculty of Philology and Arts in Kragujevac, Serbia. They were all, without exception, native speakers of Serbian whose level of proficiency in English was assessed as B2 (CEFR) by means of the university entrance exam in July 2011, prior to the morphological and vocabulary testing.

### **3.2. Research Instruments**

The subjects completed four different tasks for the purpose of this research: two vocabulary tests and two affix knowledge tests. The vocabulary tasks intended to evaluate the learners' vocabulary size (VS) encompassed both dimensions of knowledge, the receptive and productive one: Nation's (1990) Vocabulary Levels Test was used as a receptive measure whereas Laufer and Nation's productive version of the Vocabulary Levels Test (Laufer and Nation 1995, as reprinted in Nation 2001) served as a productive measure of vocabulary size. These two tests each comprised five levels of word frequency: the 2,000-word level; the 3,000-word level; Academic Vocabulary/University Word Level; the 5,000-word level; and the 10,000-word level. Moreover, both contained 90 test items, 18 per word frequency level, but differed in format: the receptive VS test required the students to match 90 decontextualized words with their synonyms/definitions by choosing from multiple choices, while the productive VS test involved eliciting appropriate word completions in 90 short sentences, e.g.

#### *Receptive vocabulary size task*

1. business
2. clock                    \_\_\_\_\_ part of a house
3. horse                    \_\_\_\_\_ animal with four legs
4. pencil                    \_\_\_\_\_ something used for writing
5. shoe
6. wall

#### *Productive vocabulary size task*

He was riding a bic\_\_\_\_. (bicycle)

On the other hand, affix knowledge tasks included the prefix and suffix test borrowed and slightly adapted from Mochizuki and Aizawa (2000). The former tested the learners' knowledge of prefixes by presenting 13 of them (i.e. *anti-*, *pre-*, *re-*, *counter-*, *non-*, *un-*, *en-*, *ex-*, *inter-*, *post-*, *in-*, *ante-*, *semi-*) in three pseudowords per prefix, alongside four different English synonyms/definitions, e.g.

<u>antisl</u> mad	<u>antikio</u> fic	<u>antirachy</u>
1. human	2. of antenna	3. opposed
		4. ancient

The sole difference between Mochizuki and Aizawa's (2000) and our prefix test lies in the fact that the Japanese authors had offered four potential prefix meanings in their learners' native tongue, i.e. Japanese, while we resorted to using English as we believed that our English majors had sufficient knowledge of L2 to be able to cope with the task.

On the suffix test, the participants were asked to choose the part of speech (noun, verb, adjective or adverb) and thus indicate their knowledge of 16 suffixes (i.e. *-able*, *-al*, *-ation*, *-er*, *-ful*, *-ish*, *-ism*, *-ist*, *-ity*, *-ize*, *-less*, *-ly*, *-ment*, *-ness*, *-ous*, *-y*), offered once more in pseudowords, three per suffix, e.g.

<u>rombortable</u>	<u>quifable</u>	<u>slomitable</u>	n.	v.	a.	ad.
			1	2	3	4

### 3.3. Procedure and Scoring

The four tests were administered by the researchers themselves in their regular vocabulary and morphology classes at the very beginning of the 2011-2012 academic year, during the first two weeks of October. To minimize fatigue, the testing sessions were held one week apart: first the receptive vocabulary task and the prefix test were completed, followed by the productive vocabulary test and the suffix test. At the onset of each session, the participants received a brief explanation in Serbian about the contents of the tests, as well as a few examples regarding the way these should be filled in (i.e. teacher's demo). It was also pointed out that the data were being collected for research purposes only and that they would in no way affect the course grades. Although there was no time limit on any of the tasks, the students managed to complete them in 60 minutes' time in both testing sessions.

As far as scoring is concerned, responses on the affix knowledge tasks were scored as either correct or incorrect, and the same goes for the two vocabulary tests. However, care was taken with the Productive Vocabulary Levels Test, as in Laufer (1998), where mistakes related to the grammatical form (e.g. *orchid* instead of *orchids*) or spelling (e.g. *acide* for *acid*) were not penalized as long as lexical meaning was

expressed correctly. The subsequent quantitative analyses were performed by means of the statistical program SPSS 17.0.

#### 4. Results and Discussion

Given that Nation (1990) judges scores of 80% or more as indicative of a mastery of a particular vocabulary level, of the 62 students who took both the receptive test and the affix knowledge test, 39 tested at either the 3,000 word level or the 5,000 word level. The rest were dispersed between the 2,000 word level, Academic vocabulary and 10,000 word level. We will therefore now proceed to analyze the results of these 39 students: twenty-two students tested at the 3,000 word level, with an average vocabulary of 3,926 words (average of 78.51% of the 5,000 most common words in English) whereas 16 students tested at the 5,000 word level with an average vocabulary of 4,571 words (average of 91.42% of the 5,000 most common words in English). The 3,962 word group did not test over 80% at subsequent levels and neither did the 4,571 word group.

Next, to investigate the relationship between vocabulary size and affix knowledge, we explored potential correlations by calculating Pearson's  $r$ , then compared the number of correct answers which the 3,000 and 5,000 word groups achieved on the prefix and suffix test (Table 2). A moderate positive correlation was revealed between the overall receptive vocabulary knowledge of both groups and prefix knowledge ( $r = 0.363$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). On the other hand, no statistically relevant correlation was identified between the overall receptive vocabulary size and suffix knowledge.

The data below show that the lower level group managed to, on average, correctly answer 50.6% of the questions on the prefix test and 77% on the suffix test. The upper level group performed better on both morphological tasks, solving 64.6% of the prefix test items and 86.3% of the suffix test items. These findings, viewed together with the aforementioned correlations, seem to suggest that the increase in general receptive vocabulary is closely related to the growth of affix knowledge.

Table 2. Means and standard deviations for scores on morphological tests

	3,000 word group (N=22)		5,000 word group (N=17)	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Prefixes	6.59	2.40	8.41	1.54
Suffixes	12.32	2.57	13.82	4.20
Affixes	18.91	3.67	22.24	4.08

In addition, we were also interested in finding out whether productive vocabulary of our 3,000 and 5,000 word group students correlated with their affix knowledge. Similar to the correlations demonstrated for receptive vocabulary knowledge, we noticed a statistically significant correlation between the productive vocabulary size and prefix knowledge ( $r = 0.357, p < 0.05$ ), but none in the case of suffix knowledge.

If we now explore the results obtained for the two word groups in relation to their performance on each of the prefixes/suffixes included in the affix knowledge test (Chart 1), we see that the upper level group outdid the lower level one on the prefix test, providing a higher number of correct answers for all but two prefixes, namely *re-* and *ex-*, occasionally scoring the maximum number of points (for *anti-* and *post-*). It is also noticeable that the degree of improvement on the scores varied significantly from one prefix to another, and that the least known prefixes were, for both groups, *ante-* (13.6% vs. 23.5%) and *in-* (31.8% vs. 35.3%).

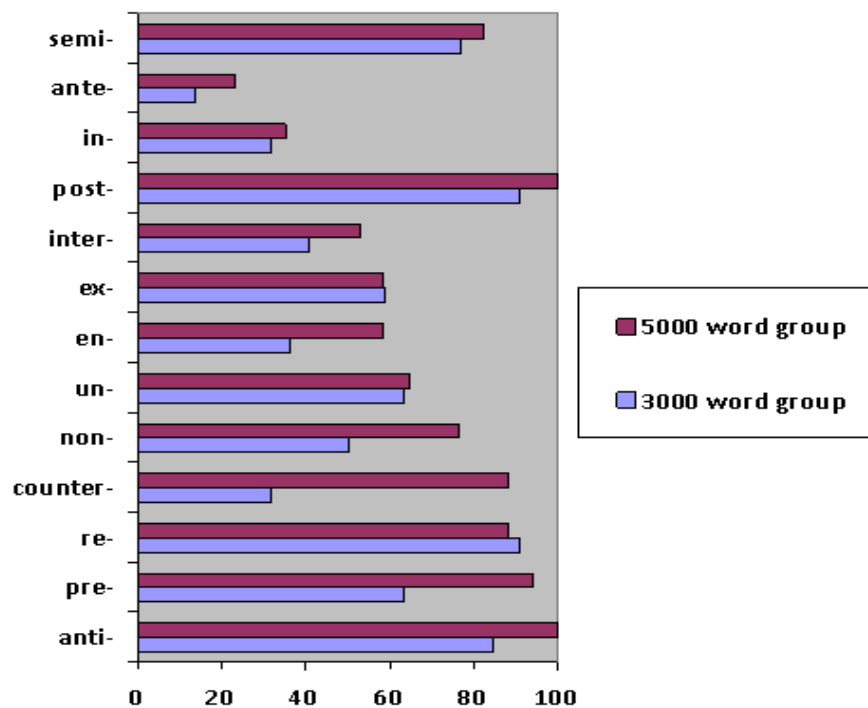


Chart 1. Comparison of correct answers on the prefix test (%)

On the suffix test, however, a somewhat different picture emerges. Again, the upper level group achieved the maximum number of correct answers twice (for *-ation*



and *-ism*), but this time they outperformed the lower level group in only 9 out of 16 instances (Chart 2), while their scores dropped on *-able* (81.8% vs. 70.6%), *-ful* (77.3% vs. 76.5%), *-ish* (72.6% vs. 70.6%), *-ist* (77.3% vs. 76.5%), *-less* (81.8% vs. 64.7%), *-ly* (90.9% vs. 88.2%) and *-ous* (72.7% vs. 70.6%). At the same time, the degree of progress once more varied significantly from suffix to suffix.

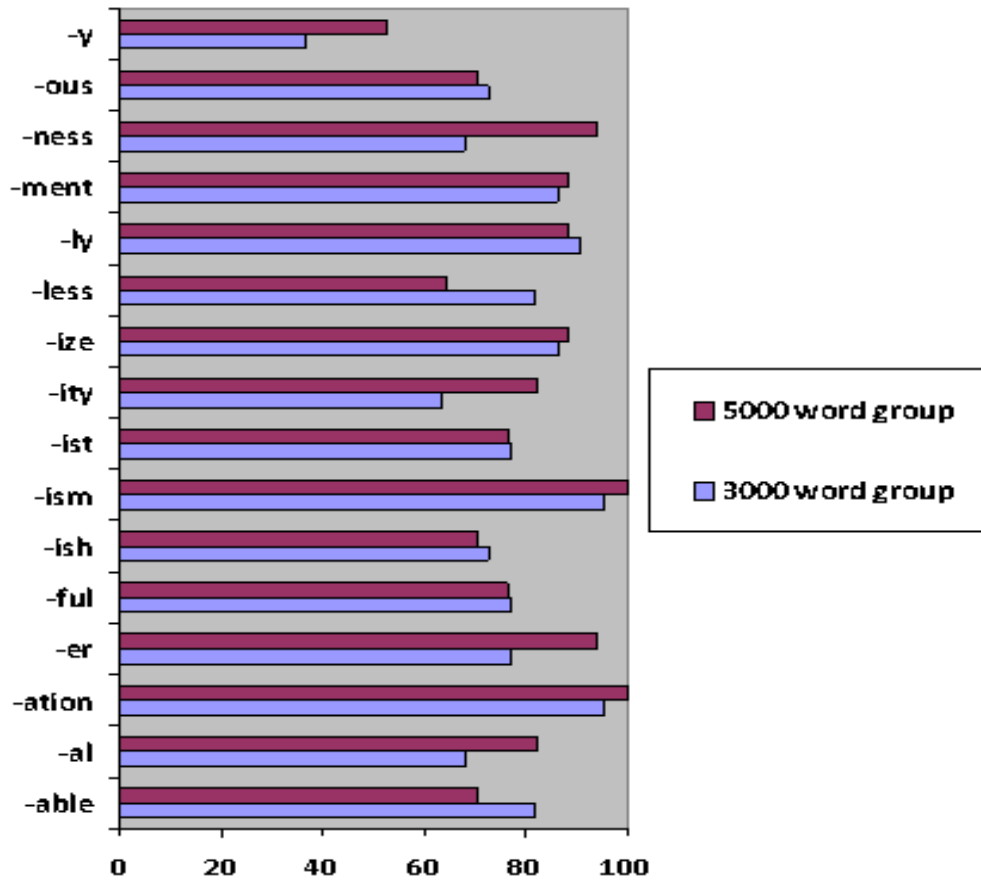


Chart 2. Comparison of correct answers on the suffix test (%)

Finally, taking into consideration the fact that neither the receptive nor the productive vocabulary size of Serbian EFL learners appeared to correlate with their suffix knowledge, as well as the lack of progress in what regards vocabulary size, and with almost half of the affixes appearing on the suffix test, we attempted to postulate only the prefix acquisition order. In accordance with Mochizuki and Aizawa's (2000) approach, we considered prefixes known by more learners as an indication of them

being acquired earlier than those known by fewer learners. When the results of both word level groups are jointly analyzed, we arrive at the following accuracy order:

- *post-* (94.9%), *anti-* (92.3%), *re-* (89.7%)
- *semi-* (79.5%), *pre-* (76.9%)
- *un-* (64.1%), *non-* (61.5%), *ex-* (59%), *counter-* (56.4%)
- *inter-* (46.2%), *en-* (46.2%)
- *in-* (33.3%)
- *ante-* (17.9%)

As we can see, there seem to be several groupings of prefixes in terms of the order of acquisition, with the best known being *post-*, *anti-* and *re-*, and the least known *in-* and *ante-*. Many of the errors with these two poorly known prefixes appear to be the result of the confusion with similar prefixes: *in-* with *en-*, and *ante-* with *anti-*. In the case of the former, the answer “causing” was offered for both of these prefixes, and it was frequently mistakenly selected by our students as the appropriate meaning for *in-*; in the case of *ante-* and *anti-*, one of the alternate meanings supplied for *anti-* was “opposed” while “opposite” was provided for *ante-*. On the other hand, this may be the effect of the test itself given that the prefixes *in-* and *ante-* were reported as least known by Mochizuki and Aizawa (2000) as well, even though their test contained multiple choice answers in EFL learners’ native tongue, i.e. Japanese, and not English. In other respects, though, the order of prefix acquisition we established for Serbian EFL learners is not similar to the one set for Japanese EFL learners by the aforesaid authors.

## 5. Conclusion

The aim of this study was twofold: to investigate the interrelatedness of vocabulary size and affix knowledge, and to establish a tentative affix acquisition order for Serbian upper-intermediate EFL learners. The data obtained are only partially in line with Mochizuki and Aizawa’s (2000) findings, in that receptive vocabulary size was found to be moderately correlated to the prefixal aspect of morphological knowledge but not the suffixal one. Additional exploration of the relationship between productive vocabulary size and affix knowledge yielded similar results: once more vocabulary correlated with prefix and not suffix knowledge. Moreover, a detailed analysis of the scores achieved by the two different vocabulary level groups on the prefix test indicated that the growth of vocabulary knowledge was intertwined with an improved morphological awareness.

It is important to note that the prefix and suffix test, though both designed as measures of receptive knowledge, i.e. in a multiple choice format, did in fact pose two

different tasks before the participants. In our opinion, the suffix test was much easier as it assessed learners' familiarity with suffixes through parts of speech. Since our subjects were upper-intermediate EFL learners with a long history of learning English (ranging from eight to ten years as was the common practice in Serbian primary and secondary education until recently) and English majors at that, it is perhaps not surprising that they performed well on the suffix test and outdid their Japanese counterparts. This could, in turn, also have been instrumental in the differences between Mochizuki and Aizawa's (2000) and our results. It is, nevertheless, hard to understand why the scores which our upper level vocabulary students gained on individual suffixes were not consistently better than those achieved by the lower level group.

When Serbian EFL learners' accuracy on the prefix test was interpreted as the order of affix acquisition, we learnt that this order differed for Japanese and Serbian learners, which may be an indication, as Mochizuki and Aizawa (2000) themselves noticed, that it depends on L1. This seems particularly plausible if we factor in the potential influence of cognate affixes (cf. Dimitrijević Savić and Danilović 2011): the three best known prefixes on our list, *post-*, *anti-* and *re-*, all have the same equivalents in Serbian (Klajn 2002).

More research is, therefore, needed if we want to gather more conclusive evidence about the process of affix acquisition in the EFL learning/teaching context. The testing instrument constructed by Mochizuki and Aizawa (2000) could be modified, to incorporate the same approach to the evaluation of prefix and suffix knowledge. In addition, as both Japanese and Serbian EFL learners had difficulty with polysemous prefixes, this aspect of morphological awareness should also be carefully examined. Lastly, as our study made use of a relatively small sample of subjects, a larger number of Serbian EFL learners of varying levels of proficiency would certainly contribute to a deeper understanding of the inter-relationships between various aspects of vocabulary and morphological knowledge.

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**AN INCREASE IN IMPORTED GOODS, IMPORTS HAVE INCREASED –  
THE ROLE OF TEACHING PRONUNCIATION IN AN ESP  
CLASSROOM\***

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***Abstract:** The fact that English has become the major lingua franca of international business and economy has influenced the goal of teaching pronunciation in an ESP economics classroom: the native-like speaking skill as the ultimate goal has been superseded by a more realistic and more reasonable goal – the adoption of intelligibility and communicability skills. We argue here, however, that pronunciation skills should be included in a university level ESP economics course syllabus. We point out common pronunciation errors made by economics students due to first-language transfer, exemplifying our points with various types of exercises aiming at overcoming their pronunciation problems.*

***Keywords:** errors, ESP, exercises, pronunciation, Serbian.*

## **1. Introduction**

The second-year undergraduate *English for Economists* course taught at the Faculty of Economics, Belgrade University, is a genre-based course. The teaching is based on the idea that just as certain lexical items have specialist meanings in specific professional genres, a number of syntactic forms may also carry genre-specific restricted values in addition to their general meanings codified in grammar books (Bhatia 1997). In other words, such an approach allows the teacher to focus on some key grammatical and lexical features which are vital for the students' future field of expertise, while simultaneously ignoring other grammatical and lexical features of little or no relevance to it. In an ESP course thus defined, teaching pronunciation may seem to play a rather insignificant role. The way it is taught to second-year economics students at the Faculty of Economics in Belgrade presupposes that English has the attribute of an international language, early defined as "one which is used by people of different nations to communicate with one another" (Smith 1976:38). Such an attitude to English as a *lingua franca* of international business and economy has influenced the goal of teaching pronunciation in an ESP classroom – the native-like speaking skill as *the* ultimate goal has been superseded by a more realistic, more desirable and more reasonable goal – the adoption of intelligibility and communicability skills. In other words, as long as the pronunciation mistakes do not impede communication and comprehension, they are not considered to be of much importance, and are usually disregarded in an ESP classroom. Therefore, the main aim of teaching pronunciation in

an ESP classroom should be to ensure mutual intelligibility of non-native speakers in their field of expertise, rather than the imitation of native speakers (Jenkins 2000). It means that “pronunciation instruction should be based on learners’ needs, directed by an understanding of the purposes for which and the context in which the language is likely to be used.” (Gilner 2006:94).

This paper deals with the ways pronunciation skills are treated in an ESP economics course attended by native speakers of Serbian, students at the Faculty of Economics, University of Belgrade. More precisely, we point out and classify some common pronunciation errors (we use terms ‘mistake’ and ‘error’ interchangeably) made by economics students, explain why they arise, and suggest ways in which students may be made aware of these mistakes, as well as the ways the mistakes can be corrected, prevented and avoided. Various types of exercises aiming at overcoming pronunciation problems are also exemplified.

## **2. Teaching Pronunciation in an ESP Economics Course**

As future economists and businesspeople, the students at the Faculty of Economics will face a number of situations where their pronunciation skills will be subject to careful judgement and may ultimately influence how effectively they do business. For example, they may be taking part in important negotiations where every word counts and imprecise pronunciation may lead to serious *faux pas* that can hardly be rectified later. Alternatively, they may have a need for effective communication in meetings or oral presentations, the areas which require that students be equipped with the necessary knowledge of the basics of correct pronunciation.

After having learned English for at least eight years before taking the *English for Economists* course at their second-year of studies, students at the Faculty of Economics in Belgrade are assumed to have a fairly good command of the basic pronunciation skills at segmental level. Therefore, the teaching of properties of vowel and consonant segmentals should play a secondary role in pronunciation instruction in an ESP course at university level. However, suprasegmental errors, particularly those in word stress, which have been reported to have “more serious effect on intelligibility than segmental errors” (Nakashima 2006), are prioritised in their *English for Economists* course, because “[m]ost modern writers on pronunciation teaching emphasise that it is the suprasegmental features which contribute most to a speaker’s lack of intelligibility” (Brown 1991:4), although “[e]ven the term *suprasegmentals* itself relegates these features to secondary importance” (Brown 1991:4).

Such a suprasegmental-oriented instruction (Nakashima 2006) aims at overcoming the problems which arise as a consequence of the fact that students tend to transfer native (Serbian)-language stress patterns to English. Most currently available ESP textbooks, unfortunately, tend to “deal exclusively with segmental pronunciation of vowels and consonants, rather than the suprasegmental features of stress, rhythm,

intonation, voice quality, etc.”, or start “with the description of vowel or consonant segments, only later progressing to the suprasegmentals” (Brown 1991:4). Unlike those who study Linguistics, students of Economics are not generally interested in technical details of the English sound system. Therefore, instead of teaching the formal aspects of English pronunciation and giving detailed description of the English vowel and consonant system, which would be highly uneconomical, time-consuming and inefficient, teachers should prioritize and focus on those genre-based problematic areas of pronunciation which may cause potential misunderstanding, embarrassment and eventual business failures, and concentrate on the *correction* of the segmental and particularly suprasegmental errors characteristic of economics discourse.

### **3. Common Pronunciation Errors of Serbian Economics Students**

Using the source of errors as the standard for categorising, pronunciation errors may thus be divided into *interlingual* errors, i.e. those errors that can occur due to first language interference, and *intralingual* errors, which are found to be committed by second language learners irrespective of their first language (Richards 1971, James 1998, Brown 1994). Every language has its own set of “phonological concepts” (such as, phonemes, syllables, tones, long and short vowels, stressed and unstressed parts, hard and soft consonants, etc.) (Fraser 2001:24) which, in turn, may explain the difficulties that Serbian learners experience when they learn English. In other words, common problems in pronunciation vary across countries (and cultures), which means that the native tongue of learners is the key factor in predicting problematic areas in which errors are likely to occur. Unfortunately, “students’ first languages colour their production and perception of English in many ways, and the pronunciation is the one area of language in which [...] first-language transfer can play a major role.” (Celce-Murcia, Brinton and Goodwin 1996:323).

In our case, therefore, the pronunciation syllabus should be determined according to linguistic factors – the similarities and differences between English and Serbian, and the ways these similarities and differences tend to pose problems for the students of Economics with regard to their correct pronunciation. That such a contrastive analysis approach is ideal for students who share a first-language background has been suggested by a number of authors (see e.g. Celce-Murcia, Brinton and Goodwin 1996: 324). A pedagogical implication of a contrastive approach to the teaching of pronunciation is that the syllabus should incorporate those features of pronunciation which are likely to arise from the similarities and differences between English and Serbian. Such a syllabus should aim at overcoming detrimental effects of the first-language transfer. Therefore, “[t]he learner, instead of being taken systematically through each English vowel and consonant, and later, if there is time, through the complexities of intonation and rhythm, would have presented to him



certain carefully chosen features on which to concentrate, the rest of his pronunciation being left to no more than a general supervision.” (Abercrombie 1991:93).

In the next part of the paper we present the most common pronunciation errors of economics students whose native tongue is Serbian, made at segmental and suprasegmental levels. We sort the errors out into several categories and explain the reasons why they are made in light of the first-language transfer which impedes the correct pronunciation of Serbian economics students. We also point out some intralingual pronunciation errors, both at segmental and suprasegmental level, and identify the areas in which they most frequently arise.

### **3.1. Pronunciation Mistakes Made at Segmental Level**

#### **3.1.1. Intralingual Mistakes**

The students of Economics at the Faculty of Economics, University of Belgrade, whose native tongue is Serbian, make the following recurrent mistakes, not influenced by the differences between English and Serbian, but mainly motivated by some other factors:

(a) The first type of pronunciation mistakes is when pronunciation is according to the root or a perceived root word in a compound or a false compound, e.g.: international (pronounced according to *nation*), purchase (pronounced according to *chase*), profitable (pronounced according to *able*), climate (pronounced according to *ate*), etc.

(b) Another distinctive type of words which poses a problem is the words with a silent letter, many of them being genre-specific in economic science, e.g.: debt, indebted, indebtedness; answer; receipt; foreign; campaign; whistleblowing; mortgage; climb, etc.

(c) Mistakes in pronouncing easily confused words, e.g.: rise (rose, risen) *vs.* arise (arose, arisen) *vs.* raise (raised, raised); affect *vs.* effect; sell *vs.* sale *vs.* seller; lie *vs.* lay, etc.

#### **3.1.2. Interlingual Mistakes**

Most mistakes students of Economics make, however, arise from the transfer of Serbian pronunciation to English pronunciation patterns. In Serbian, there is a strict one-to-one correspondence between sounds and letters, non-existent in English. As economics as a science abounds in internationalisms, words which are spelt and pronounced quite similarly in English and Serbian, this could be a potential source of error making. These pairs of words may be regarded as *phonological false friends* in these two languages. We illustrate this source of errors by several examples of word pairs in English and Serbian:

(a) Mistakes in consonant pronunciation – the English consonant is pronounced the way it is spelt, i.e. the way it is spelt and pronounced in the

corresponding Serbian word: legitimate<sub>ENG</sub> – legitiman<sub>SER</sub> (English *g* pronounced as /g/); homogeneous<sub>ENG</sub> – homogen<sub>SER</sub> (English *g* pronounced as /g/); jurisdiction<sub>ENG</sub> – jurisdikcija<sub>SER</sub> (English *j* pronounced as /j/); digital<sub>ENG</sub> – digitalan<sub>SER</sub> (English *g* pronounced as /g/); leasing<sub>ENG</sub> – lizing<sub>SER</sub> (English *s* pronounced as /z/), etc.

(b) A distinctive group of words in English which may cause confusion is the one which contains a two-consonant cluster, *ch*. Unfortunately, these words, being mainly internationalisms, exist in Serbian as well. However, in Serbian *ch* is replaced by *h* only, and its pronunciation differs from the way it is pronounced in the counterpart words in English, meaning that the influence of Serbian is to blame in such cases. Therefore, Economics students tend to pronounce *ch* as /h/ instead of /k/ in some English words such as these (the Serbian counterpart is also given): mechanism<sub>ENG</sub> – mehanizam<sub>SER</sub>; technique<sub>ENG</sub> – tehnika<sub>SER</sub>; technology<sub>ENG</sub> – tehnologija<sub>SER</sub>; chemical<sub>ENG</sub> – hemijski<sub>SER</sub>, etc.

(c) Mistakes in the pronunciation of words of Latin and Greek origin are common. Due to their international recognition, Economics as a science extensively uses Latin or Greek words instead of their English equivalents. Therefore, students need to become familiar with some basic terms used in economics which are of Latin or Greek origin in order to be able to understand and interpret them within economics texts. It is also made sure that such foreign words are correctly pronounced, since their pronunciation in English largely differs from the way they are pronounced by Serbian native speakers, which is another source of pronunciation errors. This group of words comprises words of Latin or Greek origin in English, with the English vowel being pronounced as it is written, e.g.: criteria<sub>ENG</sub> is pronounced as /krɪ'teəriə/ according to kriterijum<sub>SER</sub>; media<sub>ENG</sub> is pronounced as /'mediə/ according to mediji<sub>SER</sub>; median<sub>ENG</sub> is pronounced as /'mediən/ according to medijana<sub>SER</sub>; thesis<sub>ENG</sub> is pronounced as /'θeɪsɪs/ according to teza<sub>SER</sub>; micro<sub>ENG</sub>- (as a prefix in words such as microeconomics) is pronounced as /'mɪkrəʊ/(economics) according to mikro(ekonomija)<sub>SER</sub>; etc.

(d) Mistakes in vowel pronunciation as a **result of transferring** Serbian pronunciation to English: deposit<sub>ENG</sub> is pronounced as /'depɒzɪt/ according to depozit<sub>SER</sub>; primary<sub>ENG</sub> is pronounced as /'prɪməri/ according to primaran<sub>SER</sub>; industry<sub>ENG</sub> is pronounced as /'ɪndʌstri/ according to industrija<sub>SER</sub>; result<sub>ENG</sub> is pronounced as /re'zʌlt/ according to rezultat<sub>SER</sub>; resources<sub>ENG</sub> is pronounced as /'resɒsɪz/ according to resursi<sub>SER</sub>; company<sub>ENG</sub> is pronounced as /'kɒmpəni/ according to kompanija<sub>SER</sub>; product<sub>ENG</sub> is pronounced as /'prɒdʌkt/ according to produkt<sub>SER</sub>; monetary<sub>ENG</sub> is pronounced as /'mɒnetəri/ according to monetarni<sub>SER</sub>, etc.

(e) Acronyms, as pronounceable words formed from components (letters, usually initial, or syllables), can also create difficulties as regards pronunciation.

Students tend to pronounce English acronyms the way they are pronounced in Serbian, owing to the great similarity of both pronunciation and spelling of these words in both languages: *NATO*<sub>ENG</sub> is pronounced as /'nato/ according to *NATO*<sub>SER</sub>; *OPEC*<sub>ENG</sub> is pronounced as /'ɒpek/ according to *OPEK*<sub>SER</sub>; *NAFTA*<sub>ENG</sub> is pronounced as /'nafta/ according to *NAFTA*<sub>SER</sub>; etc.

### 3.2. Pronunciation Mistakes Made at Suprasegmental Level

#### 3.2.1. Intralingual Mistakes

(a) When it comes to mistakes at suprasegmental level, students' attention should be drawn to the fact that in two-syllable words in English stress is random. Shifting stress from one syllable to another in the words which are spelt in the same way often changes grammatical functions of words, thus rendering differences in meaning. Here are some examples relevant to an ESP economics course taught to Serbian students: *conTRAST* (v.) – *CON*trast (n.); *deCREASE* (v.) – *DE*crease (n.); *exPORT* (v.) – *EX*port (n.); *imPORT* (v.) – *IM*port (n.); *obJECT* (v.) – *OB*ject (n.); *proDUCE* (v.) – *PRO*duce (n.); *proGRESS* (v.) – *PRO*gress (n.); *proJECT* (v.) – *PRO*ject (n.); *to proSPECT* (v.) – *PRO*spect (n.); *to reCORD* (v.) – *RE*cord (n.); *surVEY* (v.) – *SUR*vey (n.), etc.

(b) The most problematic area, as far as intralingual mistakes at suprasegmental level are concerned, seems to be that many students of economics make mistakes, both in writing and speaking, when they attempt to use the noun/verb which is pronounced with the stress on a different syllable compared to the words derived from them. For example, the pronunciation of *economy* or *economise*, differs from the pronunciation of *economics* or *economic* or *economist*. Here are some other examples of similar word families: *monopolise* (v.) – *monopoly* (n.) – *monopolist* (n.) – *monopolistic* (adj.); *advertise* (v.) – *advertising* (n.) – *advertiser* (n.) – *advertisement* (n.); *analyse* (v.) – *analysis* (n.) – *analytic* (adj.) – *analyst* (n.); etc.

#### 3.2.2. Interlingual Mistakes

(a) At suprasegmental level, native-language transfer is much more outstanding with economics students. Thus, mistakes made in ***word stress as a result of transferring*** Serbian stress patterns or pronunciation to English, may be termed as *Serbian pronunciation of English words*, since these are internationalisms which tend to be pronounced similarly across languages, e.g.: *comPOnent/ kompoNENta*; *dePOsit/ DEpozit*; *INdustry/ inDUstrija*; *VARiable/ variJAbila*; *eFFECT/ Efekat*; *perCENT/ PROcenat*; *CONsequence/ konseKVEnca*; *perSPEctive/ perspekTIva*; etc.

#### 4. Some Remedial Exercises

As “[p]ronunciation teaching involves the process of deconditioning the student from his native language habits and reconditioning him to those of the language being learnt, where the latter differs from the former” (Brown 1991: 2), we may be justified to say that “much of pronunciation teaching is remedial in nature.” (Brown 1991:2). Therefore, in order to enable the students to identify and correct the pronunciation mistakes they make, we provide some remedial exercises which may be used to deal with the pronunciation problems encountered in ESP economics students whose native tongue is Serbian. They should help to raise the students’ awareness of the correct pronunciation and word stress and their importance for using English in their future field of expertise.

##### 4.1. Remedial exercises for *intralingual errors made at segmental level*

- Divide the following words into two groups, regarding the way the ending *-ate* is pronounced: adequate, climate, evaluate, delicate, generate, innovate, motivate, navigate, private, simulate.
- Cross out any consonant that is not pronounced in these words, and underline the main stress: Wednesday, debt, company, whistleblowing, foreign, interesting, business, receipt.
- Match the underlined words with their correct pronunciation.

<u>/raɪzɪŋ/</u>	<u>/raɪz/</u>	<u>/reɪz/</u>	<u>/reɪzd/</u>	<u>/raɪz/</u>	<u>/raɪzɪŋ/</u>
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The Unions state that because the cost of living rose by 8% last year, management should raise wages by an equivalent amount. However, such a rise means that the prices of the company’s products would have to be raised in order to maintain adequate profit margins. It should be clear that the Union’s demands give rise to an inflationary spiral of rising costs, rising prices and further wage claims, ultimately to nobody’s satisfaction.

##### 4.2. Remedial exercises for *interlingual errors made at segmental level*

- Single out the words in which *g* is NOT pronounced as /dʒ/.

legitimate agronomy agenda homogeneous oligopoly heterogeneous hygien  
e

- Substitute the underlined Serbian words in the following sentences with their English counterparts and then read them aloud.

1. It is not necessary that any new tehnika be invented.
2. Tehnologija, information and time can also be regarded as resursi.
3. Mikroekonomija concerns the komponente of a system.
4. Full employment is a primaran goal of any economic society for obvious reasons.
5. Opportunity cost is the direct rezultat of the scarcity of resursa.
6. Medijana is the point in a group of numbers at which half are higher and half are lower.
7. The new syllabi will be drawn according to different kriterijumima.

- Which of these acronyms can be said like *words*, e.g. NATO /'neɪtəʊ/?  
VIP; NASDAQ; OPEC; WHO; CAD; CAM; EFTA; IMF; LIBOR; CEO; OECD; PIN; IT

#### 4.3. Remedial exercises for intralingual errors made at suprasegmental level

- In many cases in English the same word is used as a noun and verb, but they are stressed on a different syllable. Stress the underlined words on the correct syllables.

1. We can only increase our sales if there is an increase in production.
2. There has been a decrease in sales. Sales have decreased.
3. There was a rise in the prices of imported goods. Imports have risen.
4. The Government will help to finance an increase in exports.
5. There has been an increase in imports.
6. There has been an increase in imported goods.
7. Imports have increased.
8. It is forecast that permit will not be issued for many kinds of manufactured goods.
9. The new advertisement ought to increase our share of the market, but only if we produce more.
10. The farm was used to produce the produce.
11. We should produce more products if we want to make a profit.

- How would you pronounce the underlined words?

1. I've been delegated to organise the weekly meetings. How many delegates does each state have?
2. Government officials visited the earthquake zone to co-ordinate the relief effort. A coordinate graph is a grid with x and y axes crossing through the center.
3. Superiors are regularly evaluated by their subordinates. He was both willing and able to subordinate all else to this aim.

4. They were able to give us a rough estimate. Officials estimate that supply has exceeded demand by £7.5 billion since the beginning of 1998.

5. The company is looking for a graduate engineer with the ability to learn and motivate a team of four people. He graduated from the University of California with a degree in mathematics. (Examples in this exercise are taken from the dictionaries listed in the References section).

- Find one word whose stress differs from the stress of the other words in the same group.

monopolise	economise	advertise
monopoly	economics	advertisement
monopolist	economy	advertising
monopolistic	economist	advertiser

- Mark the correct stress in these words.

1. general	generality	generalization
2. legal	legality	legalise
3. national	nationality	nationalization
4. personal	personality	personalize
5. stable	stability	stabilisation

#### 4.4. Remedial exercises for *interlingual errors made at suprasegmental level*

As the only common-sense solution to teaching word stress in a class consisting of students who share a first language background seems to be the contrastive approach (cf. Celce-Murcia, Brinton and Goodwin 1996: 324), the following exercise focuses on the differences in the pronunciation of similarly spelt English and Serbian words:

- ***Put the accent on the right syllable in the Serbian and English word. Note and remember the difference in stress!***

**SERBIAN:** komponenta; monopolista; ekonomista; depozit; perspektiva; varijabla; procenat; mašinerija; licenca; resursi.

**ENGLISH:** *component; monopolist; economist; deposit; perspective; variable; percent; machinery; licence; resources.*

## 5. Conclusion

With English being a *lingua franca* of international business and economy, thus having more non-native speakers in the world than native speakers, there is a need for setting more realistic goals in teaching pronunciation in an ESP classroom –

comfortable intelligibility (Kenworthy 1987) and communicability skills. We have argued here that by replacing native-speaker pronunciation concept with intelligible pronunciation concept in line with English understood as an international language, and by viewing the students' first language not as an obstacle but as an access to gaining better insights into the nature of pronunciation problems, teaching and learning pronunciation becomes grounded on more achievable goals, resulting in a considerable reduction in the workload on behalf of both teachers and students. Devising exercises which will tap into the most problematic (intralingual and interlingual) segmental and suprasegmental errors should help raise students' awareness of the necessity to discriminate between correct and incorrect pronunciation in order to not only become more confident speakers but also be better understood in their prospective professional setting. In this paper an attempt has been made to illustrate how these goals may be achieved in an economics ESP classroom. With slight adaptations, the approach we have adopted in our work and the exercises we have provided in our textbook (Silaški and Đurović 2009) may also be used in some other ESP courses, regardless of the subject matter and the native tongue of students.

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# TEACHERS' RESPONSE TO SERBIAN EFL LEARNERS' PRONUNCIATION ERRORS

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***Abstract:** The present paper aims at discovering what type of feedback Serbian teachers resort to when correcting their students' mispronounced words or utterances. To accomplish the previously stated aim of the study, we conducted a survey investigating teachers' preferences for specific types of corrective feedback and the results indicate that the most frequently employed type of feedback among Serbian EFL teachers is recast, whereas the least preferred one is direct or explicit correction. The total of 55 teachers from primary, secondary schools and colleges participated in the survey.*

***Keywords:** corrective feedback, EFL, pronunciation errors*

## 1. Introduction

Although systematic research in SLA has expanded for the last three or four decades, the field of interlanguage phonology remains slightly disregarded (Baptista 2002) compared to other linguistic areas, such as grammar and vocabulary, for example. We dare say that in Serbian EFL context, as well, research in interlanguage phonology is still in its infancy. However, with the predominant use of English as a medium of international communication, acquiring the capacity to correctly perceive and produce foreign, i.e. English language sounds has become an essential step towards successful foreign language acquisition. Defective pronunciation can lead to communication breakdowns and sometimes result in unnecessary tension and conflict. Hence, there is a renewed interest in the relevance of pronunciation teaching in recent years with the number of studies increasing (Derwing and Munro 2005).

The aim of the present study is to discover the strategies Serbian EFL teachers employ when teaching pronunciation, more precisely, to determine what type of feedback they provide for the incorrect production of English sounds. After several introductory sections presenting relevant theoretical considerations, the results of the conducted research are presented and discussed.

## 2. Effects of Corrective Feedback

Corrective feedback remains a matter of controversy among scholars, especially concerning the following issues: (a) whether CF contributes to L2

acquisition, (b) which errors are to be corrected, (c) who should do the correcting (the teacher or the learner him/herself), (d) which type of CF is the most effective, and (e) what is the best timing for CF (i.e. immediate or delayed) (Ellis 2007). Feedback may be helpful for it enables learners to distinguish whether their production is accurate or not (Panova and Lyster 2002), and, when their performance is not correct, further feedback incites them to take some remedial action. Another considerable role of corrective feedback is in rejecting false hypotheses that may arise from various misleading sources as well as in preventing overgeneralisation (Nassaji and Swain 2000). Under the right conditions and salient feedback, learners may cognitively restructure current learning techniques. Frequent and thoughtful corrections may have a metalinguistic or reflective function. Through consistent feedback teachers encourage students to view learning situations from a different standpoint and to observe their own progress. In the absence of feedback students may feel disappointed and lose interest and motivation (Richards and Lockhart 1994). Moreover, lack of feedback causes repetition of errors eventually resulting in fossilization.

To ensure the effectiveness of corrective feedback, one must take the following factors into consideration (Brookhart 2008): (1) Timing, (2) Amount, (3) Mode, and (4) Audience. El Tatawy (2002) adds that feedback should be clear enough in order to be perceived as such and the learner's readiness to process it should also be carefully considered. The learner should actively participate in pronunciation monitoring and correction, promoting thus his/her communicative self-confidence.

Nevertheless, if feedback is not systematically applied, it may trigger negative outcomes. Occasionally, avoidance of error correction is recommendable. A learner may produce a slip or mistake, not an actual error, which likewise naturally occurs in mother tongue, and this is when corrective feedback is undesirable. Affective filter must also be taken into account, since frequent corrections may lower learners' self-confidence and decrease motivation or even result in disappointment, frustration and ultimately, reluctance and rejection (Murphy 1991). Possible problems in applying corrective feedback may be ambiguity and inconsistency. Teachers sometimes adopt ambiguous feedback strategies, i.e. they neglect errors for the sake of not interrupting continuous flow of conversation or correct the same errors. Furthermore, students often pay scarce attention to feedback they receive and frequently do not know how to benefit from it, either because their strategies are limited or because the feedback they expect does not match the one they are provided with. Additional negative effects of feedback may refer to the amount of time necessary for processing information since numerous corrections cannot be processed simultaneously thus causing confusion and overload of cognitive capacities (Richards and Lockhart 1994).

### **3. Types of Corrective Feedback**

Some authors suggest that feedback be classified into a) implicit or explicit and b) input or output based (Ellis 2007).

Implicit feedback is covert and inconspicuous incorporating:

- a) A recast – a reformulation and correction of a deviant utterance while the meaning is preserved;
- b) A request for clarification – urges the students to reformulate and repeat the utterance since pronunciation or meaning was unclear;
- c) Repetition of errors – different from recasts because the teacher repeats the student's utterance with the error using intonation to indicate that it was incorrect.

Explicit feedback signifies that the teacher provides the correct form and clearly indicates that the student has made a mistake, and it includes:

- a) Direct / explicit correction – telling students they made a mistake and correcting it;
- b) Explanation or metalinguistic feedback – comments about the error intended to make students reflect upon and correct errors by themselves;
- c) Elicitation – encourages students to pronounce correctly by open-ended questions or fill-in-the-gap utterances.

Input-based feedback designs the correct form for learners (e.g. a recast), while output-based corrections demand the correct form from them (e.g. a request for clarification).

There is yet another division of feedback into external and internal according to the source it emerges from (Ellis 1991). External feedback derives from teachers and peers, whereas internal feedback is a self-regulating and monitoring cognitive process by which a learner assesses the current state of affairs and adopts appropriate techniques for future improvement. Teachers' corrections provide a sense of direction, identification of errors and advice, whilst peer feedback enables interaction without anxiety and may have more powerful results. Finally, regarding the time span during which it occurs, feedback can be immediate, instantly following the incorrect production, and delayed, with a time lapse between the performance and feedback (Opitz et al. 2011).

### **4. Methodology**

#### **4.1. The Aim of the Research**

The essential goal of the current research is to provide an insight into the feedback strategies Serbian EFL teachers employ when correcting students' pronunciation errors. We are primarily interested in ranking the types of feedback

according to the level of frequency and relevance as well as in determining what variables affect the teachers' preference for any of the suggested feedback types.

#### **4.2. Research Questions**

Having considered relevant theoretical concerns, we formulated the most significant questions for the present research. We are especially concerned with:

1. What is the most frequently used type of teacher feedback for correcting pronunciation errors in Serbian EFL classroom?
2. Is there a correlation between independent variables, such as work experience, age of students, teaching method employed, number of classes per week and the teachers' pronunciation variant, and the ranking of preferred types of feedback?

#### **4.3. Participants**

A total of 55 teachers from primary (25), secondary schools (18) and colleges (12) in Jagodina, Cuprija, Paracin, Kragujevac, Nis and Belgrade participated in the study. Our aim was to discover the types of feedback teachers most frequently use in Serbian EFL classroom in general, so we found it suitable to question teachers working at different levels of education.

#### **4.4. Instruments**

In order to examine the teachers' preference regarding which type of feedback they resort to when correcting students' pronunciation errors, we conducted a questionnaire containing three parts. The first set of questions was related to general information concerning the teachers' work experience, gender, age of students, preferred English variant in terms of pronunciation (British or American English), number of classes per week and the predominant teaching method they employed. The second set was a three-point Likert scale and the questions were concerned with the teachers' general viewpoints on feedback and pronunciation errors. The final set in the questionnaire represented an ordinal scale, more precisely a rank-ordering scale, in which the participants had the task to rank the statements regarding the types of feedback from the most frequently used (1) to the least frequently used (6). The third set of the survey is considered the most relevant for the present research, yet the previous sets are not disregarded, either, since the first set was essential for establishing the variables affecting the results in the final section of the questionnaire, whereas the second part enabled us to obtain a wider image regarding teachers' attitudes to feedback in general.

#### **4.5. Pilot Study**

The reliability and validity of the questionnaire was initially tested through a pilot study which was conducted on a sample of 15 teachers, and the results of the pilot

study led to the reformulation of several questions and the exclusion of two, because they were vague and irrelevant to the issue.

#### **4.6. Procedure**

The survey was conducted from November to April in the 2010/2011 academic year with teachers of primary, secondary schools and colleges in Jagodina, Cuprija, Paracin, Kragujevac, Nis and Belgrade. The questionnaire was distributed either personally or via the Internet. The results were later coded and analysed by providing frequency counts, i.e. the percentage scores for each variable and the results were compared to establish whether these particular variables affected the outcomes or not. The percentage values were displayed for the total number of participants, as well. The types of feedback considered the most frequently used were the ones ranked 1 and 2 (the percentage scores were added to determine the cumulative value), whereas the least preferred ones were those with ranks 5 and 6. Ranks 3 and 4 represented medium points.

### **5. Results**

#### **5.1. The Second Part of the Questionnaire – Teachers' General Attitudes**

The majority of teachers participating in the present survey believe that pronunciation is important (67.27 %), whereas 21.82 % think it is extremely important and 10.9 % of teachers are of the opinion that pronunciation is unimportant for successful interaction in L2. The second part of the questionnaire contained nine statements regarding teachers' general views on pronunciation instruction, errors and corrective feedback. Although the statements were not directly related to the actual types of feedback, we believe the answers may be beneficial since they represent the teachers' general notions and attitudes. The following table represents the percentage scores of teachers' answers:

Statements	Always (%)	Occasionally (%)	Never (%)
I disregard my students' pronunciation mistakes.	9.09	41.82	<b>49.09</b>
I emphasize the importance of pronunciation to my students.	<b>51.18</b>	34.55	25.46
My students have trouble pronouncing English consonants that are different from Serbian.	36.36	<b>63.64</b>	0
My students have trouble pronouncing English vowels that are different from Serbian.	40	<b>60</b>	0
My students have trouble pronouncing English diphthongs.	36.36	<b>60</b>	3.64
I devote special time to <u>practise</u> pronunciation with my students.	27.27	<b>61.82</b>	10.91
My students are bored when <u>practising</u> pronunciation.	27.27	<b>65.45</b>	7.27
I correct my students' pronunciation mistakes.	<b>61.82</b>	34.55	3.64
My students respond to my feedback by immediately correcting themselves.	<b>40</b>	<b>40</b>	20

### 5.2. The Third Part of the Questionnaire - Preferred Types of Feedback

For the sake of conciseness we present the results of the third part of the questionnaire in tables, yet it is important to clarify the acronyms: Direct/Explicit Correction (D/E.C.), Repetition of Errors (R.O.E.), Elicitation (E.), Metalinguistic Feedback (M.F.), Request for Clarification (R.F.C.), Recast (R.). It is likewise essential to note that the rank of the results starts at 1 (the most frequently used) and finishes with 6 (the least frequently used).

### 5.3. General Results

According to the results obtained in the current research, the majority of teachers rank recast as the most frequently used type of feedback; the second most preferred are repetition of errors and elicitation. Regarding the least frequently used feedback strategy, teachers rarely use request for clarification and direct/explicit correction:

Rank	1	2	3	4	5	6
D/E.C.	5 (9.09%)	11 (20%)	7 (12.73%)	6 (10.9%)	3 (5.45%)	23 (41.82%)
R.O.E.	6 (10.9%)	14 (25.45%)	25 (45.45%)	2 (3.64%)	5 (9.09%)	3 (5.45%)
E.	12 (21.82%)	8 (14.55%)	11 (20%)	16 (29.09%)	3 (5.45%)	5 (9.09%)
M.F.	4 (7.27%)	4 (7.27%)	1 (1.82%)	21 (38.18%)	21 (38.18%)	5 (9.09%)
R.F.C.	3 (5.45%)	5 (9.09%)	2 (3.64%)	5 (9.09%)	21 (38.18%)	18 (32.73%)
R.	25 (45.45%)	14 (25.45%)	9 (16.36%)	5 (9.09%)	2 (3.64%)	0 (0%)

#### 5.4 Results according to variables

The following results in the tables represent the rank order of feedback types in percentage scores according to the independent variables we found potentially significant for the overall outcome. As a reminder, the highest percentage scores for ranks 1 and 2 represent feedback types used most often, whereas the highest percentage scores for ranks 5 and 6 represent the least frequently employed types of feedback by Serbian EFL teachers.

##### 5.4. a) Gender

The first variable that we would like to consider is gender. Females were predominant in the questionnaire:

Male	Female
17 (30.91%)	38 (69.09%)

Apparently, there are no significant differences between male and female teachers regarding the most rarely used type of feedback since it is request for clarification as well as direct/explicit correction. The most frequently used type for both men and women is recast, yet there is a slight difference concerning the second most preferred type of feedback, since it is repetition of errors for male and elicitation for female teachers.

Rank	Male (%)						Female (%)					
	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6
D/E.C.	5.88	23.53	17.65	5.88	<b>5.88</b>	<b>41.18</b>	10.53	18.42	10.53	13.16	<b>5.26</b>	<b>42.1</b>
R.O.E.	<b>17.65</b>	<b>29.41</b>	29.41	5.88	17.65	5.88	7.89	23.68	52.63	2.63	7.89	5.26
E.	17.65	11.76	17.65	41.18	0	17.65	<b>23.68</b>	<b>15.79</b>	21.05	23.68	7.89	7.89
M.F.	5.88	5.88	0	47.06	<b>47.06</b>	0	7.89	7.89	2.63	34.21	34.21	13.16
R.F.C.	5.88	5.88	17.65	0	<b>35.29</b>	<b>35.29</b>	5.26	10.53	0	13.16	<b>39.47</b>	<b>31.58</b>
R.	<b>47.06</b>	<b>23.53</b>	23.53	5.88	0	0	<b>44.74</b>	<b>26.32</b>	13.16	10.53	5.26	0

#### 5.4. b) Work Experience

The majority of teachers in the survey had less than 10 years of experience and we further investigated whether it had any effects on the choice of corrective feedback type.

0-5 years	5-10 years	10-20 years	Over 20 years
21 (38.18%)	17 (30.91%)	11 (20 %)	6 (10.91 %)

The participants were sorted into four groups according to their work experience, yet merely six teachers had more than 20 years of experience, which must be recognized as an impediment to more valid research results. The first group (0-5 years of work experience) uses recasts most often, followed by elicitation and repetition of errors, which have similar percentage scores. The least preferred types of feedback are direct/explicit direction. Interestingly, teachers chose request for clarification as one of the most frequently as well as the least frequently used feedback types. The second group (5-10 years) ranked recasts as most frequent, and elicitation as the second, while the least employed are again direct/explicit correction and request for clarification.

Recasts are the most preferred feedback type for the third group (10-20 years), as well, yet there is an alteration regarding the second ranked feedback type, since it is direct/explicit correction. The least preferred are request for clarification and metalinguistic feedback. The last group (over 20 years) will not be taken as relevant, since the number of participants was deficient to make any valid conclusions. Intriguingly though, absolutely all the teachers chose recasts as the most frequently used feedback type.



0-5 years (%)							5-10 years (%)					
Rank	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6
D/E.C.	14.26	14.26	9.52	14.26	4.76	38.1	0	17.65	0	5.88	11.76	64.71
R.O.E.	4.76	33.33	28.57	4.76	19.05	4.76	23.53	11.76	52.94	5.88	5.88	0
E.	28.57	9.52	23.8	23.8	0	14.26	29.41	23.53	23.53	17.65	0	5.88
M.F.	14.26	14.26	4.76	28.57	28.57	9.52	5.88	0	0	58.82	35.29	0
R.F.C.	28.57	9.52	4.76	14.26	38.1	23.8	0	5.88	5.88	11.76	47.06	29.41
R.	28.57	19.05	28.57	14.26	9.52	0	41.18	41.18	17.65	0	0	0
10-20 years (%)							Over 20 years (%)					
D/E.C.	18.18	27.27	27.27	0	0	27.27	0	33.33	33.33	16.67	0	16.67
R.O.E.	9.09	18.18	63.64	0	0	9.09	0	50	50	0	0	0
E.	9.09	9.09	9.09	54.55	18.18	0	0	16.67	16.67	33.33	16.67	16.67
M.F.	0	9.09	0	18.18	45.45	27.27	0	0	0	50	50	0
R.F.C.	9.09	9.09	0	9.09	36.36	36.36	0	0	0	0	33.33	66.67
R.	54.55	27.27	0	18.18	0	0	100	0	0	0	0	0

#### 5.4. c) Students' Age

Another factor that we shall consider is the age of students taught by the participants in our survey.

Primary School		Secondary School 1-4 <sup>th</sup> Grade	College 1-4 <sup>th</sup> Year
1-4 <sup>th</sup> Grade	5-8 <sup>th</sup> Grade	18 (32.73 %)	12 (21.82 %)
13 (23.64 %)	12 (21.82 %)		

1-4<sup>th</sup> grade primary school teachers prefer recast and explicit correction and avoid using request for clarification and metalinguistic feedback. 5-8<sup>th</sup> grade primary school teachers prefer recasts, as well, along with elicitation, repetition of errors and direct/explicit correction, while they do not use request for clarification and some of them direct/explicit correction. Regarding the preferred feedback types, the situation is identical with secondary school teachers, whereas the least frequently used ones are request for clarification, metalinguistic feedback and direct/explicit correction. College teachers prefer recasts and elicitation, and rarely use direct/explicit correction and request for clarification.

1-4 <sup>th</sup> Grade Primary School (%)							5-8 <sup>th</sup> Grade Primary School (%)					
Rank	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6
D/E.C.	<b>23.08</b>	<b>23.08</b>	0	23.08	7.69	23.08	0	<b>33.33</b>	0	8.33	<b>8.33</b>	<b>50</b>
R.O.E.	0	23.08	53.85	7.69	15.38	0	<b>8.33</b>	<b>25</b>	50	0	8.33	0
E.	15.38	7.69	23.08	38.46	0	7.69	<b>25</b>	<b>8.33</b>	25	33.33	0	8.33
M.F.	0	15.38	0	15.38	<b>53.85</b>	<b>15.38</b>	8.33	8.33	0	41.67	33.33	8.33
R.F.C.	7.69	0	7.69	7.69	<b>23.08</b>	<b>53.85</b>	0	8.33	0	16.67	<b>41.67</b>	<b>33.33</b>
R.	<b>46.15</b>	<b>30.77</b>	15.38	7.69	0	0	<b>58.33</b>	<b>8.33</b>	25	0	8.33	0
1-4 <sup>th</sup> Grade Secondary School (%)							1-4 <sup>th</sup> College					
D/E.C.	0	11.11	38.89	11.11	0	<b>38.89</b>	16.67	16.67	0	0	<b>8.33</b>	<b>58.33</b>
R.O.E.	<b>11.11</b>	<b>38.89</b>	27.28	0	5.56	16.67	25	0	58.33	8.33	8.33	0
E.	<b>27.78</b>	<b>11.11</b>	16.67	22.22	16.67	5.56	<b>8.33</b>	<b>33.33</b>	16.67	25	0	16.67
M.F.	5.56	0	0	50	<b>33.33</b>	<b>11.11</b>	16.67	8.33	8.33	41.67	25	0
R.F.C.	11.11	5.56	5.56	5.56	<b>44.44</b>	<b>27.28</b>	0	16.67	0	8.33	<b>50</b>	<b>25</b>
R.	<b>44.44</b>	<b>33.33</b>	11.11	11.11	0	0	<b>33.33</b>	<b>25</b>	16.67	16.67	8.33	0

#### 5.4. d) Number of Classes per Week

Since lack of time may be a problem for Serbian EFL teachers, perhaps the number of classes may affect the options for corrective feedback, which is why we included this question in the survey and discovered that the majority of teachers we surveyed taught 2 classes per week (per one class only).

2	3	4	5	more
44 (80 %)	/	8 (14.55 %)	3 (5.45 %)	/

Similarly to the situation with work experience, the number of teachers who teach the same group of students more than two classes a week is deficient, so the results we obtained are insufficient to lead to reliable conclusions. Regardless, we will mention that the most frequently used feedback types are recasts, elicitation and repetition of errors for teachers who teach two classes per week, whereas the least used ones are request for clarification, metalinguistic feedback and direct/explicit correction. The situation is similar when it comes to the group of teachers who teach 4 classes per week, as can be seen from the relevant tables:

2 Classes (%)							4 Classes (%)					
Rank	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6
D/E.C.	9.09	20.45	11.36	13.64	<b>6.82</b>	<b>38.64</b>	12.5	12.5	0	0	0	<b>75</b>
R.O.E.	<b>6.82</b>	<b>29.55</b>	43.18	4.55	11.36	4.55	<b>37.5</b>	0	62.5	0	0	0
E.	<b>25</b>	<b>11.36</b>	20.45	27.27	4.55	11.36	<b>12.5</b>	<b>37.5</b>	25	25	0	0
M.F.	6.82	6.82	2.27	36.36	<b>38.64</b>	<b>9.09</b>	0	12.5	0	62.5	25	0
R.F.C.	4.55	6.82	4.55	11.36	<b>36.36</b>	<b>36.36</b>	0	0	0	0	<b>75</b>	25
R.	<b>47.73</b>	<b>25</b>	18.18	6.82	9.09	0	<b>37.5</b>	<b>37.5</b>	12.5	12.5	0	0
5 Classes (%)												
D/E.C.	0	33.33	66.67	0	0	0						
R.O.E.	0	33.33	33.33	0	0	33.33						
E.	0	0	0	66.67	33.33	0						
M.F.	33.33	0	0	0	33.33	33.33						
R.F.C.	33.33	33.33	0	0	0	33.33						
R.	33.33	0	0	33.33	33.33	0						

#### 5.4. e) Teaching Approach

In the theoretical sections concerning feedback and pronunciation instruction in general we mentioned the different views various teaching approaches had with regard to pronunciation instruction, which is why we consider the teachers' preferred teaching approach may affect the choice of feedback strategy.

Communicative	Grammar-translation	Combined	Other
17 (30.91 %)	15 (27.27 %)	23 (41.82 %)	/

Among teachers who apply the Communicative approach in their classroom, the majority prefers elicitation and recasts, whereas direct/explicit direction is the most disliked type along with request for clarification. Grammar-translation supporters prefer recasts and direct/explicit correction, however, while metalinguistic feedback is the least used and so is request for clarification. Teachers who combine approaches say that they most frequently use recast and repetition of errors, and avoid using direct/explicit correction and request for clarification.

Communicative (%)							Grammar-translation (%)					
Rank	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6
D/E.C.	5.88	5.88	0	17.65	<b>11.76</b>	<b>58.82</b>	<b>6.67</b>	<b>53.33</b>	20	13.33	0	6.67
R.O.E.	0	29.41	52.94	5.88	11.76	0	0	26.67	66.67	0	6.67	0
E.	<b>64.71</b>	<b>17.65</b>	11.76	0	0	5.88	0	6.67	6.67	53.33	20	13.33
M.F.	5.88	5.88	0	47.06	29.42	5.88	0	6.67	0	20	<b>46.67</b>	<b>26.67</b>
R.F.C.	0	4.88	5.88	17.65	<b>35.29</b>	<b>29.41</b>	6.67	0	6.67	6.67	<b>26.67</b>	<b>53.33</b>
R.	<b>23.53</b>	<b>35.29</b>	29.41	5.88	5.88	0	<b>86.67</b>	<b>6.67</b>	0	6.67	0	0
Combined (%)												
D/E.C.	13.04	8.7	17.39	4.35	<b>4.35</b>	<b>52.17</b>						
R.O.E.	<b>26.09</b>	<b>21.74</b>	26.09	4.35	8.7	13.04						
E.	4.35	17.39	34.78	34.78	0	8.7						
M.F.	13.04	8.7	4.35	39.13	34.78	0						
R.F.C.	8.7	13.04	0	4.35	<b>47.83</b>	<b>26.09</b>						
R.	<b>34.78</b>	<b>30.43</b>	17.39	13.04	4.35	0						

#### 5.4. f) Teachers' Preferred Pronunciation Variant

The American English variant is prevailing in films, TV shows and music, whereas British English is less frequently heard, which is why we believe that teachers who opt for British English pronunciation are more careful and meticulous about the production of target language sounds.

<b>British English</b>	<b>American English</b>
28 (50.91 %)	27 (49.09 %)

Teachers who adopted British English pronunciation use recasts and direct/explicit correction to correct their students' pronunciation errors, and rarely use request for clarification and metalinguistic feedback. Those teachers who speak American English prefer elicitation, recast and repetition of errors, yet dislike direct/explicit correction and request for clarification:

British English (%)							American English (%)					
Rank	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6
D/E.C.	7.14	32.14	21.43	7.14	0	32.14	11.11	7.41	3.7	14.81	11.11	51.85
R.O.E.	10.71	21.43	50	0	10.71	7.14	11.11	29.63	40.74	7.41	7.41	3.7
E.	7.14	10.71	17.86	46.43	10.71	7.14	37.04	18.52	22.22	11.11	0	11.11
M.F.	0	7.14	0	32.14	46.43	14.29	14.81	7.41	3.7	44.44	25.93	3.7
R.F.C.	10.71	3.57	7.14	7.14	32.14	39.29	0	11.11	0	11.11	48.15	29.63
R.	64.29	25	3.57	7.14	0	0	25.93	25.93	29.63	11.11	7.41	0

## 6. Discussion

The fact that the majority of Serbian teachers who participated in our study believe that pronunciation is important for successful interaction seems encouraging for students who intend to perfect their production of English sounds, since teachers are willing to invest their efforts and knowledge to help them. One of the ways in which teachers can help their students is by not disregarding their errors and by emphasizing the importance of pronunciation, which is how teachers predominantly behave, according to the results of our questionnaire. The prevailing number of teachers said that their students occasionally had problems with the pronunciation of English vowels, consonants and diphthongs, yet with a careful approach and consistent attention, these problems can be overcome successfully. The discouraging fact, however, is that teachers believe that their students are occasionally bored with pronunciation practice, which can be improved by including more interesting exercises and involving students in projects they would feel comfortable with. The majority of teachers likewise said that they only occasionally devoted special time to practising pronunciation, which is probably the result of the curriculum requirements that do not

put significant emphasis on pronunciation practice. Most of the teachers reported that they always corrected the students' pronunciation errors, which goes in line with stressing the importance of pronunciation. An equal number of teachers said that their students responded to corrective feedback always or occasionally, which may be considered positive since it serves as evidence that teachers and their corrective feedback affect their students and provoke reactions.

The results obtained regarding the general Serbian EFL teachers' attitudes towards corrective feedback and pronunciation instruction in general may be beneficial because of their pedagogical implications for applied linguistics research and English language teaching in particular.

The results of the questionnaire showed that the most frequently used type of feedback by Serbian teachers was recast, followed by elicitation and repetition of errors. Our findings thus confirm the ones previously obtained by various scholars about which we reported earlier (Lyster 1998; Lyster and Ranta 1997). However, although recasts are the most frequent type, they may be confusing for students and they have less effect on the students' production than, for example, metalinguistic feedback or other types of implicit feedback because these enhance the students' involvement and motivate them to rely on their own resources. The most unpopular feedback types are request for clarification and direct/explicit feedback. The possible explanation perhaps derives from the fact that pronunciation errors are different from other types of error and when a student produces an inaccurately pronounced word, the teacher understands what type of error was made and needs no explanation from the student regarding what he/she was trying to say. Direct/explicit correction may be used most rarely because teachers are reluctant to discourage their students by explicitly indicating that they made a mistake, since direct correction may lead to the increase of affective filtering and result in the decrease of self-confidence and motivation. However, it is irrefutable that explicit correction may be useful occasionally, and it is the teachers' task to discover what type of error and classroom situation it is suitable for.

Regarding the factors, i.e. independent variables that may affect the teachers' choice of corrective feedback type, we may conclude that gender is not a relevant factor, since both men and women have the same preference for recast and avoid request for clarification and explicit correction. However, it may be significant to mention that male and female teachers differ in terms of the second best ranked type of feedback, since males prefer to repeat errors, which is implicit, whereas females tend to elicit the correct production from their students, which is an explicit type of corrective feedback. Work experience may seem a significant factor, yet we are not allowed to make any steadfast conclusions due to insufficient evidence, as we mentioned earlier. However, we may underscore the fact that as work experience is greater, teachers prefer direct/explicit correction as second-ranked, but recasts remain the most frequently used type. Further research on a larger number of participants may

provide more substantial evidence for the relevance of work experience for the type of feedback teachers choose. The age of students may have a certain influence on the type of feedback teachers use, yet not regarding the first-ranked choice, but the second one and especially with younger learners. Teachers who teach lower grades in primary schools reported direct/explicit correction as the second most preferred choice (after recasts), whereas teachers in older primary school grades and secondary schools use elicitation and repetition of errors most frequently, along with recasts. This difference may arise from the fact that younger learners need a more explicit indication that they made an error in pronunciation and also from the fact that the older learners' curriculum is more diverse and the students' proficiency is hopefully at a higher level, so teachers can use various materials and adjust their approach to correspond to their students' needs. The same argument may account for the college teachers' preference for elicitation since they may want to involve their students more and stimulate them to rely on their own intuition and knowledge.

The deficiency of evidence disallows us to draw any viable conclusions regarding the correlation between the number of classes taught and the types of feedback teachers use. Bearing in mind that pronunciation was approached differently depending on the teaching approach, we assumed that the teaching approaches applied by the participants in the survey might have an influence over the type of feedback they choose. Our assumption was correct to a certain extent, since the teachers who use the Communicative approach predominantly use elicitation, probably seeking to involve students more, yet recasts also remain the most frequently used type. Furthermore, the teachers who apply the Grammar-translation method prefer recasts; however, they resort to explicit correction to a significant extent, which is comprehensible enough since the teaching approach in question is somewhat traditional and so is direct/explicit correction. There is likewise a difference in the least preferred type of feedback, and that is direct/explicit correction for Communicative-approach teachers, and metalinguistic feedback for Grammar-translation teachers, while request for clarification is avoided by both groups of teachers. Teachers who combine several approaches tend to use recasts and, interestingly, repetition of errors, and avoid direct correction and request for clarification.

The results showed a difference between teachers with British and American English variants, meaning that the teachers who speak British English regard direct/explicit correction more favourably than those who speak American English, who prefer elicitation and repetition of errors, yet recasts are common with both groups. The possible explanation may be that the teachers who prefer British English tend to emphasize the importance of pronunciation and thus explicitly draw the students' attention to erroneous production, whereas teachers with American English variant choose to correct their students somewhat more implicitly.

## 7. Conclusion

The goal of the previous study was to explore the types of feedback Serbian EFL teachers use to correct their students' pronunciation errors.

The results of the questionnaire designed to measure the most frequently employed type of feedback indicated that the predominantly used corrective feedback type was recast, and the most rarely used one was direct/explicit correction. We drew attention to certain possibly relevant factors influencing the teachers' choice of feedback and we arrived at the conclusion that the most significant factor is the teaching approach, along with the age of students and the teachers' pronunciation variant. However, further research involving a greater number of participants seems necessary to explore the aforementioned suggestions.

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## CULTURE IN ESP SYLLABUS: WHY AND HOW

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***Abstract:** While language and culture are generally recognised to be intimately linked, English for Specific Purposes has typically been seen as “acultural”. This paper argues that cultural information is a necessary component of any ESP course and that a contrastive-comparative approach can help the learner in appropriating other cultures.*

***Keywords:** contrastive-comparative approach, cultural awareness, English for Specific Purposes, intercultural communication*

### 1. Introduction

Whereas it is generally recognised nowadays that language and culture are intimately linked, the teaching of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) has typically been seen as divorced from cultural input. This paper argues that cultural information is a necessary component of any ESP course, but that the teaching methods used must take into account the complex nature of culture as well as students' needs.

Starting out from the basic postulates of ESP, the paper looks at learners' needs and refutes the idea historically present in the field that ESP is essentially “acultural” (Bower 1992). Once the need to include culture as part of language teaching in professional contexts is established, the paper addresses the issue of which (type of) culture should be included, focussing on “little c” culture and the interplay of the source and target cultures. In this respect, the necessity to “appropriate” (Kramsch 1998), rather than adopt, the foreign culture is stressed; appropriation will ideally further promote language proficiency as well as openness to yet other cultures.

Based on these theoretical premises, the comparative-contrastive approach (Byram, Morgan et al. 1994) is discussed as a possible method of including culture in ESP classes. Finally, a case study of a course of English for Civil Engineers at the University of Ljubljana is presented, together with the positive feedback received by the students involved.

### 2. Needs Analysis

It is a distinctive trait of ESP that teaching and materials are founded on the results of needs analysis:

The first questions when starting preparation for teaching an ESP course is almost always: What do students need to do with English? Which of the skills do they need to master and how well? Which genres do they need to master, either for comprehension or production purposes? (Dudley-Evans 2001:131)

In the development of a Language for Specific Purposes (LSP) course, much attention is consequently paid to the specific vocabulary of the discipline, often accompanied by a limited focus on some grammar topics that often occur in the genres most typically encountered by the students (e.g. traits of academic language). Additional training in some aspects of general language useful in most everyday professional situations is typically included as well, but very rarely does one hear of culture being incorporated in the LSP syllabus.

Besides the fact that cultural and intercultural aspects of the field are usually given less significance in LSP in general, English is a world language that can frequently be expected to be used by students as a *lingua franca*, i.e. in communication with non-native speakers of English, rather than to interact with native English speakers (cf. Nickerson 2005). Some authors even take this to be a prominent characteristic of ESP: “In the majority of cases, interactions take place among people of different nationalities using English as an international language for communication” (López Torres and Perea Barberá 2002:75).

On the side of the workplace and professions, intercultural communication awareness training has been implemented since the 1970’s because the need for it arose from multicultural work situations, although it has remained relatively marginal (Roberts 1998:119). It is argued here that cultural material should be included in the ESP syllabus because it does form part of what the learners need, even if this necessity is often overlooked. This is hardly surprising as “[l]earners are not aware of their own language requirements, and external observers (e.g. textbook writers and applied linguists) have only experience and intuition to guide them” (Strevens 1977:107).

### **3. (Un)desirability of Culture**

For a long time, ESP was to some degree seen as “free of culture”: ESP was supposed to be “a conception of teaching and learning the practical command of a language, unrelated to aspects of culture” (Strevens 1977:89), and Bower (1992:29-30), for example, described English at the international level as “essentially acultural” with a “universal functional value”. Some of the practitioners in the field even felt culture had a negative connotation. The English language was desired

not for the purpose of spreading British or American social and cultural values but as a natural link within multi-cultural, multi-lingual societies as a vehicle for international communication, as a global carrier-wave for news, information, entertainment and

administration, and as the language in which [had] taken place the genesis of the second industrial and scientific revolution. (attributed to Strevens (1977:89) in Master and Brinton 1998:vii)

It has thus been claimed in language teaching that there is a strong dichotomy between language and culture, and the latter has at times been seen as “contents conveyed by language, but separate from language” (Penz 2001:103). Such an assertion cannot hold because of the interaction between cultural awareness and language awareness, which are “both seen as essential aspects of communicative competence and inseparable from it” (Fenner 2001:7). In reality, quite the opposite is true: “Since language and culture are inseparable, we cannot be teachers of language without being teachers of culture – or vice versa” (Byram, Morgan et al. 1994:vii).

In Europe and worldwide, the question of language and culture teaching – also known as intercultural communication, intercultural communicative competence, *Fremdverstehen* (“understanding the Other”), intercultural studies, or multiculturalism – has become particularly prominent in the third millennium, and this fact is also reflected in the great number of publications and endorsements by Unesco, the Council of Europe and EU institutions (e.g. Council of Europe 2008, European Union 2007, Unesco 2003; cf. Penz 2001:104). The main concern here is the possibility of miscommunication as studies of interethnic communication suggest that lack of shared schemas in interaction is more likely to lead to communication breakdown than differences at the level of linguistic code (Ellis and Roberts 1987:24 as cited in Byram, Morgan et al. 1994:8; cf. Grosman 1998).

#### **4. Which Culture?**

The literature typically distinguishes between Culture with a “big C” and culture with a “little c”. Traditional study of British and American/Canadian life and institutions has placed emphasis on “big C” or “achievement” culture – history, geography, institutions, literature, art and music – at the expense of “little c”, “behaviour” or “behavioural” culture, which includes cultural behaviours, culturally-influenced beliefs and perceptions (cf. Čurković Kalebić 1998, Stern 1992, Strevens 1977, Tomalin and Stempleski 1993). It is the latter, however, that seems to be of greater importance for ESP courses.

Among ESP practitioners, the relevance of “behaviour culture” has been most widely recognised in the field of Business Studies (cf. Heinzová 1999, Kramsch 2001). Out of the six case studies of ESP for language learners in the university presented in Orr (2002) only one – for students of business – mentions culture, acknowledging that “[a] critical approach to cultural issues informs nearly every aspect of the program” (Boyd 2002:53).

But it is not only the target culture that needs to be taken into account. The cultural component of any language course – including those for specific purposes – will be important at both societal and individual levels. The language learner, who is in the case of LSP a current or future professional in the field, must also be able in his or her professional life to play the role of a cultural intermediary, and this must be taken into account in the management of the relations between the learner's country and that of the target language (cf. Byram and Zarate 1997). Interestingly, the problems created by differences in behaviours in intercultural communication may not be very different from those encountered in communication among ethnically diverse groups within one and the same country (cf. Kramersch 2001).

At the level of the individual, one of the educational purposes of foreign language teaching is “to develop pupils' understanding of themselves and their own culture” (DES 1990:3 as cited in Byram, Morgan et. al. 1994:43). In this respect, the value of language and culture teaching is that it can contribute to this educational purpose as it provides learners with a perspective on themselves from beyond the usual limits of their experience and perceptions. An aspect of the cultural dimension of foreign language learning will accordingly refer to the learner himself or herself, i.e. the learner “as a cultural being with a cultural perspective on the world, including culture-specific expectations of the classroom and learning processes” (Wajnryb 1992:40; cf. Nero 2009).

## **5. Appropriation instead of Adoption**

Teaching a foreign culture does not mean “infecting” learners with it nor does it imply cultural conversion:

Learners cannot simply shake off their own culture and step into another. It is not a question of putting down their “cultural baggage” [...] Learners are “committed” to their culture and to deny any part of it is to deny something within their own being. (Byram, Morgan et al. 1994:43)

This does not mean they will not try it: “[Language learners'] desire to learn the language of others is often coupled with a desire to behave and think like them, in order to ultimately be recognized and validated by them” (Kramersch 1998:80-81; cf. Grosman 1998). Apart from being unrealistic, such a prospect is less than advantageous. The notion of authenticity is suspect in itself as there is necessarily a diversity of authenticities present within any one national society and what is authentic in one context might be inauthentic in another: in the complexities of a post-colonial, global age with its multiple, shifting identities, “native” and “foreign” cultures cannot be seen as stable spaces on the map and permanent in time or reduced to a limited set of cultural traits (cf. Holliday 2010a, Holliday, Hyde and Kullman 2006:21-25, 54-59,

Kramersch 1998:81, 2001:202, 205), and this is particularly true of English-speaking cultures as English is the leading international language (cf. Alptekin 2002, Bhatia 1996, Prodromou 1992).

Even more important, however, is “the undesirability of imposing on learners a concept of authenticity that might devalue their own authentic selves *as learners*” (Kramersch 1998:81). Kramersch argues that cultural appropriateness may need to be replaced by the concept of *appropriation*. This process goes beyond adopting a foreign language and culture: learners make it their own by adapting it to their own needs and interests. The goal to be striven for is therefore the ability to acquire another person’s language and understand someone else’s culture while retaining one’s own. Encouraging appropriation means trying to avoid both extremes: on the one hand, cultural pluralism may lead to a crisis of meaning and alienation (cf. Berger and Luckmann 1995); on the other, one might develop representations of an “idealised Self” and “demonised Other” (cf. Holliday 2010b).

Interestingly, language teachers teaching a language that is not their mother tongue might have an advantage over native language teachers in this respect, and not just in the sense of being able to point out cultural differences straightforwardly to homogeneous classes (cf. Medgyes 1994): far from being “culturally deficient” (cf. Holliday 2009), they know from their own experience what it means to enter a new, foreign culture with its own set of customs, values and assumptions (cf. Rowsell, Sztainbok and Blaney 2007).

## **6. Some Additional Benefits**

As Johnson and Nelson’s (2010) study shows, students who do not achieve proficiency may nevertheless experience transformative learning, i.e. even students whose level is relatively low can benefit from cultural instruction in terms of awareness of diversity and ethnocentricity. It is the converse relation, however, that is even more interesting: research done by Jiang, Green, Henley and Masten (2009) has shown that acculturation, understood as getting closer to the target culture without separation from the learner’s ethnic society, has a beneficial influence on learners’ proficiency. Consequently, incorporating culture into an ESP course may have a greater impact than just reaching goals related to cultural knowledge.

It is an important characteristic of developing intercultural interaction competence in an ESP context that the aim is profession-related rather than generally educational. Spencer-Oatey and Franklin (2009:202) believe that the beneficiaries of promoting competence in intercultural interaction are “the individual participant and his/her *organization* (or other users of his/her professional qualifications) rather than the individual and *society*”.

The societal level cannot be disregarded, however. Another important benefit of a learner’s being able to assess critically the foreign culture and acquire an

understanding of it while at the same retaining a certain distance by staying rooted in his or her own culture is that such a learner can hopefully avoid adopting without reflection attitudes and claims about groups within the target culture (cf. Clark and Schleef (2010) for an example of Polish learners acquiring sociolinguistic evaluations of Birmingham English).

Furthermore, if a dialogical approach is adopted that takes into consideration the learner's own culture and how it interacts with the target culture, increased awareness of the different perspectives the world can be viewed from should translate into greater openness to the possibility of further cultural differences, opening the door for encounters with yet other foreign cultures (cf. Seelye 1997:207), which, due to the status of English as the world's *lingua franca*, should be of special interest to ESP.

## **7. Contrastive-Comparative Approach**

Even when a teacher is convinced of the value of teaching culture, he or she might not know precisely how to go about it, and this is an issue not only in ESP but in English language teaching in general. There is a gap between the broad theoretical consensus that culture should be included in language curricula and the lack of impact of the culture concept on language classes – “in spite of this strong endorsement by the theorists, the cultural component has remained difficult to accommodate in practice” (Stern 1992:206).

Members of any society will typically see the norms governing social (and linguistic) behaviour in their society as the default. Often, they will not expect differences to occur, and if they do notice dissimilarities, they will usually regard them as deviations. Building on such perceptions of cultural practices, learners will consequently attempt to assimilate or anchor differing behaviours within their existing categories. It is here that a contrastive-comparative approach can prove its value.

Byram, Morgan et al. (1994:43-44) see comparison, and especially contrast, as a means of helping learners to realise that the process of assimilation or anchoring will not do justice to the reality of other people's culture, their cultural values and meanings. What is needed is for learners to accept that other people have other schemata through which they understand their physical and social world and to relate it cognitively to their own socially determined representations of what might seem to be the same reality:

[T]he psychological theory points quite clearly to the need for a comparative method: learners need to become aware of their own cultural schemata – and of the affective, attitudinal dimension of those schemata – in order to effect an acknowledgement of those of a different culture. (Byram, Morgan et al. 1994:43-44)

It follows from this that confrontation with their own culture as seen from the perspective of others is important when learners try to bring unconscious and naturalised beliefs into consciousness so that their relativity and specificity can be acknowledged; after all, culture can only really ever be construed as “resources and imagination produced, negotiated, and appropriated through contact with difference” (Singh and Doherty 2004:34).

Despite the fact that a comparative-contrastive approach can be very useful in establishing a relation between the source culture and target culture(s), attention needs to be paid to avoid reductionist ideas of cultural difference that might oversimplify or stereotype groups (Jund 2009; cf. the above discussion on the diversity of authenticities).

## **8. A Practical Application**

A practical attempt at integrating culture in ESP through a comparative-contrastive approach was made in a course of English for students of Civil Engineering at the University of Ljubljana, Slovenia, in the academic year 2009–2010. Alongside the more conventional content expected in this type of course, a number of specialised (e.g. wood-framed construction in the USA vs. masonry construction in Slovenia) and semi-specialised (e.g. imperial system of units, homes in Britain and America) cultural topics were discussed. The cultural input was thus supposed to help learners not only in contexts where they will actually be in touch with members of the target culture but also indirectly, for instance when having to study from American textbooks and articles. The content comprised both “big C” and “little c” culture insofar as it pertained to the specialist field.

The cultural component was integrated into the syllabus in three ways. Most of the time cultural information was subsidiary to specialist language, e.g. when types of construction were discussed, the group also talked about the differences between the types of construction common in America and Slovenia (cf. Pérez 1999). In addition, “throw-away cultural information” was often provided when the focus of the lesson was on some other component: e.g. when American texts were used for the study of the properties of various materials and houses were given as a typical application of wood, the students were reminded of how this was linked to the typical type of construction in the USA.

The third method used for incorporating culture into the ESP syllabus was devoting a whole session to raising cross-cultural awareness. The lesson was divided into two parts, imperial system of measurement and homes in the UK and USA. The students were introduced to imperial units and referred to a website where they could study the matter in more detail. They tested their knowledge with the help of a quiz and tried their hand at conversion in a civil engineering context. In the second part, they were given resources to learn about homes in Britain from, and some of the content

was checked with the help of another quiz. The students then led online discussions about differences between housing in Slovenia and English-speaking countries and how they were related to the systems of beliefs and values in the respective societies.

## **9. Student Response**

A questionnaire was administered to students enrolled in the course to assess their attitudes towards the cultural information included in the syllabus. Feedback was obtained from 11 female and 21 male students in the first (18) and second (14) years.

The analysis of student questionnaires showed that students welcomed the inclusion of cultural information in the course as described above: 30 of the 32 students involved in the study believed that cultural knowledge was either occasionally important or very important for professional communication in their chosen field. A third of the students (9) would have appreciated even more instruction of this type, and not a single student felt too much emphasis was given to culture (cf. Kavalir 2010 for more details).

In comparison with Greek students of (general) English in Prodromou's (1992) study, where 60% of respondents believed British life and institutions should be part of the content of their English lessons and 26% felt the same way about American life and institutions, Slovenian students thus seem to exhibit more cultural curiosity; it should be noted, however, that they seem to have a more positive attitude to foreignness and acquire more "knowledge of the world" throughout their education compared to their peers in other countries (cf. Zhang, Lin and Hoge 2007). It is also true, on the other hand, that there will typically be a variety of cultural influences on student behaviour apart from national and regional influences, such as classroom and institution culture (Holliday 1994:54-55), and not all of the difference can be explained by the contribution of the source culture.

## **10. Conclusion**

Despite the fact that cultural information is usually absent or at least understated in ESP courses, such content is necessary: language learning cannot be separated from culture and the cultural component is crucial when it comes to intercultural communication even when English is used as a *lingua franca*. While it has become axiomatic in language teaching to draw attention to the close ties between language and culture, ESP has for the most part not followed this path.

It is important to recognise the importance of culture for ESP courses irrespective of whether needs are defined as what students have to be able to do at the end of their language course or as what the society at large regards as desirable to be learnt from the programme (cf. Robinson 1991:7-8). As the example discussed in the paper testifies, such needs will also be readily acknowledged by the learners



themselves: “if we treat culture and language as linked, we invite students in; if we mobilise and operationalise our students’ lived experiences, we invite them in; and, if we open up our teaching to different modalities, we allow the language and culture nexus to flourish” (Rowse et al. 2007:153).

To sum up, the views and studies presented in the paper point to the conclusion that culture should be included in the ESP syllabus: a contrastive-comparative approach to the delivery of cultural content can help the ESP learner to appropriate the foreign culture and make a positive step towards true intercultural communication.

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# USING FIELD TRIP AS A TEACHING METHOD: A WALKING TOUR OF TIMIȘOARA AS SEEN BY BRITISH WRITERS

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**Abstract:** *This article proposes a literary walking tour of Timișoara as seen by British authors who visited the city from the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century to present. The article proposes a synthesis of the authors' perceptions of some of the main attractions of Timișoara: the Bega Canal, the Victory Square, the Liberation Square, the Union Square and the Bastion.*

**Keywords:** *field trip, image of Romania in British Literature, imagology, literary tour, Timișoara*

## 1. Introduction

Timișoara is one of the Romanian cities which have left an unforgettable impression on the British writers who have visited our country. In this paper I intend to select some remarkable travel impressions and, based on them, to propose a walking tour of the city which follows the trail of the authors. John Paget, who visited the city in the first part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was under the impression that “the capital of the Banat, and the winter residence of the rich Banatians, is one of the prettiest towns I know anywhere” (Paget 1839:162), and similar feelings have often been expressed in the travel notes of his compatriots.

I think that a walking tour based on the British travellers' impressions would increase the students' interest both in the study of literature and in the history and culture of Timișoara. This article proposes an approach which is based on an interactive method of learning, the field trip. There are several studies which consider that in the study of literature, “some external activity should elicit interest in the topic” (Bogle 2005:55).

Teaching and learning in public spaces is an interactive strategy which has drawn the attention of several methodological studies (see Crimmel 2003). Hall Crimmel shows that the field trip can be used both in the exploration of nature and in rediscovering the values of an urban environment. In contemporary approaches to the study of literature and culture, the field trip is perceived as “an obvious point to begin developing a place-based instructional focus” (Krishnaswami 2002:3). Field studies are also seen as a way of encouraging an interdisciplinary approach to literature and a strategy to develop the students' creative writing abilities. The advantages of using field trip as a method of teaching are also discussed in the volume *Turismul Școlar* by Ancuța Franț (2003).

I suggest a walking tour which starts from the West University of Timișoara and ends at the walls of the fortress. If students cross the road opposite the university, they will see the banks of the Bega Canal, and a short walk along the canal will lead their steps towards the Victory Square (Piața Victoriei).

## **2. Along the Bega Canal to Victory Square**

The Bega Canal was built in the 18<sup>th</sup> century (between 1728 and 1771) with the aim to link the waters of the region with the Danube River, a connection with economic and strategic purposes. One of the first British travellers who wrote about the role of this canal in the economic development of the area was William Hunter, a Barrister of the Inner Temple, who travelled through France, Turkey and Hungary, to Vienna, in 1792. On his route he visited some areas of contemporary Romania, and wrote his impressions about several cities such as Timișoara, Arad, Deva, Orăștie, etc. Hunter informs his readers that the Bega Canal was begun by order of Maria Theresa, and describes it as “a truly imperial work, for it is not only of essential service to the commercial interests of the inhabitants, but also, by means of pipes and pumps, supplies the whole city with water” (Hunter 1803:45).

In 19<sup>th</sup> century encyclopaedias, the Bega Canal appears as a defining element in the structure of the city. For instance, Goodrich's *A Pictorial Geography of the World* underlines the fact that Timișoara “owes its commercial activity to a canal, which connects it with the Danube” (Goodrich 1840:730). James John Best also refers to the role of the Bega Canal in the economic development of the city; the scenery of the region and the commercial character of the place make him compare Timișoara with the capital of the Netherlands: “The suburbs are extensive and are intersected by canals in several directions, giving the whole an appearance very much resembling the Hague” (Best 1842: 327). This aspect was perpetuated during the whole century, because Andrew Archibald Paton, who visited the city approximately twenty years later, has a similar impression: “with its straight lines, and boats in the distance, like black dots, its alleys of trees and brick houses, reminds one of Holland. Here is a crowd of canal craft; here are the large magazines of the Banat wheat, and a constant bustle of loading and unloading” (Paton 1861:39).

The development of the new city under Habsburg administration is discussed by B. W. Newton, whose book on the Roman Empire also includes some references to the Banat region. The construction of the canal is presented as part of the Austrian Empire's strategy to transform the region from “a desolate Turkish Pashalic” to a “flourishing and prosperous European province” (Newton 1863:271). Newton writes that the reorganisation of the Banat was a very ample enterprise, and “millions were expended by the cabinet of Vienna in cutting the great navigable canal that connects Temesvar with the confluence of the Theiss and the Danube” (Newton 1863:271).

The importance of the Bega Canal for the city and the whole province of Banat is also discussed in a translation from German into English. J. G. Kohl shows that the role of Timișoara as the “principal trading place” of the Banat is due to the Bega canal, “the great medium of transport for all the commodities which the rich country yields” (1844:310). He presents the role of the canal in a global context, explaining that it connects the city with other major European places:

Through this canal, its corn and fruit can reach the Danube; and when once there, the corn vessels of the Banat proceed up as far as Raab, and thence to Wieselburg. Raab and Temesvar may be regarded as the two extremities of a line of navigation of which the one end, Raab, lies near a country (Vienna and its environs) where there is a great and constant demand for these blessed fruits of the earth; while the other end (Temesvar) lies in a country that produces them in abundance. Temesvar carries on a more active trade with the former city than with any other (Kohl 1844:310).

### **3. Victory Square, “the Spacious Sunny Square Overlooked by the Orthodox Cathedral” (Dervla Murphy 1995:84)**

The walk along the canal ends when the students cross the bridge which leads them to the cathedral. For the writers who have visited the Victory Square after 1989, this place is associated with the Romanian revolution against Ceaușescu’s regime. Comparing it with Wenceslas Square in Prague, Alan Ogden describes Victory Square as “a long oblong space, with the modern 1923 facade of its theatre and opera house at one end and the imposing 1926 Orthodox cathedral at the other” (Ogden 2000:204). Ogden emphasises the fact that this was the place where the people gathered in 1989 “exasperated by the antics Ceaușescu” and where the military troops opened fire on the protesters (2000:204).

The Orthodox Cathedral is mentioned in several travel memoirs of contemporary writers. Dervla Murphy describes the building as “a 1930s hybrid which not unsuccessfully combines neo-Byzantine and traditional Moldavian influences” (1995:84). For the authors who visit the city after 1989, the references to the cathedral are connected to the accounts of the Romanian revolution that started here. Dervla Murphy is moved by the tragic events on 17 December, when, “in its shadow... many young demonstrators were killed” (1995:84). In the 1990s, she notices that the inhabitants of the city are marked by the tragic events and is impressed by the frequent celebrations for the people who lost their lives in the revolution. The piled wreaths and bouquets, the numerous candles lit for the dead, the horticultural shrine dedicated to the martyrs of the revolution are signs of an “intense public commemoration of the dead” (1995:96). The scene is impressive for the foreign visitors, who “often come to this place and weep”, being aware of the fact that the Romanian revolution started on the stairs of the cathedral (Murphy 1995:84). Besides these feelings of sorrow, Dervla

Murphy is also puzzled by the numerous question marks related to the Romanian revolution of 1989.

In the novel *Kitty and Virgil*, Paul Bailey refers to the role played by Timișoara in the anticommunist movement, and describes the effect which the name of the city had on the demonstrators in Bucharest. Helena Drysdale is also aware of this aspect, and is impressed by the reaction of the dictator Ceaușescu when he hears this word:

I had seen it on TV, his confidence giving way first to confusion as his promises of wage increases had no effect and the chanting 'Ti-mi-șoa-ra Ti-mi-șoa-ra' just would not stop, and then to fear as he was hustled away under his small grey astrakhan (Drysdale 1996:61).

The travellers who visit Victory Square are also impressed by its architecture. Alan Ogden writes that some of the buildings, such as the Palace Weiss, Palace Lloyd and Palace Löffler are “fine examples of fin-de-siècle offices and apartments” (Ogden 2000:204), and Dervla Murphy admires “the splendid opera house – an Austro-Hungarian legacy” (1995:84).

The Castle Hunyadi has also drawn the attention of the visitors over the centuries. At the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the building is depicted as “a square castle with a tower at each angle” whose walls are nine feet thick (Hunter 1803:144). Hunter is aware that this is “the only remaining part of the ancient town, and its existence may be traced very far back in the annals of the country” (1803:144).

Nina Elizabeth Mazuchelli, who visits the city in the second part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, notices that the palace, “built in 1443 by John Hunyad” has been “entirely restored” (1881:44), and is used as a prison. The harmony between the style of the medieval castle and the architecture of the square is one of the features which make her consider Timișoara “one of the prettiest, cleanest, and brightest little towns” of the Austro – Hungarian Empire (Mazuchelli 1881:44).

Dervla Murphy informs her readers that Timișoara was the first city in Europe which had electric street lightening (Murphy 1995:83). This fact is also mentioned on a street lamp placed in front of the Hunyadi castle. The travellers who visited it at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century were impressed to notice the technological progress on the streets of the city. Ellen Browning writes that:

for many years past the streets, shops, and many of the private houses have been using the electric light, which is under the charge of an Englishman sent out by the firm known in London as the 'Brush Company,' and electric cars are to be seen everywhere in the broad tree-planted streets. (Browning 1897:184)

Alan Ogden's travel memoirs also include a note on the “old Hapsburg palace, Huniade Castle” (2000:204). He specifies that its construction started in the fourteenth



century, and the palace was rebuilt in 1856. He informs his readers that today it houses the Museum of Banat History. The author likes the inner courtyard, which “had been given an attractive coat of yellow paint” (Ogden 2000:204), but is disappointed with the manner in which the exhibits are displayed. According to Ogden, the Museum of History (as it was organised in the 1990s), “like so many of its ilk in Romania, was poorly laid out, seemingly with the intention of persuading the visitor that Romania has been the cradle of civilization since the first day when man swung down from the trees” (2000:204).

#### **4. Liberation Square**

The next objective of the walking tour is Liberation Square. On his way from Victory Square to “the small Liberation Square”, Alan Ogden pays attention to the facades of the “large houses” (2000:204) which connect the two plazas. Although the author of *Romania Revisited...* finds the latter a plaza “of non-descript Austro-Hungarian architecture in the centre of the city” (Ogden 2000:204), some of his predecessors had a more enthusiastic attitude.

During the Turkish occupation, the square was home to a Turkish bazaar, and the travellers who visited the city in that period made some remarks on the Ottoman administration. The first accounts on the Liberation Square are from the first part of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, when Aubry de la Mortraye visits Timișoara. He observes the large market, organised in Turkish style, but he dislikes the dirty streets and the numerous swamps which surround the city. However, he is impressed by the hospitality of the Turkish authorities, who invite him to stay here for a longer period (de la Mortraye 1980:80).

As Alan Ogden writes, “the Banat was handed over to Prince Eugene of Savoy on 13 October 1716 and the Hapsburgs set about reconstructing it on a massive scale, stamping the architectural authority of Vienna on the two main cities, Timișoara and Arad” (2000:203). The characteristics of the city changed, and Liberation Square was transformed into a typical Habsburg plaza. At the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century Hunter discovers a city with wide and regular, well-paved streets, spacious squares and remarkable buildings. He considers that some of the public edifices, such as the town hall and the catholic cathedral “are specimens of architecture beyond what one commonly meets with in Hungary” (Hunter 1803:144). Most writers who visited Timișoara in the 19<sup>th</sup> century emphasise the progress of the place, the transformation of the city from a town “miserably built, on the Turkish plan with covered markets under long cloisters called Bazars” into a very well organised place (Dallaway 1805:45). John Paget learns that the city “was little better than a heap of huts in 1718, when Prince Eugene besieged the Turks, who then held it, and drove them for ever from this fair possession. At that time, too, the country round was a great swamp, and constantly infested with fevers of the most fatal character” (Paget 1839:163). Paget also argues

that besides the military qualities, Prince Eugene had an architectural vision, because he “laid the plan of the present town” (1893:163). The old country hall was the building in Liberation Square that drew the attention of several travellers. Paget considers this plaza one of the “two handsome squares” of the city, and the county-hall one of its “very fine buildings” (Paget 1839:162-163). When Andrew Paton visits Timișoara, he is very curious to see marks from the Ottoman period, but the only witnesses of that period he finds are a gravestone and the Arabic name of a suburb: “Mahala” (1861:38).

Another building of this square which drew the attention of British travellers is the Military Casino. The officer Eustace Clare Grenville Murray is invited by the Austrian authorities to participate in the grand ball at the casino. Although the officer is in great hurry, as he has to fulfil a war mission, he cannot deny this invitation: as soon as the authorities identified his identity during the passport control at the entrance in the city, he was warmly welcome to this event.

The officer is delighted to make acquaintance with “a very agreeable and curious society”, as “half the nobility of the Banat were assembled” (Murray 1855:208) at this fashionable event. Murray performs several popular dances before the nobility of the Banat, “as a delicate hint to the British Government as to his qualifications for high employment” (1855:208). He also has an interesting conversation with an Austrian officer related to the political situation in the region (Murray 1855:208).

Coming back to contemporary Liberation Square, the students will notice the tram station here. It will remind them of the book *Transylvania and Beyond*: Dervla Murphy mentions the packed tram which brought her to the city centre and which, probably, to the very same place. The author mentions that “Timișoara was among the first cities in the world to run trams; in 1864 the horse-drawn version appeared” (Murphy 1995:83).

## **5. Union Square**

From Liberation Square, the students continue their walking tour to Union Square, which is probably the plaza that impressed its British visitors most. Caroline Juler writes that this open place is as large as a football stadium (Juler 2010:160).

Alan Ogden is also very enthusiastic about Union Square. Although he visits it on a rainy day, he is delighted to discover “a superb Habsburg cobbled open space, constructed between 1720 and 1760, with wonderful facades of eighteenth century elegant townhouses” (2000:203). He mentions the contribution of Count Andrew Hamilton, who was president and commander-in-chief in the Banat between 1734 and 1738, to the construction of this plaza. Like Caroline Juler, Ogden is also impressed by the width of the square, and notes that in spite of the dimensions of the large Roman Catholic Cathedral, it does not dominate the place. He also offers historical details about this church, specifying that its construction took sixteen years, and the first

attempt to erect it “ended with the building sunk without trace in the marshy ground!” (2000:203).

Another building that draws Ogden’s attention is the palace of the Serbian Orthodox bishop, which is depicted as a peculiar building, with “Moorish window and pepper-potted towers” (Ogden 2000:203), which are compared to Islamic minarets. He is also intrigued by the design of the Scot Bank, “an extraordinary Art Nouveau building of bulbous, protruding facades” (2000:203). Ogden writes that “it looks like an elephant has been plastered into the walls, which are studded with electric blue enamels like small light bulbs. The windows on the first floor have identical surrounds with similar motifs, this time like giant blue pearls” (2000:204).

In the first part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Paget visits this square and is impressed by its buildings “remarkable for their size and appearance” (Paget 1839:163). Paton is also stunned by the “great square” of Timișoara, dominated both by the Catholic dome and by the Orthodox cathedral. He writes a remarkable description of the Baroque Palace:

The palace of the government” is “so overdone with ornamental consoles, vases, wreaths, and arabesques of the eighteenth century, that it looks like a château in the vista of one of Boucher’s landscapes; and every time I pass its portals, with grinning satirs forming the key-stone of the arch, I fancy a fine gentleman with a clouded cane, bloom-coloured coat, satin breeches, and *ailles de pigeon*, would be more fitting the *genius loci*, than the Pandours of the imperial commissioner, with their waxed moustachios and frogged hussar jacket” (Paton 1861:38-39).

The only traveller who is less enthusiastic about this square is Fraser. Disappointed that he could not find satisfactory accommodation in the city, he has the impression that “the chief square had little stir in it”, although he arrives here on a market day (Fraser 1838:119).

The enthusiasm of the British travellers who visited Union Square can be synthesised in a quotation from Andrew A. Paton, who considers this square a typical European place: “... if a stranger were to have his eyes bandaged, he would suppose that he had been carried back towards the centre of Europe, instead of being nearer the Turkish frontier” (Paton 1861:38).

## **6. The Bastion**

The next objective of the literary tour is the Bastion. The defensive walls of the city are important marks in Timișoara’s history. Nineteenth century works in English that refer to Timișoara present the fortress as one of the main features of the city. In Goodrich’ *A Pictorial Geography of the World*, “Temeswar” is introduced as “one of the strongest fortresses in the empire” (Goodrich 1840:730).

The travellers who visited the city in the last decade of the 18<sup>th</sup> century are impressed by the strategic position of the city. Dallaway has the impression that “excepting a convent and church, the whole town is a fortress and the streets little more than a range of low barracks” (Dallaway 1805:45). Hunter, who visits the city in the same period, has a different opinion and finds the barracks for the soldiers “convenient and spacious”, while for the defence of the fortress a garrison of 14000 men is necessary (Hunter 1803:145). John Jackson also observes that “the capital of the Banat” is a “strong fortification”, and a careful passport control is done before any foreigner is allowed to enter it (which, in his case took no less than two hours) (Jackson 1799:272). However, this inconvenience is compensated by the attention which the General Commandant shows him on hearing that he is an Englishman.

The impressions of the travellers who visited the city in the 19<sup>th</sup> century are very similar. At the beginning of the century, Edward Daniel Clarke considers Timișoara as one of the strongest fortifications of the empire (1838:80). This aspect is also mentioned by Lord William Cavendish Bentinck, who writes that this city is the only fortified place he visited in the region (2004:127). After some notes about the main events in the history of the fortress, John Mac Donald Kinneir – another traveller who visited the citadel in the same period – refers to its rich arsenal (2004:592).

John Paget specifies that Prince Eugene commenced the fortifications which surround the city, and considers that:

the defences are very good, for there are all manner of angles and ditches, and forts, and bastions, and great guns, and little guns; so that wherever a man goes, he has the pleasant impression that half-a-dozen muzzles are pointing directly his way, and to an uninitiated son of peace that would appear just the impression a good fortification ought to convey. (Paget 1839:163)

James John Best also observes that “Temesvar is a fortified place and its works appear to be very strong” (Best 1842:327). The only one who has a different impression is James Baille Fraser, who considers that “Temiswar — is a miserable, half-neglected fortress, surrounded by ditches and swamps, now dry; but which in winter must be full of water, and in autumn full of pestilence” (Fraser 1838:119). If Fraser criticises the exterior aspect of the fortress, Captain Frankland complains about the soldiers’ lack of vigilance. At four in the morning, when he reaches the outer barrier of the fortress, the English officer is surprised to see that no sentinel is on duty. His postilion clammers over the barricade, and reaches the *corps de gardes*, where he finds a corporal who comes and opens the gate. When Frankland observes this lack of discipline in “one of the strongest fortifications of Austria”, he writes a complaint for the commander of the garrison (Frankland 1829:9-10). James John Best, who also finds the gates of the fortress closed, accepts this situation: he explains that the gates had been closed at ten, and he arrived at midnight (Best 1842:327).

Another British officer, Eustace Clare Grenville Murray, has a different perception of the thorough passport control at the entrance in the fortress. He even expresses his “delight in the passport system”, and reveals its advantages for the security of the city and its inhabitants. He thinks that “there is some good in the passport system”, because “a passport enables a traveller at once to prove his identity, and the amount of consideration to which he is entitled. It enables him, indeed, to show that there is nothing wrong or questionable about himself or his business, an advantage sometimes of great importance to a stranger in an out-of-the-way place” (1855:208). He had all the reasons to praise the passport control, as it ensured him instant access to the ball of the nobility of the Banat!

The travellers who visit the city in the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century perceive the same features of a military city. Nina Elizabeth Mazuchelli notes that Timișoara “consists of an inner town and an outer one, the former surrounded by strong fortifications. Wherever one looks there are bastions and ditches, and great guns and little guns menacing us in all directions, and seeming to dodge our movements continually” (Mazuchelli 1881:43).

The fortress often made British travellers reflect on the tumultuous history of the city. Hunter is interested in the medieval period, and he emphasises the role of the citadel in those times. He specifies that it was built “by the ancient kings of Hungary” (1803:142), and it was besieged several times, until the Ottomans conquered it in the latter part of the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

A medieval event which draws the attention of the British authors is the peasant rebellion led by Gheorghe Doja. Hunter offers several details about the development of this movement, and is horrified by the cruelty of Doja’s execution. Hunter perceives the event “with a mixture of horror and admiration, as it furnishes, on one side, as striking an instance of barbarous ingenuity, and, on the other, of heroic fortitude, as any recorded in history” (1803:147). An account of the terrible execution is included in his travelogue:

Their leader, George Doscha, who, a few days before, had been proclaimed king, was made prisoner with a number of his adherents, and, in this town, was sentenced to expiate his rebellion by the following dreadful punishment. Forty of the chief confederates were thrown into prison, where they were confined for several days, without receiving any sustenance. In the mean time, as tokens of mockery and contempt, a throne, a crown and a sceptre, of iron were forged. As soon as finished, they were all put into a furnace, where they remained till they were red hot. They were then taken out, and Doscha being brought forward, and, undressed, was seated on the throne, the crown was placed on his head, and the sceptre in his right hand. When he was half roasted, nine of his famished companions, all who had survived their sufferings in prison, were let loose on him, in the expectation that they would immediately devour him. Of these, three were stubborn, and, absolutely refusing to touch him, were immediately dispatched by the executioner: the others tore and

mangled him in a horrible manner, and were allowed to escape. During these agonies no sigh, or groan, or tear, escaped him, and his only exclamation was, 'I have brought up hounds to devour me.' Saying this, he gave up the ghost. (Hunter 1803:146 -147).

Robert Townson also refers to the peasants' revolt lead by Gheorghe Doja, and is appalled by the cruel execution (Townson 1797:256 -257).

Some British travel accounts include references to the old Turkish fortress. In the first part of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, William Lithgow considers it one of the most important Turkish military centres (Lithgow 1632: 362). In the same period, John Smith refers to the role of this important fortress in the fights between the Austrian army and the Ottomans.

Several 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century travelogues include references to the conquest of the fortress by prince Eugene of Savoy. For instance, Hunter mentions that it occurred after a long siege of ten weeks (Hunter 1803:142-143).

Another historical event which drew the attention of the British travellers who visited Timișoara is the Revolution of 1848. During his visit, Paton finds a city seriously affected by the war:

As I approached the town itself, I in vain looked for the noble alleys of trees that used to be the delight and ornament of the place; all had been hewn down by the grim axe of war, the fortifications covered with the marks of cannon-balls, and the roofs of the houses within battered to the bare rafters, or altogether roofless. (Paton 1861:36)

Nina Elizabeth Mazuchelli also refers to the damages of the city during the revolution.

For Alan Ogden, Timișoara, "the long arm of Vienna", is the last Romanian city he visits during his journey in our country, and it also an inspiring place for his concluding reflections: "Timișoara, with its Hapsburg legacy, was the perfect place for me to leave Romania, for it is an example of the many strands of history that make up this fascinating country" (2000:204).

## **7. Conclusions**

This literary tour can increase the students' interest in travel literature and in British literature, as well as in the history and culture of the city. Several connections between the travellers who visited Timișoara and other British personalities of their time would also be helpful. This field trip has an interactive character: the students can be organised in groups, and each group can be divided into several presenters: each group presents one of the main places (Bega Canal, Victory Square, Liberation Square, Union Square, the Bastion) and each reader will present a fragment related to a certain building (for instance the texts about the Orthodox Cathedral). The students can

comment on the report between past and present and on the objective or subjective character of the accounts in discussion. I think that this literary tour would also be useful for foreign students who are involved in international programs in Timișoara.

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# INTERNALIZATION AND PRODUCTION OF METAPHORICAL EXPRESSIONS WITH EFL STUDENTS

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***Abstract:** The paper presents the results of qualitative research with 20 EFL students, who were exposed to structured metaphorical input for one academic year. It will be demonstrated how metaphorical expressions covered in classes are used spontaneously by students in writing tasks some time after they had been introduced and practiced, which is clear evidence of internalization that surfaces during production.*

***Keywords:** EFL, internalization, metaphor, production, qualitative research, vocabulary.*

## 1. Introduction

Metaphor, one of the basic concepts and mechanisms of cognitive linguistics, has found its application in the field of foreign language learning as well. Lazar (1996) was one of the first applied linguists who, relying on the fact that figurative meaning enables native speakers to understand and produce metaphorical expressions, propounded that the development of such an ability is of great importance for foreign language learners. The ability to tackle metaphorical meanings should keep pace with the increase of general knowledge of the foreign language, which is proven by research conducted by Littlemore (2001): metaphorical input in EFL classes improved the general linguistic production of foreign learners, whose communicative competence increased alongside their understanding of metaphorical expressions in the foreign language.

Due to the lack of native competence, learners do not and cannot process figurative meanings in the same way as native speakers, but they can increase their understanding of the foreign language by applying figurative thinking, an analytical, “enquiring” approach defined as “the use of a query routine which assumes that an unknown expression might be figurative, or which asks what the implications of using a figurative expression might be” (Littlemore and Low 2006:6). This process comprises a series of steps that non-native speakers apply when encountering words or phrases that they do not understand. Learners usually slow down if reading, or engage in extensive online analysis if listening, and ask themselves a series of questions to decipher the unknown segments of a sentence (Littlemore and Low 2006).

When trying to decode figurative meaning, learners have to connect two different elements, i.e. the source and target domains, and draw inferences regarding

additional meanings or cultural implications. This task is quite challenging and learners often ask their teachers for help. In order to avoid or prevent such situations and turn students into autonomous learners, foreign language teaching should focus on raising metaphor awareness with foreign language students. This is the task of the teacher, who should demonstrate that metaphor is not merely a poetic form, but a pervasive linguistic and conceptual mechanism. However, the question is how much exposure to theory will benefit the students, especially if they are not language specialists. Littlemore (2004) has shown that the theory-based approach burdens the teaching process with unnecessary theoretical linguistic information and that the practice-based approach based on inductive teaching is easier for foreign language students because it allows them to achieve a deeper understanding of metaphors without delving into linguistic theories.

Littlemore and Low (2006:24-25) describe in detail the inductive approach and illustrate how basic questions regarding the appearance, function or position of an entity can help students to understand metaphorical meanings of words and phrases in the foreign language, especially when simple transfers of meaning are in question. Many other expressions will remain opaque either because students do not know the literal meaning of the word or because the word itself is archaic or obsolete. The query routine comprises simple, direct questions that refer to the basic meaning of the words, the answers to which can guide students towards deeper understanding and aid information processing. Thus, learners are actively involved in processing the given topic: they ask questions and make meaningful connections with other topics. Simultaneously, learners connect the existing knowledge of word meanings in their mental lexicon with new meanings, which “enhances the learning process and aids the retention of new information, with the ultimate result of greater learner autonomy” (Radić-Bojanić 2011b:306). Essentially, this method of vocabulary teaching should be integrated with other approaches in foreign language teaching so that both students and teachers can achieve better results (Boers 2000).

The sign of true success as far as this method is concerned is the occurrence of metaphorical expressions in language production, especially spontaneous language production, because it is a clear indicator of the fact that internalization of metaphorical expressions has happened. However, the very nature of foreign language learning dictates a slow pace of progress due to the fact that a certain material, be that grammatical or lexical, needs to be repeated a sufficient number of times in a variety of different modes and manners in order to be placed in long-term memory and, thus, become available for later recovery during language production. The same is valid of metaphorical expressions in the foreign language, because learners need time first to understand the mechanisms behind metaphoricity, then to learn query routines and become proficient at using them, and finally to enrich their mental lexicon with additional meanings of the already familiar and known words. Once this has taken place, the newly acquired vocabulary items are ready for active use in language

production. This paper illustrates the process of meaningful, metaphorical input which, in time, leads to meaningful production, a clear sign of the internalization of material.

## **2. Research Methodology**

The purpose of the paper is to find out how a group of EFL university students process and retain metaphors both in controlled and free practice. The initial methodological tenets of this research are that the human conceptual system and changes therein cannot be observed externally and can only be established through direct testimonies of informants, and that genuine knowledge about human interaction or mental processes is best acquired not in controlled laboratory conditions, but in everyday settings (Eisner 1991:32-33). As the naturalistic paradigm focuses on the behaviour of people in their natural surroundings (Tullis Owen 2008), it was chosen for this paper as the most adequate approach which would provide material for analysis.

In naturalistic research data collection necessarily relies on direct, face-to-face interaction between the researcher, who is considered to be the most important instrument in data collection, and informants. Research material can be collected by observation, when the researcher makes notes about what he/she sees, or by questionnaires and interviews, when the researcher makes notes about what informants tell him/her.

Human interaction should be observed on a daily basis (Eisner 1991:32-33) by one and the same observer, who, in order to achieve the validity of the instrument, i.e. him/herself, must always use the same set of criteria and features in observation. This is one of the oldest research methods and it relies on collecting and noting down impressions about a specific situation that surrounds the researcher/observer. In naturalistic research, observation provides data which is founded on the experiences of research participants, on the basis of the methodological presupposition that human behaviour is purposeful and reflects deeper values and convictions (Richards 2003:106). Observation notes are made in the form of a criterially predefined journal or are sometimes recorded by camera or tape recorder, and then this data is transferred to a journal. Regardless of the particular data collection technique, the journal should ultimately contain detailed descriptions of external events in which the informants participated, the reactions of both informants and observer, and the observer's reflections, which later serve as a framework for the interpretation of research results (Patton 2002:302-304).

The research presented here is part of a larger project which was realized during the 2007/08 academic year. The research subjects were 40 first-year students of English language and literature at the Department of English, University of Novi Sad, who were divided into two groups: experimental and control. Both groups attended English language classes under the same conditions (the B2 level of the Common

European Framework of Reference, the same course book, the same teacher), the only difference being that during the entire year the experimental group was exposed to structured metaphorical input adapted to the class syllabus. The metaphorical input followed all the principles of the inductive approach, i.e. the teacher introduced various metaphors in different tasks so the students were able to make inferences and use query routines. The teacher kept a detailed class journal during the whole academic year, where she noted all activities, student answers and reactions to various tasks, which is the source of the material analysed here.

### 3. The Experiment

In order to contextualize the research data and explain the results, metaphorical input at different research stages has to be described. As previously stated, time is one of the key factors in the process of foreign language learning and that is why attention will be paid to one segment from the first month of presenting students with new material and to one segment from the fourth month of input.

#### 3.1. Metaphorical Input – First Month

One of the first metaphorical sets that the students tackled belonged to the metaphor LIFE IS A JOURNEY. Upon reading the text in Box 1. (the task was adapted from Lazar 2003:24-25), the students were involved in controlled practice with the task to find in the text phrases that had the same meanings as the phrases below the text.

After I left school, I didn't take the usual path to college. I had always enjoyed woodcarving, so I took the first step towards trying to earn some money from this hobby. I decided to open a stall at our local market, selling some wooden toys I had carved. The toys sold very well, and I couldn't make enough of them, so two of my friends joined me and I showed them how to do it. Our little business was on the road to success, when unfortunately there was a fire in the garage where we stored our toys. We lost all our stock. Step by step, we had to build up the business again.

After a few years of doing this, we felt we were at the crossroads. We could have continued to sell out toys in the market. But we decided not to go down that road any more. Instead, we decided to sell out toys over the Internet.

In the last few years the company has become very successful, but all of us are arguing about everything and I feel very bored. I think I am coming to the end of the road with this company. It's time to take steps towards doing something different. One positive step might be to get some advice from friends and family. What do you think I should do?

- to be doing the right things in order to achieve a particular goal
- to make decisions to live your life in a particular way
- to feel that you have done all you can
- to do the first of a series of actions that you need to do in order to succeed
- slowly and carefully, so that you think about each stage before you move on

to the next

- to follow a series of actions because you want to achieve a particular result
- to do something now that will make something happen later
- a good and useful action
- to be at an important point in your life where you have to make a decision

about your future

Box 1.

Using a variety of strategies, the students were able to find the matches for the definitions below the text. Since one of the main strategies was imagery (Radić-Bojanić 2011a), the students spent some time drawing their own individual ways of visualizing the metaphorical expressions in question and were later asked to devise their own sentences and use these expressions in them, which provided enough practice and repetition in a variety of ways.

### 3.2. Metaphorical Input – Fourth Month

Another group of metaphorical expressions that served as a foundation for controlled practice and later as a basis for students' production relied on the overarching metaphor HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS ARE BUILDINGS. Students were given the material from Box 2. (The task was adapted from Lazar 2003:48), which descriptively introduced metaphorical mappings found in these two similar metaphors.

Many people believe that our dreams contain personal and sometimes hidden messages. You can learn to interpret your dreams in order to discover more about yourself and your psychological motivation. This can be done by understanding common symbols that appear in dreams, such as:

*Buildings* These may represent the personality of the dreamer. In many cases, dreams about exploring a building are encouraging us to explore our own personalities. You may dream that you are exploring a building you know well, in which there are many unfamiliar rooms. This dream could mean that you are ready to develop in some way.

*Home* Dreaming of home is connected with a sense of emotional and financial security. A common dream is of returning to a house that you knew well in the past. Your feelings about the house in the dream may suggest something about how you feel about your past experiences.

*A door* This may represent how well you communicate your feelings or your thoughts. If a door in your dream is shut, it may mean you are not communicating with somebody.

*Walls* These support a building. If they are unsafe or falling down, maybe it is because you are not feeling very secure.

Box 2.

The exercise required students to use the available information in order to interpret dreams which contained messages based on the said metaphors. In order to help the interpretation, the teacher wrote the following mappings on the board:

buildings	–	relationships
		organizations
foundations	–	support, basis
doors	–	access
bricks	–	elements
wall	–	difficulties
ruins	–	damaged, destroyed
build	–	develop, grow
demolish	–	destroy, prove wrong

Relying on the information from the teacher, the students interpreted short dreams, some of which are given below, which enabled them to indirectly acquire relevant concepts and related vocabulary.

You are at a party. Suddenly the foundations of the building you are in start to crack.

Box 3.

While some students interpreted this dream as a literal party where the person involved experienced something bad, other students interpreted it as a quarrel or instability in family life, maybe even love problems. In any case, whichever domain of life students were aiming at, apparently they all understood the essence: building foundations are a metaphor for stability and security, whereas the cracking represents problems that threaten stability and security.

You knock on the door of a house belonging to a member of your family. He or she opens the door, and then slams it in your face.

Box 4.

This dream was interpreted by most students as a family quarrel, where the house stands for the family member with whom the person is quarrelling, a knock on the door is a metaphor for a communication attempt, and the slammed door is the rejection of reconciliation.

These short descriptions show that the students were able to understand metaphors when presented with short and clear instructions. In order to reinforce this lexical and metaphorical set, the students were given homework

(see Box 5. – the task was adapted from Lazar 2003:49), where they had to connect the beginnings and endings of sentences, i.e. the underlined metaphorical expression and its paraphrase or meaning in the other part of the sentence.

A Your promotion will really <u>open doors</u> for you	1 so she <u>felt at home</u> having to travel for her new job.
B You cannot believe what those scientists say	2 and people cannot afford to buy new clothes.
C When the detective talked to the family about the accident	3 by showing that the facts were all wrong.
D Prices have suddenly <u>gone through the roof</u>	4 and give you lots of new opportunities.
E All new students have to do the Basic Skills Course	5 and is <u>trying hard to build</u> a new career for herself.
F It was very sad that Bill's accident	6 he was met by <u>a wall of silence</u> .
G She has always enjoyed living in other countries	7 as their theories are <u>without foundation</u> .
H After the war the economy was <u>in ruins</u>	8 <u>closed the door</u> on his career in athletics.
I He completely <u>demolished</u> my argument	9 and the government needed to <u>rebuild</u> it.
J She is very hardworking and ambitious	10 which <u>provides the foundation</u> for all their studies.

Box. 5

### 3.3. Production

The following week the students were supposed to do a written task in which they would use the metaphorical expressions covered in the previous week. The task (adapted from Lazar 2003: 50) was designed as a short story written by a group of students who would use some general questions as guidelines for ideas, with the choice of vocabulary more or less open for selection. Box 6. contains the initial part of the task and what follows are the stories written by four groups of students.

*Here are some questions which will help you to invent a story. Write down a few ideas for each question.*



- Your story is going to have a hero or a heroine. Who is he or she? How old is he or she? What does he or she look like? Where does he or she live?
- In what situation does your hero or heroine feel most at home? Why?
- Your main character is trying hard to build something. What? A career? A relationship?
  - Somebody important promises to open doors for your hero or heroine. Who? What do they promise?
  - Your hero or heroine decides to take the opportunity offered by the important person. Along the way, your hero or heroine meets a wall of silence. From whom? About what? Why?
  - Despite the wall of silence, your hero or heroine still manages to reach their goal. But somebody says something about them which is without foundation. What is it? How does your hero or heroine feel about this?
  - At the end of the story, somebody's life is in ruins. Who? Your hero or heroine? The important person? Somebody else? Why?

Box 6.

#### Essay 1.

Lisa is a 26-year-old woman who lives in Dallas, Texas. She feels most at home when she is on her farm because she like nature and countryside. She broke up with her boyfriend and now her life is in ruins. She wants to build a new relationship. One day an elderly man knocks on her door and offers her a new job that she accepts. At work one day she meets the elderly man's son Josh, who asks her out. Eventually, she discovers that he is a spy. So, even though she is a tad bit apprehensive about her new love affair, they decide to stay together, but Josh gets into trouble because of his last assignment, which was a failure. People start rumours and Lisa wants to move on, but Josh doesn't and his life is left in ruins.

#### Essay 2.

The story is about Merilin, a little girl from an isolated village. She is 15 years old, goes to secondary school and wants to become an actress. She is very sociable and likes to imitate people, she is humorous and self-confident. She has a specific look, red curly hair and a specific dressing style, but when you get to know her, she is very cute.

She feels most at home when she is in the center of attention and when people laugh at her jokes. Her aim in life is to become a famous animator and to earn a lot of money.

A famous director comes to her village to make a movie. He notices her while she is acting in front of her friends and offers her a role in his latest comedy. He opens her the door on the way of her success.

She, of course, accepts the role but what she doesn't know is that another actress has already got this role on the audition. But the director wants her. While they are working on the film, she is confronted with a wall of silence from other actors. She is not accepted by her colleagues because they are jealous of the offer put in front of such

a young girl. She passes through a hard period of her life because she is alone, without her parents, and is not accepted.

The actress who has been rejected puts a lot of obstacles in her way. She makes up gossip and magazines are filled with false information about Merilin. But she is strong enough to confront these problems and to reach her goal. Her film is a great success and she becomes famous.

When the jealous actress sees that Merilin's film has turned out to be successful, she is so desperate that she tries to kill herself. Her life is in ruins.

### Essay 3.

The heroine is a young perfectionist from 221 Baker Street, London. Her glance was delicate, but her stance was of iron as if someone could perceive the wall she put around her. But behind the facade of confidence lies a fragile foundation.

In winter mornings she finds herself in the most secluded parts of Central Park. That is when she feels at home, for her surroundings seem to adhere to the state of her mind. For years she has been trying to build a writing career worth of her family name. Her great-grandparents are from Victorian times so she has a great wealth. A distant cousin from Pennsylvania promises to open doors for her among the finest of the literature world, provided she help him financially.

She accepts her cousin's offer but along the way she meets a wall of silence when she realizes that what he really wants is her heritage. Despite her dreams being demolished, a mysterious admirer publishes her book and she manages to reach the top in the literature world.

She reveals her cousin's mean intentions in her book so his life is a complete ruin.

### Essay 4.

Patricia Clooney is a 20-year-old student. She is beautiful and attractive, has a gift for acting and lives in L.A. She feels at home when she is on the stage, performing one of her favourite parts of the plays at her college. She is trying to build a career of an actress. A famous movie director, after seeing her performing, promises to open some doors for her by offering her a part in a famous movie.

She is happy for starting to build the foundation of her career when she meets a wall of silence when her colleagues do not cooperate with her. They 'accidentally' forget to give her the new script which had some significant changes.

Despite all the obstacles, she manages to overcome them, but the main actress says some really bad and untrue things about the suspicious path she took to get the part in this movie. Patricia is very offended and discouraged, but she manages to reveal the real truth about her and the main actress gets fired for conspiracy.

The main actress's life is in ruins, she lost her job and good reputation she had up to then. Patricia gets the main role, which has proven to be a big step in her future career.

### 3.4. Discussion

The four essays written by students reveal a lot about their progress concerning the acquisition and use of metaphorical vocabulary, especially under closer scrutiny. Firstly, one can notice that most of the required expressions from the task itself were used in the original form (e.g. *feel most at home, life in ruins, build a new relationship, open the door*), which is indicative of the fact that they invested a conscious effort to use the newly learnt phrases in the essay.

Besides that, one can notice a few instances when the students tried to modify the newly learnt expressions to a certain extent, i.e. they tried not to copy them verbatim from the task (e.g. *confronted with a wall of silence, the wall she put around her, behind the facade of confidence lies a fragile foundation, demolished dreams, build the foundations of her career*). This testifies of their level of mastery of the linguistic material as well as some hints of deeper metaphor understanding and the development of metaphorical thinking.

Finally, the most encouraging finding that stemmed from the analysis of these essays was the existence of a group of metaphorical expressions based on the metaphor LIFE IS A JOURNEY, which had been covered in class two months earlier. Sentence segments like *Lisa wants to move on, He opens her the door on the way of her success, She passes through a hard period of her life, The actress who has been rejected puts a lot of obstacles in her way, along the way she meets a wall of silence, she manages to reach the top in the literature world, Despite all the obstacles, the suspicious path she took to get the part in this movie, a big step in her future career*, which can be found in all four essays, are evidence that the students spontaneously used metaphorical expressions without any explicit requirements in the task. This is a clear indicator that the students fully understood the metaphor LIFE IS A JOURNEY and metaphorical expressions stemming from it, which was covered in the first month of metaphorical input. This is also the first sign of long-term term progress because this metaphor has obviously been internalized along with its linguistic realizations, which consequently means that the students have exhibited autonomous and creative use of metaphors and metaphorical thinking.

## 4. Conclusion

Like any other foreign language material, metaphorical content takes time to be understood, repeated, internalized and, finally, actively used in production. As the examples above show, material needs to be introduced gradually, repeated and reinforced in a variety of ways through different skills and only through such an approach will it become part of students' mental lexicon. Once they have grasped the lexical items and went over them enough times, students will eventually spontaneously use them during language production, which is essentially the ultimate aim of foreign language learning.

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# ACADEMIC RESEARCH SKILLS OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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***Abstract:** The paper analyzes questionnaires administered to 135 English Language students in all four years with an attempt to elaborate how developed the students' academic research skills are and investigate if they correlate with the years of study. Furthermore, the results are compared to students' general habits concerning internet use to prove that they do not correlate with academic research skills.*

***Key words:** academic research skills, information literacy, virtual/digital libraries.*

## 1. Introduction

Regardless of the field of higher education and scientific research, academic writing plays a very important role as a way to transfer known information and note down new information and research results. One of the first steps in academic writing, besides the formulation of a research question, is certainly finding references and relevant sources of information that will be of use to the writer as a foundation for the new research. Although it may not seem so at a first glance, this is one of the most necessary skills in the field of academic writing, especially in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, when there is so much available online that it is sometimes difficult to choose with certainty a good, relevant and reliable source. In other words, research skills are among the most necessary skills in the field of academic writing.

This is also true for students who, as beginners in the field of academic writing, have to learn much and develop their ability to do research, i.e. find the necessary sources and make use of them, and then to shape the knowledge they have gathered into academic assignments (projects, seminar papers, presentations). In order to complete their academic tasks, students have to do research and preparation, which primarily involves finding sources of information and using them properly. Unlike experienced scientific workers and writers, students do not have any academic practice to rely on and they do not have enough width in an academic field to assume a critical view of what they find, especially online. For that reason academic research skills are among the most important general skills that students should master during their studies.

## 2. Development of Academic Research Skills

With the advent of World Wide Web, students today have a plethora of opportunities to learn throughout their lives, both in formal and informal environments,

as motivated by their personal, professional, family, work and community needs, interests or responsibilities (Lemke, 2003). In light of this, university becomes just one node among the learning contexts available to students (Barron, 2006). The role of educators in this evolving ecology of learning needs to include at least two new features. First of all, teachers need to have a sufficient understanding of their students' informal learning habits and daily routines in using the Internet, in order to successfully integrate it with formal learning contexts. Secondly, teachers need to help students develop experience and skills in navigating, interacting and learning within digital environments. Information literacy, as a set of abilities requiring individuals to "recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information" (ALA, 2000:2) becomes a prerequisite for an academically skilled internet user.

One possible problem that immediately springs to mind is that due to the enormous quantity of information available online; it is impossible for inexperienced students to choose with certainty good, valid and reliable sources. This kind of research does not involve traditional filters of credibility such as a library or a publisher (Radić-Bojanić and Topalov, 2012:34), who perform the process of selection prior to presenting material to their users. For that reason online researching, as many teachers have witnessed when checking their students' assignments, is reduced to the first few links in a Google search, one of which is usually Wikipedia (Radić-Bojanić, 2012).

When discussing material for the development of research skills with students, Manning et al. (2007:306-322) say that students must be aware of a range of sources of information (university libraries, virtual and digital libraries, other online sources...), be able to identify the strengths and weaknesses of different sources, and be able to note down bibliographic details for books, articles and websites that they used in the process of preparation and research. Considering the vast quantity of data and variety of sources that can be found online, students should develop the skill of assessing the credibility of materials they find and make judgments regarding the status and relevance of a large number of texts (Alexander et al., 2008: 124).

The factors that Alexander et al. (2008) mention and which are criteria for assessing first the credibility and the relevance of the sources found are the following: authority, ease of access, reliability, amount of information, and time. Authority refers to the type of source or the platform where a certain article or text is found. For example, the authority of a text found on someone's blog vastly differs from a text found via ScienceDirect or JStor. Ease of access, one of the most important features when students do research online, is often misleading: texts that are easy to access, i.e. free of charge, usually do not carry scientific weight, unless it is open access journals; conversely, articles downloaded via academic platforms are not so easily accessible and often require a payment unless downloaded via an academic or university network, but they present proper scientific sources of information. This leans onto the next criterion, reliability, which can often be assessed simply by looking at the domain

which hosts a text: if the domain is an academic one, e.g. .edu, then the probability that the text is credible and relevant is higher. The amount of information found in a text can also be a tell-tale sign of how academically appropriate it is because the fact that a text refers to other academic sources implies scientific weight visible in its list of references. Finally, the time when a text is written and published also plays a significant role since outdated sources do not provide the latest and most relevant information regarding a subject matter or a field.

### 2.1. Research Context

In order to establish how developed students' research skills are in a university academic context, a research was undertaken at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Novi Sad, Serbia, with 135 students in all four years of studies of English at the Department of English Language and Literature. The researchers administered a questionnaire with twenty-two multiple choice items, with the aim to establish if the students' academic research skills correlate with the years of study and if they correlate with students general habits concerning internet use.

The grouping factor for all one-way ANOVAs in data processing was the independent variable of Study Year. Dependent variables included reported use of Electronic Resources, Difficulty of Use (of digital and/or virtual libraries), Pages of Search Results that the students check when performing an online search, Hours Spent Online, the inclination to use Chatrooms, Blogs, Music, News, Games, Livestream, Social Networks, E-Shopping on the Internet, and the Faculty Related use of the Internet.

### 2.2 Results

In looking at students' readiness to use electronic resources, the amount of difficulty with which they use digital/virtual libraries and the number of pages they refer to when doing an academically related online search, planned one-way ANOVAs were performed for all variables (Table 1).

	1 <sup>st</sup> year		2 <sup>nd</sup> year		3 <sup>rd</sup> year		4 <sup>th</sup> year		<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
	Mean	StDev	Mean	StDev	Mean	StDev	Mean	StDev		
Electronic Resources	2.2	0.78	2.59	0.67	2.52	0.67	2.07	0.86	3.115	0.029
Difficulty of Use	2.48	0.87	2.73	0.94	2.64	0.82	2.64	0.56	0.591	0.622
Pages of Search Results	2.56	0.98	3.18	1.56	3.27	1.15	3.93	0.72	9.933	0.000

Table 1: One-way ANOVAs for use of digital/virtual libraries

The results indicate firstly that there is a statistically significant difference between students studying at different years in terms of their readiness to use

electronically available resources ( $F=3.115$ ,  $p=0.029$ ). Further testing using LSD post-hoc tests revealed specifically which group differs from others. The results indicate that fourth year students show a statistical difference with respect to first year students (mean difference= $-0.391$ ,  $p=0.045$ ), second year students (mean difference= $-0.591$ ,  $p=0.017$ ) and third year students (mean difference= $-0.443$ ,  $p=0.024$ ). Secondly, the results of one-way ANOVA reveal that there is no statistical difference between students in terms of the perceived difficulty of use. Lastly, there is a statistical difference in terms of the number of pages the students consult when they search the internet for study related reasons ( $F=9.933$ ,  $p=0.000$ ). Additional tests on the variable Pages of Search Results revealed specifically which group differs from others. Namely, comparisons using LSD post-hoc found a statistical difference between the first and the third years (mean difference= $0.715$ ,  $p=0.02$ ) and the first and the fourth years (mean difference= $1.37$ ,  $p=0.000$ ).

The results of the second part of research focusing on students' everyday habits in using the Internet, both for academic and non-academic purposes, reveal, first of all, that 99.25% of the respondents use the Internet every day, with over a third of students using it for three or more hours every day (25.18% of respondents use it between three and four hours, whereas 8.88% of students use it for more than four hours every day).

Results of one-way ANOVAs reveal that the statistical difference between the respondents has been identified with variables News ( $F=2.88$ ,  $p=0.039$ ) and Faculty Related Activities ( $F=2.784$ ,  $p=0.044$ ) (Table 2).

	1 <sup>st</sup> year		2 <sup>nd</sup> year		3 <sup>rd</sup> year		4 <sup>th</sup> year		<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
	Mean	StDev	Mean	StDev	Mean	StDev	Mean	StDev		
Hours Spent Online	3.22	1.15	2.82	1.18	2.69	1.23	2.61	1.34	2.052	0.110
Chatrooms	3.78	1.58	3.82	1.56	4.07	1.55	3.54	1.75	0.529	0.663
Blogs	3.02	1.38	3.23	1.31	3.55	1.12	3.68	1.36	1.953	0.124
Music	1.63	1.06	2.09	1.27	1.68	1.11	1.64	1.13	0.977	0.406
News	2.57	1.28	3.23	1.51	3.19	1.47	2.36	1.45	<b>2.880</b>	<b>0.039</b>
Games	3.78	1.59	4.14	1.31	3.87	1.59	4.14	1.18	0.527	0.665
Livestream	2.71	1.32	3.09	1.27	2.45	1.57	2.5	1.32	1.106	0.349
Social Networks	1.59	1.06	1.77	1.07	2.16	1.66	1.79	1.34	1.284	0.283
E-Shopping	4.39	1.15	4.68	0.89	4.58	1.06	4.89	0.31	1.702	0.170
Faculty Related Activities	2.1	0.98	1.77	0.97	2.52	1.29	1.89	0.83	<b>2.784</b>	<b>0.04</b>

Table 2: One-way ANOVAs for use of the Internet



Additional post-hoc tests using LSD indicate that the difference in results for variable News is statistical between the second and the fourth year (mean difference=-0.87, p=0.031) and the third and the fourth years (mean difference=-0.836, p=0.024). For variable Faculty Related Activities, LSD post-hoc reveals that the difference is statistical between the second and the third years (mean difference=0.743, p=0.011) and the third and the fourth years (mean difference=0.623, p=0.022).

Pearson's correlation between the year of study and the students' reported use of digital and/or virtual libraries revealed a statistical result for variable Search Result Pages ( $r=0.427$ ,  $p=0.000$ ), indicating that older and more experienced students consult two or more pages of search results, whereas younger students tend to stop after the first three results, occasionally checking the first full page (Table 3).

		Study Year	Electronic Resources	Difficulty Of Use	Search Result Pages
Study Year	<i>r</i>	1	-.011	.078	<b>.427**</b>
	<i>p</i>		.900	.367	.000
Electronic Resources	<i>r</i>	-.011	1	<b>.179*</b>	.081
	<i>p</i>	.900		.039	.357
Difficulty Of Use	<i>r</i>	.078	<b>.179*</b>	1	-.082
	<i>p</i>	.367	.039		.349
Search Result Pages	<i>r</i>	<b>.427**</b>	.081	-.082	1
	<i>p</i>	.000	.357	.349	

Table 3: Pearson's correlations for use of digital/virtual libraries

The results also indicate that students who use more of electronic resources tend to find the use of digital and/or virtual libraries easier ( $r=0.179$ ,  $p=0.039$ ).

Pearson's correlation for data regarding the respondents' everyday habits in using the Internet, motivated either academically or otherwise, reveals a number of interesting statistically significant results (Table 4).

		Study Year	Hours Online	Chat-rooms	Blogs	Music	News	Games	Live-stream	Social Networks	E-Shopping	Faculty Rel. Activ.
Study Year	r	1	-.204*	-.024	.207*	-.005	.000	.076	-.084	.107	.177*	.009
	p		.019	.781	.017	.953	.996	.388	.336	.223	.042	.920
Hours Online	r	-.204*	1	.157	.165	-.058	.015	.275*	.137	.168	.174*	-.088
	p	.019		.075	.059	.510	.865	.002	.118	.056	.047	.318
Chat-rooms	r	-.024	.157	1	.208*	-.061	-.035	.097	-.092	.096	.130	.030
	p	.781	.075		.017	.492	.689	.276	.294	.274	.140	.735
Blogs	r	.207*	.165	.208*	1	.086	-.023	.038	.034	.047	.025	.060
	p	.017	.059	.017		.324	.791	.665	.702	.589	.777	.498
Music	r	-.005	-.058	-.061	.086	1	.285*	-.058	.226*	.203*	-.358*	.204*
	p	.953	.510	.492	.324		.001	.512	.009	.020	.000	.019
News	r	.000	.015	-.035	-.023	.285*	1	-.132	.091	.244*	-.180*	.110
	p	.996	.865	.689	.791	.001		.135	.302	.005	.039	.207
Games	r	.076	.275*	.097	.038	-.058	-.132	1	.097	-.134	.248*	-.422*
	p	.388	.002	.276	.665	.512	.135		.271	.128	.005	.000
Live-stream	r	-.084	.137	-.092	.034	.226*	.091	.097	1	.073	-.177*	-.025
	p	.336	.118	.294	.702	.009	.302	.271		.404	.042	.780
Social Networks	r	.107	.168	.096	.047	.203*	.244*	-.134	.073	1	-.201*	.296*
	p	.223	.056	.274	.589	.020	.005	.128	.404		.021	.001
E-Shopping	r	.177*	.174*	.130	.025	-.358*	-.180*	.248*	-.177*	-.201*	1	-.444*
	p	.042	.047	.140	.777	.000	.039	.005	.042	.021		.000
Faculty Rel. Activ.	r	.009	-.088	.030	.060	.204*	.110	-.422*	-.025	.296*	-.444*	1
	p	.920	.318	.735	.498	.019	.207	.000	.780	.001	.000	

Table 4: Pearson's correlations for use of the Internet

The year of study appears to be positively correlated with the use of blogs ( $r=0.207$ ,  $p=0.017$ ) and with shopping over the Internet ( $r=0.177$ ,  $p=0.042$ ), and negatively correlated with the amount of time spent on the Internet ( $r=-.0204$ ,  $p=0.019$ ). Students who use the Internet for faculty related activities also tend to listen to music online ( $r=0.204$ ,  $p=0.019$ ) and use social networks more often ( $r=0.296$ ,  $p=0.001$ ). On the other hand, they play less games online ( $r=-0.422$ ,  $p=0.000$ ) and seem to rarely shop online ( $r=-0.444$ ,  $p=0.000$ ). The highest number of statistical returns was shown for variable E-Shopping, which positively correlates with Study Year as indicated previously, with Hours Online ( $r=0.174$ ,  $p=0.047$ ) and with Games ( $r=0.248$ ,  $p=0.005$ ), and negatively with Music ( $r=-0.358$ ,  $p=0.000$ ), News ( $r=-0.180$ ,  $p=0.039$ ), Livestream ( $r=-0.177$ ,  $p=0.042$ ), Social Networks ( $r=-0.201$ ,  $p=0.021$ ) and Faculty Related Activities, as stated previously.

### **2.3. Discussion**

Some of the most interesting and relevant results of the research presented above will be discussed in this section.

The overall impression that students are convinced they are skilled at using digital and virtual academic resources has been confirmed in the questionnaire. Namely, there is no statistical difference between students in terms of the perceived difficulty of use, which means that students in all four years of studies are sure that their academic skills concerning online research are at a very proficient level and, hence, there is no need for improvement. Unfortunately, this conviction is not corroborated by other results of the questionnaire analysis, because students, especially in first two years, do not conduct a comprehensive, deep online search. Instead, they tend to stop after the first three results, occasionally checking the first full page. The situation is only slightly different with older and more experienced students, who consult two or more pages of search results. This is very indicative of a grave lack of awareness of the difficulty of use of online resources, which certainly does not lead to learning or practice of academic research skills.

This finding, i.e. the number of pages students check when doing an academically related online search, reveals an interesting fact: since students in the third and fourth years view a greater number of pages and sites, it seems that experience in academic research is an important factor. In other words, educational and academic experiences, as well as their teachers' feedback concerning various academic assignments they had done, have taught older students the necessity to undertake a deeper online search.

The factor of academic experience is also crucial when it comes to the frequency and readiness to use electronic resources. Students who use more of electronic resources tend to find the use of digital and/or virtual libraries easier, which can be explained by more practice they have in terms of online researching and probably more instructions they have received from their teachers. Furthermore,

because of the same reason, older students find the use of electronic resources to be easier than younger students.

Students' academic research skills are much better understood if contextualized by their everyday habits in using the Internet, both for academic and non-academic purposes. The rate of daily Internet usage is extremely high, with over a third of students using it for three or more hours every day. The most frequent reported online activities for all students seem to be reading the news and doing faculty related activities, but students also frequently visit blogs (which may be due to the fact that blogs are often used by their teachers as a mediated space for communication, giving assignments and material exchange).

To sum up, students seem to spend a lot of time online, doing a variety of things, which gives them the impression that they are skilled at doing academic research. In reality, when asked about digital/ virtual libraries and online research in general, they show very little knowledge because, in essence, their real research skills are quite limited. They do not tend to do deep research and their ability to delimit valid and invalid sources is not big.

### **3. Conclusion**

On the basis of research results, it can be concluded that there is a dire need to educate students and develop their skills of academic research. They should first be taught what online resources they have at their disposal and how they can find them. Then they should learn how to use different search engines and data bases as well as what kinds of results they can get and what to do with them. Finally, this kind of education would gradually develop students' critical thinking and raise awareness with regard to the academic credibility of different sources. In the long term, this would prevent problems that all university teachers face, such as plagiarism, and it would teach students to value authorship and copyright.

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SECTION THREE:  
**LANGUAGE STUDIES**

# SENSE DISCRIMINATION IN FIVE ENGLISH LEARNER'S DICTIONARIES

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***Abstract:** This paper presents the comparison of sense discrimination strategies including the structure and organization of a polysemous word entry in five English monolingual learner's dictionaries with the aim of gaining an insight into the aspects of sense division where the given dictionaries agree and disagree. The final outcome of the analysis is the selection of features contributing to the establishment of the user friendliest sense discrimination system in a pedagogical dictionary.*

***Keywords:** lexicography, lumping, polysemy, sense discrimination, splitting*

## 1. Introduction

This paper sets forth one of the main issues regarding the lexicographic treatment of polysemous lexemes, i.e. sense discrimination, which can be defined as a lexicographic procedure aiming at precise and meticulous decomposition of the given polysemous structure into senses and related subsenses within a dictionary entry. More specifically, the paper analyses sense discrimination strategies used for establishing the senses and subsenses of the polysemous verb *drop* in the following English monolingual learner's dictionaries: *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (OALD), *Macmillan English Dictionary for Advanced Learners* (MEDAL), *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* (LDOCE), *Collins Cobuild English Dictionary* (CCED), *Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (CALD). The verb *drop* has been selected due to its rich polysemous structure including various uses in different contexts, which provides a suitable corpus for the given analysis. Furthermore, dictionaries for language learners or pedagogical dictionaries have been selected for this analysis as a type of dictionaries primarily designed to meet the practical needs of teachers and learners of a language. As a result, it is expected that these dictionaries place an emphasis on neat, meticulous, clear and easily intelligible separation and organization of word senses since this is considered one of the key requirements for a user-friendly reference work.

The analysis aims at identifying and comparing sense discrimination criteria and an overall strategy employed in the five dictionaries of the same type, size and objectives. In this way, it is possible to check the supposed expectation of an average language-user who might predict that the account of a particular polysemous lexeme

in one dictionary is much the same as in other dictionaries, especially if they belong to the same type. Potential similarities in the five systems might indicate a common lexicographic approach applied in English pedagogical dictionaries. On the other hand, potential differences in word sense disambiguation systems and entry organization and structure among the five dictionaries in question confirm the attitude that a word sense is a rather relative, vague and unstable category that can be viewed and approached from various perspectives even in dictionaries of the same type.

Finally, the summary of the findings is expected to show the way towards the user-friendliest sense discrimination system relied on the features of the five analysed dictionaries.

## **2. Lexicographic Treatment of Polysemy**

Polysemy is a linguistic phenomenon referring to the ability of a lexeme to have several senses all of which are mutually connected and presented within one dictionary entry. According to Dragičević (2007:131-132), the polysemantic structure of a lexeme includes the primary sense and secondary senses derived from it through mechanisms such as specialization, generalization, metaphor or metonymy. The primary sense is established as the sense that most readily springs to speakers' mind when they think of a particular lexeme, so that it could be treated as a direct sense (Zgusta 1971:61).

As Zgusta (1971:64) claims, while analysing a rich polysemous structure of certain lexemes including direct, transferred, specialized and generalized senses, a lexicographer notices that certain senses overlap or that there are plenty of borderline cases, which is one of the main difficulties in the process of splitting a word's total semantic potential into separate clearly divided senses and organizing them within a neat list of numbered items. In his explanation of this demanding lexicographic task, Kilgarriff (2006:29) explains that there is very little agreement about what word senses are or how broad their scope should be, and no definitive way of knowing where one sense ends and another begins. This claim subsumes the main issues of sense discrimination.

Accordingly, the lexicographers' task of word sense disambiguation (WSD) requires a reliable methodology that is based on a set of practical strategies involving the use of meaning indicators provided by the context in which a word appears. These indicators enable lexicographers to identify different senses of a polysemous lexeme.

Atkins and Rundell (2008:296) make a distinction between external and internal indicators of meaning. The external factors include: the domain or subject matter of a text, a regional dialect, time and subcultures. The internal indicators of meaning, such as a word's syntactic and lexico-grammatical behaviour, collocational features and selectional restrictions and colligational preferences, are still perceived as more reliable in the task of sense discrimination.



However, the application of practical sense discrimination strategies provides a lexicographer only with a set of a lexeme's various senses, i.e. raw data that requires further processing. Actually, a lexeme's inventory of senses can be analysed at different levels of granularity. Thus, a lexicographer can account for a word's inventory of senses by distinguishing only among the main uses of a word or they can do a finer analysis by making subtler distinctions among the senses. More senses are established in this way since each determined sense matches a precise context.

Lexicographers decide on one of the two methods known in lexicography as "lumping" and "splitting". Lumping refers to grouping of closely related senses, while splitting denotes the opposite process, establishing a greater number of more finely defined senses. Which method is applied depends on the type of a dictionary as well as the needs of its users. Penelope Stock (1983:131) notices that splitting, however, imposes a problem of knowing when to stop eliciting distinctions which individuate different senses. The definition of every contextual variation as a separate sense produces too detailed a sense inventory that causes a problem for logical and effective organization and clear structure. Actually, it is fairly difficult to transform such a large number of senses into a list of neatly separated, consecutively numbered senses and their appropriately structured and labelled subsenses.

### 3. Corpus Analysis

Except for CALD, the entry for the verb *drop* in each of the learner's dictionaries in question consists of a list of clearly separated and numbered senses. Instead of an entry structured in this way, CALD offers a list of both nominal and verbal uses of *drop*, which are not numbered but only divided into separate sections, each of which is followed by a list of fixed expressions related to the given sense.

Most of the dictionaries include approximately the same number of senses, as it is shown in the table below:

	<i>LDOCE</i>	<i>OALD</i>	<i>CALD</i>	<i>MEDAL</i>	<i>CCED</i>
Nº of senses	13	13	4	13	15

The number of principal senses shown in the table implies that all the dictionaries include equally exhaustive list of senses. The only exception is CALD, which offers a significantly smaller number of senses, which are, presumably, selected on the basis of the frequency of their use.

The senses included in each of the dictionaries are established on the basis of various sense discrimination criteria summarized as follows:

- syntactic or lexico-grammatical behaviour,
- selectional restrictions/specific referent,
- colligational preferences,
- metaphoric transfer of meaning,
- variation in a sense component,
- register,
- fixed expression.

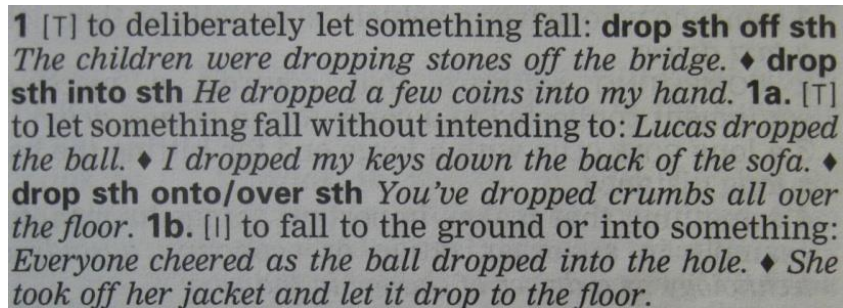
The application of these criteria has enabled lexicographers to identify particular uses of the verb *drop* and form its dictionary entry. The examination of sense discrimination strategies and organizational system in the five dictionaries has included two uses of the given verb: the default and a figurative one.

### 3.1 The Treatment of the Default Sense

The default sense of the verb in question is *fall* or *let something fall*. This sense is determined as the primary one since it does not imply any additional connotation and is not the result of the figurative extension of meaning by means of cognitive mechanisms, such as metaphor or metonymy.

However, this sense is not treated as a single one in all the dictionaries. Actually, it can serve as the first indicator of differences in applying a particular sense discrimination criterion as well as in an overall organizational strategy.

In MEDAL, the default sense component of the verb *drop*, which is *fall*, is represented within a single numbered sense section including the superordinate main sense and two subsenses.



**1** [T] to deliberately let something fall: **drop sth off sth** *The children were dropping stones off the bridge.* ♦ **drop sth into sth** *He dropped a few coins into my hand.* **1a.** [T] to let something fall without intending to: *Lucas dropped the ball.* ♦ *I dropped my keys down the back of the sofa.* ♦ **drop sth onto/over sth** *You've dropped crumbs all over the floor.* **1b.** [I] to fall to the ground or into something: *Everyone cheered as the ball dropped into the hole.* ♦ *She took off her jacket and let it drop to the floor.*

Figure 1: The default sense section in MEDAL

It seems that the main sense is established as the dominant one, i.e. the first one to be thought of by the majority of speakers coming across this verb outside any

context. However, the distinction between the two subsenses, which are closely related to the main sense due to the same main sense component of *falling*, is established on the basis of the grammatical criterion, transitivity. The change in transitivity brings about the difference in meaning, which is shown in the figure above.

Since both the superordinate and the first subsense involve the transitive use of the given verb, it is clear that an additional criterion has been used for making a distinction between them. It is defined in this paper as a variation in a sense component accompanying the default one. In addition to the default component of *falling*, the superordinate sense involves the component *deliberately*, while the subsense involves the opposite component, *accidentally*.

The same sense is treated in various ways in the other dictionaries. CALD does not recognize transitivity or a variation in sense components as indicators of meaning since it includes all the variations in a single sense. The definition of the given sense is formulated in a broad way subsuming both the transitive and intransitive use of the verb *drop* and showing no inclination towards displaying finer sense distinctions.

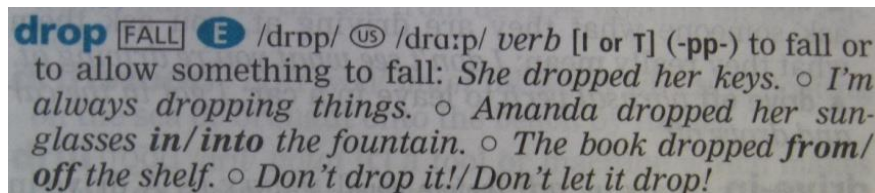


Figure 2: The default sense section in CALD

OALD shows the tendency of grouping the related senses as it is the case in MEDAL. Thus, the meanings whose core component is *falling* are placed within the same sense section, but they are marked as separate senses so that the structure is flat and not hierarchical as in MEDAL. (The hierarchical structure refers to the grouping of closely related senses so that the most general one is marked as a superordinate sense followed by its subsenses. In a flat structure, all senses have an equal status and they are labelled accordingly.)


**drop**  /drɒp; NAmE dra:p/ verb, noun  
 ■ verb (-pp-)  
 ▶ **FALL 1** to fall or allow sth to fall by accident: [V] *The climber slipped and dropped to his death.* ◊ [VN] *Be careful not to drop that plate.* **2** to fall or make sth fall deliberately: [V + adv./prep.] *He staggered in and dropped into a chair.* ◊ [VN] *Medical supplies are being dropped into the stricken area.* ◊ (BrE) *He dropped his trousers (= undid them and let them fall).* ◊ (NAmE) *He dropped his pants.* **3** [V] to fall down or be no longer able to stand because you are extremely tired: *I feel ready to drop.* ◊ *She expects everyone to work till they drop.*

Figure 3: The default sense section in OALD

The key criterion applied here is not transitivity as in MEDAL, but the variation in sense components (*fall deliberately* vs. *fall accidentally*), so that it is taken as an indicator of two distinct senses. Moreover, this section includes the third sense that is completely contextually dependent since the indicator of distinct meaning in this case is a specific referent (a human being). This use derived from the default one by means of specification is treated as a separate sense in the other dictionaries (e.g. MEDAL, CCED) or it is not included at all (e.g. LDOCE, CALD).

CCED includes all the previously mentioned contextual variations of the prototypical sense, but they are all shown as separate senses established on the basis of the same criteria as in previously examined dictionaries (the variation in a sense component and transitivity).

**2** If you **drop** something, you accidentally let it fall. *I dropped my glasses and broke them.*  
**3** If something **drops** onto something else, it falls onto that thing. If something **drops** from somewhere, it falls from that place. *He felt hot tears dropping onto his fingers... Burning embers started dropping from the ceiling... His toupee dropped off, revealing his bald head.*  
**4** If you **drop** something somewhere or if it **drops** there, you deliberately let it fall there. *Drop the noodles into the water... He dropped his plate into the sink. ...shaped pots that simply drop into their own container... Bombs drop round us and the floor shudders. † **dropping** ...the anniversary of the dropping of the first atomic bomb.*

Figure 4: The default sense section in CCED

It should be noted here that CCED does not follow a logical order of senses in its entry. This claim is supported by the fact that the default sense is not positioned as the first one in the list of senses. What is more, a sense derived from the primary one by means of metaphor is positioned at the very top of the list of senses.

In LDOCE, the core sense component of *falling* is divided into two separate senses distinguished on the basis of the transitivity criterion. The two senses are represented as two numbered sections (*let something fall* and *fall*). The fact that the first section consists of two senses marked and positioned as subsenses can indicate the tendency towards hierarchical structuring of sense sections. However, the subsenses are not established on the basis of the variation in an additional sense component as is the case in the previously analysed dictionaries. Namely, the broad definition of the first subsense subsumes both variations: *let something fall deliberately* and *let something fall accidentally*. This implies that LDOCE does not tend to achieve a high degree of granularity in making sense distinctions. It seems that the general tendency is to group together all the uses with the same core sense component without drawing fine distinctions based on the variation in a single sense component.

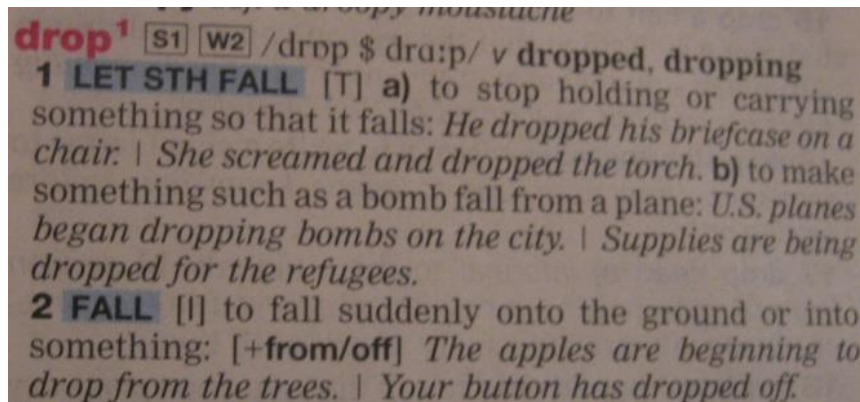


Figure 5: The default sense section in LDOCE

The second subsense is associated with a quite specific context, i.e. this use of the verb *drop* requires a specific semantic type of object connected to entities being thrown from the plane (e.g. bombs, supplies). Thus, the criterion at work in this case is selectional restriction. This use is not marked as a distinct sense in the other dictionaries.

Using the grammatical criterion of transitivity, all the dictionaries in question distinguish between the two variants (transitive and intransitive use) of the default sense. However, there are differences among the dictionaries regarding the scope,

structure and organization of the default sense. In most cases, the two variants of the default sense of *falling* are treated as two separate senses. However, in CALD both variants are grouped together representing a single sense. What is more, MEDAL treats the intransitive use of the verb *drop* as a subsense within the default sense section.

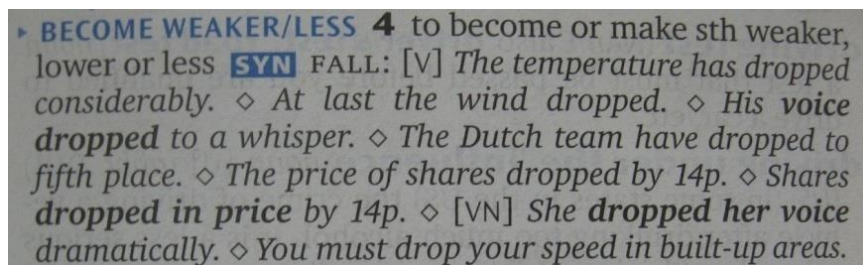
The transitive use of the given verb can be further split into two senses according to the sense component opposition *deliberately/accidentally*. Again, the dictionaries do not agree on the treatment of these two senses. Most of the dictionaries mark the two variants as separate senses. CALD does not take this criterion into account, while MEDAL positions the component *deliberately* as the main, default and superordinate sense, while the variant with the component *accidentally* is treated as its subsense.

It can be concluded that these five dictionaries have applied the same criteria to discriminate among various meanings of the verb *drop*, but the data acquired in this way has been structured and organized differently.

### 3.2 The Treatment of a Figurative Sense

The application of the sense discrimination criterion defined as the metaphoric transfer of meaning is illustrated in the example of the sense present in all the given dictionaries: *become weaker/less*.

This figurative sense is derived from the basic sense by means of metaphor whose pattern is BECOMING WEAKER/LESS IS FALLING DOWNWARDS/DROPPING. As for this sense, the verb *drop* can be used both transitively and intransitively. However, OALD does not use the difference in transitivity as a sense discrimination criterion. Moreover, the example sentences contain some of the most common referents that appear with the verb *drop* in this figurative use, but they are all subsumed under a single broad definition.



► **BECOME WEAKER/LESS** 4 to become or make sth weaker, lower or less **SYN** FALL: [V] *The temperature has dropped considerably.* ◊ *At last the wind dropped.* ◊ *His voice dropped to a whisper.* ◊ *The Dutch team have dropped to fifth place.* ◊ *The price of shares dropped by 14p.* ◊ *Shares dropped in price by 14p.* ◊ [VN] *She dropped her voice dramatically.* ◊ *You must drop your speed in built-up areas.*

Figure 6: The metaphoric sense section in OALD

CALD's entry includes the same sense although defined in a broader way. Specific referents are not taken as indicators of distinct senses or subsenses, too.



**drop** LOWER E /drɒp/ US /dra:p/ *verb* [I or T] (-pp-) to move to a lower level, or cause something to move to a lower level: *The water level in the flooded region has finally begun to drop.* ◦ *The land drops (away) (= slopes down) sharply behind the barrier.* ◦ *We've had to drop our prices because of the recession.*

Figure 7: The metaphoric sense section in CALD

In MEDAL, the metaphoric transfer of meaning is used as a criterion for establishing a distinct sense section. The most generally defined use is singled out as the superordinate sense and further split into subsenses. MEDAL applies the criterion of specific referent in order to show further specialization of this transferred sense including referents such as *voice* and *wind*, which are treated as indicators of new subsenses of a more general superordinate sense. The third subsense is established on the basis of a grammatical criterion, i.e. transitivity.

**3** [T] to reduce something to a lower amount or value: *We had to drop the price of our house to sell it.* ♦ *Be sure to drop your speed in wet weather.* **3a.** [I/T] if you drop your voice, or if your voice drops, you speak less loudly **3b.** [I] if the wind drops, it becomes less strong **3c. drop** or **drop back** [I] to fall to a lower amount or value: *Infant mortality has dropped dramatically in the last 50 years.* ♦ **+from/to** *PCM's share value dropped to 750 pence.* ♦ **+below** *In winter the temperature often drops below freezing.* ♦ **+by** *European sales have dropped by over 30%.*

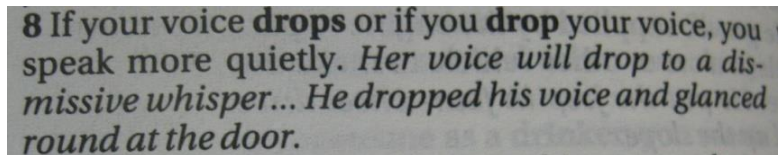
Figure 8: The metaphoric sense section in MEDAL

It is interesting that CCED positions this sense as the first one in the list of senses, although it is not the primary, basic sense.

**drop** /drɒp/ **drops, dropping, dropped**  
**1** If a level or amount **drops** or if someone or something **drops** it, it quickly becomes less. *Temperatures can drop to freezing at night... Once the rate rises it never drops back to its previous level... His blood pressure had dropped severely... He had dropped the price of his London home by £1.25m.*  
 ► Also a noun. *He was prepared to take a drop in wages... The poll indicates a drop in support for the Conservatives.*

Figure 9: The metaphoric sense section in CCED

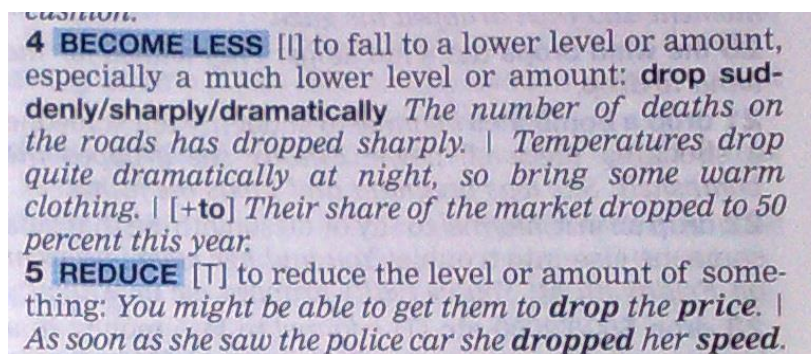
As has been shown so far, there is a variety of referents used with the verb *drop* in this metaphoric sense. Still, only *voice* is taken into account in CCED. This referent is recognized as an indicator of a separate, new sense positioned in a way that does not show any close relation to the sense it has been developed from by means of specialization.



**8** If your voice **drops** or if you **drop** your voice, you speak more quietly. *Her voice will drop to a dismissive whisper... He dropped his voice and glanced round at the door.*

Figure 10: The metaphoric sense section in CCED

In LDOCE, metaphoric extension is accompanied by transitivity for the purpose of distinguishing between two related uses treated as two separate senses in this dictionary.



**4 BECOME LESS** [I] to fall to a lower level or amount, especially a much lower level or amount: **drop suddenly/sharply/dramatically** *The number of deaths on the roads has dropped sharply. | Temperatures drop quite dramatically at night, so bring some warm clothing. | [+to] Their share of the market dropped to 50 percent this year.*

**5 REDUCE** [T] to reduce the level or amount of something: *You might be able to get them to **drop the price**. | As soon as she saw the police car she **dropped her speed**.*

Figure 11: The metaphoric sense section in LDOCE

Transitivity is the dominant criterion in this case since it is the one that brings about the difference in meaning considered significant enough for establishing the two variants of the same metaphoric sense as two independently numbered senses within the entry.

In all the dictionaries, this figurative use of the verb *drop* has been recognized and established as a separate sense. OALD and CALD treat this metaphoric transfer of meaning as a single simple sense section offering a broad definition, without further decomposition of the meaning into subsenses. However, in MEDAL, CCED and LDOCE, the metaphoric transfer of meaning has not been used independently as a sense discrimination criterion. Instead, it has been supported by other criteria, such as syntactic behaviour or selectional restriction, so that the general superordinate



definition of the sense is further split into subsenses (as in MEDAL adhering to the hierarchical structure) or even several separate senses (as in CCED and LDOCE). The examination points to the conclusion that the choice and application of sense discrimination criteria affects the scope of a sense section and its decomposition. The interplay of several sense discrimination criteria often results in a more granular sense structure.

#### **4. The Overall Sense Discrimination Strategy in the Five Learner's Dictionaries**

The analysis of the treatment of the default sense and one metaphorical sense from the polysemous structure of the verb *drop* has provided a basis for the discussion on a general tendency present in each of the dictionaries in question concerning the sense discrimination practice. It is possible to define a general sense discrimination system for each of the dictionaries depending on the degree to which a dictionary atomizes the principal senses of the verb in question.

MEDAL applies the general strategy of lumping. It means that it attempts to group all senses with the same main or dominant semantic feature into a single sense section, which is structured hierarchically so that the most general sense is positioned and numbered as the superordinate one, while more specific uses discriminated on the basis of selectional and colligational restrictions or specific syntactic behaviour are treated and labelled as its subsenses.

LDOCE shows the tendency towards splitting as a general strategy, although the default sense, limited only to the transitive use of the verb *drop*, is divided into two subsenses positioned under the same heading LET STH FALL. However, the intransitive use with the same main semantic component of *falling* is labelled and positioned as a separate sense. As for the metaphoric meaning *become weaker/less*, the organization is the same, i.e. the transitive and intransitive use with the same main sense feature are treated as two separate senses.

The analysis has shown that OALD inclines towards lumping. This tendency is reflected both in sense organization and sense definitions. The default sense feature of *falling* is divided into three separate senses, each of which is marked by its own specific additional sense feature. However, since they are perceived as senses derived from the same core sense, they are grouped under the same heading FALL. Still, the structure is not hierarchical as in MEDAL. Furthermore, the metaphoric sense *become weaker/less* is not split into two distinct senses, as is the case in LDOCE, but the definition is formulated in a broader way so that it subsumes all the variations of the given sense within the same sense section.

The treatment of polysemy in CCED is fully representative of splitting. Taking into account the default sense, every variation in an additional sense component (*deliberately/accidentally*) or syntactic behaviour is considered as an indicator of an

independent new sense. The same practice is applied in the case of the observed metaphoric sense. The structure of the entry is flat.

CAED's entry for the verb *drop* includes only four senses, whose definitions are broadly defined so that they subsume a number of mutually related uses treated as subsenses or even separate senses in the previously mentioned dictionaries. Thus, it is supposed that this dictionary favours lumping as a general strategy. However, the list of senses is certainly not extensive enough to consider this observation as a completely valid conclusion.

## 5. Conclusion

The analysis presented in this paper has revealed that there is no universal sense discrimination system common to all the examined dictionaries despite the fact that they belong to the same type. It has been shown that they discriminate among the same principal uses of the verb in question due to reliance on the same criteria. However, further processing of this raw data takes different directions due to different understandings of what a word sense is and how broad its scope should be. This observation supports the view that a word sense is a rather unstable category so that it is difficult to propose a comprehensive and exact definition of it. Thus, it is not surprising to find various sense discrimination systems even in dictionaries of the same type.

Another question that arises from the analysis is what system would be the most suitable for a pedagogical dictionary. The suggestion offered in this paper is based on the selection of the user friendliest features found across these five dictionaries, taking into account clear and neat discrimination of senses, their selection, organization and structure within an entry.

The attitude adopted in this paper is that lumping and the hierarchical structure, which is considered compatible with this strategy, are more suitable than other choices for the type of dictionaries in question. This type of organization implies that all closely related senses are grouped together within a single numbered sense section. However, for each section, there is a superordinate sense defined broadly enough to encompass all its appropriately positioned and numbered subsenses ordered from less to more specific in relation to the superordinate sense. In this way, a quick look at the entry enable users to gain an insight into the principal senses of a particular word. After focusing on the needed principal sense, users can quickly look up a more specific subsense appearing in a particular context. For the purpose of illustration and better understanding of the context in which the given sense is used, every sense within a section should be followed by example sentences.

All the proposals mentioned above are illustrated by a suggested numbered section for the default sense of the verb *drop* based on the following sense discrimination criteria: transitivity, variation in a sense component and colligational

preference (the use of a particular preposition or adverb with the given verb in the case of the subsense 1c):

**drop** /drɒp/ verb

**1** [T/I] to fall or to allow something to fall: **1a.** [T] to allow something to fall by accident: ● *Be careful not to drop that expensive vase.* **1b.** [T] to make something fall deliberately: ● *Drop the noodles into the water and stir to prevent them sticking together.* **1c.** [I] to fall onto the ground or into something: [V+prep/adv] ● *The ball dropped **into** the hole just a few seconds before the end. All the plums have dropped **from** the trees. Your button has dropped **off**.*

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## (MIS)TRANSLATING U.S. SOUTHWEST HISTORY

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***Abstract:** Historians of the U.S. Southwest invariably rely on English-language translations of original Spanish documents for their interpretive work. However, a philological approach to the Spanish documents reveals all manner of translator shortcomings, some of which negatively impact the historical record. I document one such instance pertaining to the early history of Texas and argue that the failure to adhere to sound philological practice has produced an inaccurate historical canon. Data are taken from a Spanish expedition diary from the late 17<sup>th</sup>-century and from unpublished archival sources pertaining to it.*

***Keywords:** English-language translation, paleography, philological practice, Spanish colonial documents, U.S. Southwest history*

### 1. Introduction

It is a curious fact that the historical canon pertaining to the Colonial Spanish presence in the U.S. Southwest relies heavily on English-language translations and summaries of original Spanish documents. This situation obtains for the history of Texas, which is the focus of this study. Not one of the canonical historical works (Bolton 1916b, Chipman 1992, Foster 1995, Naylor and Polzer 1986) is based on a single critically edited original text. However, over the past twenty years, several projects and centers have emerged to remedy this situation, particularly as regards New Mexico, which was the administrative center of the Colonial Spanish presence in the region. Most notable among them, in terms of the output of critically edited scholarship, is the Cibola Project of the Research Center for Romance Studies at the University of California-Berkeley (see, for example, Craddock and De Marco 1999-2000), and the Vargas Project published through the University of New Mexico (cf. Kessell 1989).

The application of rigorous philological practice to Colonial Spanish documents has consistently shown that English-language treatments of them are replete with mistranslations, inaccurate or incomplete information. Reliance on such works can and does have negative consequences for interpreting the historical record. In what follows, I document a striking example in which this situation obtains for the early history of Texas. Data are taken from a military expedition diary from 1683-1684, hereafter referred to as the *Mendoza expedition*. I argue that the version of this

expedition that has come to inform the historical canon represents a *sanitized* version of events.

## 2. The Mendoza Expedition in Translation

During the twelve years between the Pueblo Revolt of 1680 and the reconquest of New Mexico in 1692, the Spanish retreated to present-day El Paso, Texas. From there, Juan Domínguez de Mendoza (1631-1695?) was appointed to lead an exploratory expedition to reconnoiter present-day east Texas. The expedition took place from December 15, 1683 to July 18, 1684 and covered roughly 700 kilometers in each direction. Nine officers and about fifteen other soldiers accompanied Mendoza, along with father Nicolás López, Vice-Custodian of the province, and an undisclosed number of indigenous people. Under instructions from the governor, Mendoza kept a diary record of the expedition, which was recorded and witnessed virtually daily by several officers.

Prior to the publication of the Spanish text of this expedition (Imhoff 2002), the only published sources for the Mendoza diary were two English-language translations: Bolton (1916a), which I show below to be flawed and incomplete, and Wade (2003). Wade improved upon the Bolton translation through the use of an unpublished archival transcript, but she was unable to identify the source of that transcript (Wade 2005:6; discussion below). The most complete summary treatments of the expedition in English include Castañeda (1976, vol. 2:311-328), Hickerson (1994:127-145) and John (1975:174-180).

It falls outside the scope of this paper to document the mistranslations found in Bolton (1916a), which are legion. I provide one example to illustrate its faulty nature. The following passage contains no less than three translator errors:

- (1) “mas *quedan* | *seguras de nuestra parte* y hecho pacto con las | naziones que *nos asistian* y sus emuajadores de | que *a su tiempo se bolueria*” (Imhoff 2002:119).  
‘but *they remain friendly toward us*. And an agreement was made with the messengers of the nations *who were not present* that a return would be made *at their appointment*’ (Bolton 1916a:340).

Bolton refers to a nonexistent friendship and states, rather implausibly, that the Indian nations who were not present were promised a return whenever they requested it. The correct translation should read:

‘but *we assured them* and made an agreement with the nations *who were accompanying us* and their emissaries that a return would be made *at an appropriate time*.’

More substantive issues surround the Bolton's translation. It ends abruptly on May 25, 1684, though the expedition continued for three more months. This fact is explained by the addition of a certification placed into the diary following the May 25<sup>th</sup> entry, which Bolton evidently took to signal the end of the diary (Imhoff 2002:10). Immediately following this official letter, Mendoza states the reason why he included it in his diary and then continues with the journal:

- (2) 'I placed this certification [here] because, for lack of paper, the Reverend Father could not write his request' (translation based on Imhoff 2002:137; all subsequent translations are mine unless otherwise noted).

The fact that Bolton did not translate a full one third of the expedition, and that he used Ms. 7 (see below) as his source, which is the furthest removed from the first complete text, is reason enough to conclude that his translation is not a reliable source. More disconcerting still is the fact that the translated record itself lacks important historical information regarding this expedition.

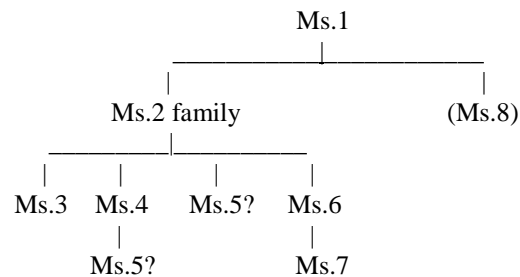
### **3. The Spanish Manuscripts**

The following list of manuscripts presents the only Spanish-language sources of the expedition diary known to exist. Manuscript 1 is an excerpt of the authentic original diary written by Mendoza during the expedition and witnessed by several officers after each entry. However, it spans only six of the sixty journal entries, which corresponds to less than 10% of the entire diary. Manuscript 2 is the oldest complete copy; it was certified by an official scribe less than three months after the expedition concluded. Manuscripts 3-7 are contemporary or posterior copies that all derive from Ms. 2. Manuscripts 8 and 9 are secondary sources in which the Mendoza expedition is discussed in detail.

- Ms. 1 1683-1684, Spanish Archives of New Mexico II, roll 21, frames 126-129  
[incomplete]
- Ms. 2 1684, Archivo General de México, Provincias Internas, vol. 37, exp. 4  
[lost]; copy in Center for American History, UT-Austin, Box 2Q234, 731, fols.  
1r-14v | copy in Center for Southwest Research, Center for Southwest  
Research, University of New Mexico
- Ms. 3 1686, Biblioteca Nacional de México, Archivo Franciscano 21/443.1,  
fols. 1r-33v
- Ms. 4 n.d., Biblioteca Nacional de México, Archivo Franciscano 21/446.12,  
fols. 70v-89r
- Ms. 5 n.d., Gilcrease Museum, Tulsa, Oklahoma, Item 176.2, 16 folia

- Ms. 6 1781, Archivo General de México, Historia 299, fols. 173v-186v  
 Ms. 7 ≥1781, Archivo General de México, Historia 298, fols. 377r-402r  
 Ms. 8 1778?, Biblioteca Nacional de México, Archivo Franciscano 20/428, fols. 26v19-33v7 “Noticias históricas del *Nuevo Mexico*,” Fray Silvestre Vélez de Escalante  
 Ms. 9 1685, Spanish Archives of New Mexico II, roll 21, frames 388-431 “Trial *in absentia* of Juan Domínguez de Mendoza,” Governor Domingo Gironza Petris de Cruzate

I have posited elsewhere the following textual transmission for the Mendoza expedition diary (Imhoff 2006:217):



Virtually all English-language treatments of the Mendoza expedition derive from Ms. 2 or from one of its copies, which I refer to collectively as the *Ms. 2 family*. But information found in two secondary sources (Mss. 8 and 9) presents a radically different account of expedition events. Attention to paleographic detail suggests that its source was Ms. 1.

#### 4. Manuscript 8

As a narrative summary of the expedition, Ms. 8 does not aid in establishing a critical text of the diary, with the exception of two excerpts that were copied directly into it. However, paleographic indications reveal that the scribe of Ms. 8 closely followed an *original diary* for his summary:

- (3) “gente politica ((^en) assi dice *en el original*) | en lengua megicana” (Ms. 8, fol. 27v26-27)  
 ‘people well-versed (thus it states *in the original*) in the Mexican language’
- (4) “de noroeste a sueste (*en el original* | dice de norte a oriente)” (Ms. 8, fol. 28v37-38)



‘from northeast to southeast (*in the original* it states from north to east)’

- (5) “Assi consta de *el mismo diario* a | fol. 13 usque ad 45” (Ms. 8, fol. 29v26-27)  
‘Thus records *the original diary* from fol. 13 to 45’
- (6) “Prosigue *el diario de Mendoza*’ (Ms. 8, fol. 33rHeading)  
‘*Mendoza’s diary* follows’
- (7) “(es copia literal de la [certificacion] original *inserta en el diario*)” (Ms. 8, fol. 33r23)  
‘(it is a literal copy of the original [certification] *inserted into the diary*)’
- (8) “*Copia | literal*” (Ms. 8, fol. 33r24-25)  
‘*Literal copy*’

To which original diary does the scribe of Ms. 8 refer? Additional paleographic clues reveal that it was not from the Ms. 2 family:

- (9) “todos sienbran mais y trigo y *otras semillas*” (Ms. 1, fr. 126.11; Ms. 8, fol. 27v27-28)  
‘everyone sows corn, wheat *and other seeds*’
- (10) “todos siembran maiz y trigo [*omitted*]” (Ms. 2 family)  
‘everyone sows corn and wheat [*omitted*]’
- (11) “en el contorno de | los dichos sartenejales mucha cantidad de *tequesquite | blanco y amarillo*” (Ms. 1, fr. 129.3-5; Ms. 8, fol. 28r17-18)  
‘Surrounding said hole [there is] a great quantity of white and yellow *tequesquite*’
- (12) “en contorno de dichos sartenexales mucha can- | tidad de *mesquites blancos y amarillos*” (Ms. 2 family)  
‘Surrounding said hole [there is] a great quantity of white and yellow *mesquites*’

In (9) and (11), the text of Ms. 8 matches that of Ms. 1 in opposition to the Ms. 2 family (10 and 12, respectively). Example (10) is a case of scribal omission, but (12) reveals an interpretive error. This example is particularly enlightening, for if the scribe of Ms. 8 were following the Ms. 2 family, one would expect to find *mesquites blancos y amarillos* in (11). It is highly improbable that the scribe of Ms. 8 would have produced the indigenous lexeme *tequesquite*, in singular form, from the more common term *mesquites* in plural form. Whence this form, if not from Ms. 1?

Additional indications from Ms. 8 also suggest an opposition between it and the Ms. 2 family. I label them stylistic emendations; one such example follows:

- (13) “por un incendio impensado que nos puso en bastante pe- | ligro” (Ms. 8, fol. 28r33-34)  
‘because of a fire that placed us in grave danger’
- (14) “por el fuego que | de noche nos quiso quemar, y con el cerco que se | dio alrededor se remedio la aueria | que pudo hauer” (Ms. 2 family)  
‘because of the fire that occurred at night, and with the circle that we made around it, the danger that might have been was avoided’

In (13), a simple objective statement reports a dangerous fire. In the Ms. 2 family (14), this fact is reported through a circumlocution that introduces a material consideration and emphasizes the positive outcome of the incident. I suggest that this is an embellished passage designed to report the event more favorably. Many such examples exist in Ms. 8, and, in every case, the information found in the Ms. 2 family indicates a more favorable account of events than that which is found in Ms. 8.

The data in (3-14) strongly suggest a connection between Mss. 1 and 8 in opposition to the Ms. 2 family. What then should one conclude about substantive historical information found in Ms. 8 that does not appear in the Ms. 2 family?

## 5. The Historical Record

The following passages taken from Ms. 8 contain important historical information that is absent from the Ms. 2 family and, thus, from the canonical historical treatments of the Mendoza expedition:

- (15) “Algunos soldados y cabos de esquadra ... se reuelaron | contra su comandante ... llego a tanto la discordia que | dos de los reboltosos echaron mano a la espada para | herir a su comandante ... por cuyo motivo les formo | causa a usanza de guerra y los sentencio a morir | arcabuzeados” (Ms. 8 fol. 29v9-16)  
‘Some soldiers and squadron leaders ... rebelled against their commander ... the discord became so serious that two of the rebels went for their swords to injure their commander ... for which he tried and sentenced them to be executed’
- (16) “Aqui fueron *nuestros* mayores trabajos porque varios | de los *nuestros* mal contentos se declararon ... se | huyeron llevandose porcion de los mejores caballos | y muchos de los infieles amigos que venian con nosotros” (Ms. 8 fol. 31r14-29)

‘Here was the most difficult work because several of our malcontents declared themselves ... and fled, taking a portion of the best horses and many of the friendly infidels who had come with us’

We also learn from Ms. 8 that Mendoza’s behavior caused great consternation among expedition members, particularly among the accompanying Indians, and that father López had to intervene to save the lives of the condemned soldiers.

I am unaware of any textual witness of Mendoza’s expedition diary cited in primary or secondary literature that contains this information. Wade (2003) incorporated it in the commentary to her translation, but she was unaware that her source transcription was, in fact, made from Ms. 8 (Wade 2005:6-7). In addition, Wade did not have Ms. 9 at her disposal. Considering examples (3-8), and lacking further indications as to source, it is reasonable to conclude that the scribe of Ms. 8 also did not make use of Ms. 9.

## 6. Manuscript 9

Ms. 9 is an unpublished original record of trial testimony taken *in absentia* against Mendoza by the governor of the province, one year after his return from the expedition. The document was certified just two days after the nine-day trial concluded. Trial witnesses were asked seven questions pertaining to Mendoza, one of which concerned his treatment of soldiers on the military expedition (referred to below as the “Jumano” expedition). The relevant question and several responses follow:

- (17) “y si sauen *que* | tratamiento le iso el dicho Juan Domingues a los sol- | dados veteranos que con el fueron al descubri- | miento de Jumanas, digan lo que en esta pregun- | ta supieren” (Ms. 9, fr. 394.3-7)  
‘and if they know how Juan Dominguez treated the veteran soldiers that went with him on the Jumano expedition, let them state what they know’
- (18) “y que en *quanto* al tratamiento que y[ç]o a los onbres | que fueron con el a Jumanas fue mui malo, tanto que | quiso alcabusear a dos hombres y les hobligo a nue- | be de ellos a boluerse y dar *quenta* a su *sseñoria* de lo que pasa- | ba” (Ms. 9, fr. 405.18-22) [Diego Barela, lieutenant on expedition]  
‘and as for the treatment of the men who went with him on the Jumano expedition it was very bad, so [bad] that he tried to execute two men and obligated nine of them to return to the governor to report what was happening’
- (19) “y quen *quanto* al tratami- | ento que iso a los soldados que fueron a Jumanas bido | este *ttestigo* que se lo asia mui malo, ... y saue que tubo para alcabusear

| [a] Anttonio Jorxe, y les obligo a que se boluieran” (Ms. 9, fr. 415.34-416.3)  
[Martin Serrano, veteran soldier on expedition]  
‘and that as for the treatment he gave the soldiers who went with him on the Jumano expedition, this witness saw that it was very bad, and he knows that he was ready to execute Antonio Jorge, and he obligated them to return’

- (20) “y que saue porqueste | testigo fue con el dicho Juan Domingues quen la jornada | trataba mal a los soldados vesinos ... y | que en vna ocasion qui[ç]o apelo-tear [a] Anttonio Jorxe, | que biendolo los de la nasion Jumanas coxieron las | armas en las manos para defender al dicho Anttonio | Jorxe, y saue este ttestigo que por el mal tratamiento que | le asia a los soldados y a los yndios se bolbieron nuebe hon- | bres” (Ms. 9, fr. 418.1-20) [Diego de Luna, lieutenant on expedition]  
‘and he knows, because this witness went with said Juan Dominguez, that he treated the local soldiers badly ... and that on one occasion wanted to execute Antonio Jorge, and that seeing this, the Jumano Indians took up arms to defend him, and this witness knows that because of the bad treatment given to the soldiers and the Indians nine men returned’

This trial testimony provides clear support for the version of events found in Ms. 8 from witnesses (18-20) who accompanied Mendoza on the expedition. They had first-hand knowledge of the events and were not among those who abandoned the expedition. In fact, the names of those who did abandon it are not given in Mss. 8 or 9, but we can be reasonably certain that Antonio Jorge, who was twice named in the trial testimony (19, 20), and three other officers were among them. All officers were listed early in the diary and several of them routinely witnessed journal entries. However, three officers who had witnessed the journal before the reported conflict did not do so again after it. Later in the diary, after the reported conflict, Mendoza again named all officers before striking camp for the return journey, but in this second list, the same three officers’ names and Antonio Jorge were not recorded. Note that this information is unrecoverable from Bolton, who omitted journal signatures from his translation “in order to save space” (1916a:321, n.1), or from Wade (2003), who did not have access to Mss. 1 or 9.

## 7. Conclusion

Manuscript 2 contains an altered version of the Mendoza expedition diary. It is the first in a series of diary copies that omits all reference to the conflict that erupted between Mendoza and his officers, the blame for which eye-witnesses placed squarely on the shoulders of Mendoza. It appears that in the three months between the conclusion of the expedition and the certification of Ms. 2, Mendoza rewrote his diary, thereby intentionally omitting the unfavorable information from the historical record.

The English-language treatments of the Mendoza expedition diary that rely on the Ms. 2 family of documents, I would argue, report a sanitized version of events. The information absent from them would be truly lost to history were it not for the existence of two secondary sources, and the short excerpt of the authentic original that survives.

The methodological implications of this work are profound. Philologists who examine all copies of a text in search of language variation are in a unique position to offer more complete data for scholars who interpret the past. Those who do interpret the historical record should make preferential use of original texts and their copies, or to critical editions made from them, rather than rely on translated material, individual manuscripts or archival transcripts. The expedition diary discussed here reveals a striking example of the value of philological practice for such scholars.

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# STRATEGIES FOR EXPRESSING POWER RELATIONSHIPS IN THE SLOVENIAN TRANSLATION OF AMITAV GHOSH'S NOVEL *THE HUNGRY TIDE*

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***Abstract:** The paper explores various narrative and rhetorical strategies for expressing power relationships in the Slovenian translation of Amitav Ghosh's novel "The Hungry Tide". Based on critical discourse analysis and the model of micro- and macrostructural shifts developed by van Leuven-Zwart, the paper provides a classification of the aforementioned strategies based on a pilot study of the source text and its translation into Slovenian. Illustrating the strategies with chosen examples, the paper then discusses the solutions adopted by the translator, focusing on general issues concerning the cultural transfer of relationships characterized by inequality in terms of social power.*

***Key words:** critical discourse analysis, postcolonial criticism, power relationships, social power.*

## 1. Introduction – Narrative Fiction and Social Power

Inequality in social power and subsequent power relationships, be it in terms of race, gender, social class or status, form the core interest of postcolonial criticism (cf. Ashcroft et al. 2005, Loomba 2009). Much scholarly attention has been devoted to the analysis of colonial and postcolonial literary works, in particular those of narrative fiction, and their thematization and both explicit and implicit portrayal of distant lands, people and social practices. As Said (1994:xiii) points out in his seminal work on the subject, "the power to narrate, or to block other narratives from forming or emerging, is very important to culture and imperialism, and constitutes one of the main connections between them".

One such aspect of the power to narrate is exhibited through translation, which from the postmodern viewpoint embodies both numerous opportunities and pitfalls in the struggle for greater social equality. In this sense, the act of translation, in particular in case of smaller and limited literary systems such as the Slovenian one, is both subject to existing power dynamics, as well as an active participant in the transfer and subsequently the construction of relationships of social power. When translating narrative fiction in which power relationships play a prominent role, the fact that social practices are inextricably connected to language and culture means that translators are faced with several issues. The first encompasses decoding indicators of power relationships, which are often subtle or implicit or may even have different

implications in different languages and cultures. The second encompasses encoding these indicators in a way that makes them accessible to the reader across cultural borders. Focusing on these translation issues, the paper will make use of the approach employed by critical discourse analysis to explore the strategies used to express different relationships of social power in the chosen work of narrative fiction and its translation.

## 2. Methodology

The study was conducted on two texts, Amitav Ghosh's novel *The Hungry Tide* in English, published in 2005 by HarperCollins, and its translation into Slovenian, entitled *Lačna plima*, published in 2008 by Cankarjeva založba. The translation came out as a part of a *Modern Classics* (Moderni klasiki) series, thus assigning the source text, and consequently the translation, characteristics of a canonical text. The translation, done by Urša Červ, is integral and features an accompanying text about the author. *The Hungry Tide* was the first of Ghosh's novels to be translated into Slovenian; it has since been followed by *The Shadow Lines* in 2012. The paper will present the findings of a pilot study, which was conducted on the first 10 chapters of the novel or approximately one fifth of the whole text.

In devising an appropriate methodology for analysing the texts, I drew on the tenets of critical discourse analysis (Fairclough 2005, van Dijk 1993) and the model of micro- and macrostructural shifts in translated works developed by van Leuven-Zwart (1989 and 1990). In its simplified version, the model is composed of two stages. First, smallest meaningful text units that van Leuven-Zwart terms transemes are identified in the source text and compared to transemes in the translation to establish shifts in the microstructure of the text. Next, the researcher establishes the effects microstructural shifts have on the macrostructure of the translated text and all its functions.

The analysis was carried out in two steps: first, the source text was analysed, examining various narrative and rhetorical strategies used by the author to describe different power relationships. Narrative and rhetorical strategies for expressing power relationships are defined as strategies employed by the narrator to convey the relationships of power between the characters in the narrative. Narrative strategies are understood as strategies relating to the construction of the narrative world. They can, for example, feature descriptions or certain choices on the lexical level, such as, in the case of the analysed text, fragments in Bengali language. Rhetorical strategies are defined as a subset of narrative strategies, as they too, strictly speaking, arise from the narrative. They are, however, limited to spoken interaction between characters, such as the way the other person is addressed, the use of marked expressions in utterances and so forth.

The second step encompassed an analysis of the translated text to observe how the aforementioned strategies were translated into Slovenian, and if, and how, the



resulting translation affected the reader's perception of relationships of social power between the characters in the novel and, consequently, the perception of the narrative world itself. Particular attention was paid to any translation issues that may arise from differences in the way power dynamics are encoded in different languages and cultures.

### **3. Results and Discussion**

#### **3.1. Types of Narrative and Rhetorical Strategies for Expressing Power Relationships**

The results of the analysis showed that the first discerning factor for narrative and rhetorical strategies for expressing power relationships was whether the strategies employed were explicit or implicit. An example of an explicit narrative strategy would be a clearly stated social relationship. Implicit narrative strategies, on the other hand, resulted either from description or characterization of the persons in the narrative. Descriptive narrative strategies encompassed strategies where the characters' social position was indirectly apparent from their clothing, gestures or unspoken interactions with other persons in the narrative. Their characterization, for example, may have featured the presence or absence of desirable or undesirable characteristics. Also frequently used were generalizations, where a certain set of characteristics was ascribed to a whole group and consequently to any character in the narrative described as belonging to that group. On the most basic and speculative level, as patterns in this case emerge only when the literary work is compared to a large body of similar texts and are in any case underpinned by the researcher's own ideological presuppositions and expectations, implicit narrative strategies also encompass absence of representatives of certain social groups in the narrative, such as women, lower social classes, ethnic and other minorities, etc.

As for rhetorical strategies, explicit rhetorical strategies for expressing power relationships encompassed, for example, titles, honorifics and forms of address in general. Indirect rhetorical strategies, on the other hand, refer to lexical choices of the speaker and encompassed features such as the level of formality or use of foreign terms.

#### **3.2. Approaches to Translating Narrative and Rhetorical Strategies for Expressing Power Relationships**

Below, the strategies in question are illustrated by examining a few of the more interesting examples. The events in *The Hungry Tide* take place in the Bay of Bengal, India, in a group of mangrove islands called Sundarbans. The three main protagonists the reader follows in the analysed section of the text are Piyali Roy, a young female American marine biologist of Bengali descent, who came to the flooding islands in

search of a rare and endangered dolphin, fisherman Fokir, who rescues Piyali after she is thrown off a boat due to a dispute with a guard assigned as her official company and whom Piyali engages as her assistant, and Kanai Dutt, a translator from New Delhi, who came to the islands to help his aunt with arranging the matters of his deceased uncle and who helps Piyali and Fokir, who have no common language. All emphases in the examples to follow are my own.

From the very opening of the novel, when Kanai sees Piya in a train station, he is characterized as a self-important city-dweller, a modern, highly-educated Indian. He has no trouble authoritatively approaching other persons and manipulating them in order to achieve what he wants. The narrator conveys Kanai's social status through a series of observations on the part of other persons in the narrative, for example:

It so happened that Kanai was carrying a wheeled airline bag with a telescopic handle. To the vendors and travelling salesmen who plied their wares on the Canning line, this piece of luggage was just one of the details of Kanai's appearance – along with his sunglasses, corduroy trousers and suede shoes – that suggested middle-aged prosperity and metropolitan affluence. As a result he was besieged by hawkers, urchins and bands of youth [...]. (Ghosh 2005:5)

Po naključju je imel Kanai letalski kovček na kolesčkih s teleskopskim ročajem. Prodajalcem in trgovskim potnikom, ki so ponujali robo na progi Canning, je ta del prtljage pomenil samo še eno izmed številnih podrobnosti na Kanaijevega videza – skupaj s sončnimi očali, žametnimi hlačami in čevlji iz semiša – ki so nakazovale na udobje srednjih let in velemestno blaginjo. Zato so ga oblegali poulični prodajalci, pobalini in gruče otročajeve [...]. (Ghosh 2008:11)

Here, the descriptive narrative strategy is translated without major microstructural shifts. We see that Kanai's class and wealth are broken down into a series of material possessions, some of which, such as the airline bag, not only distinguish him from his fellow passengers in a way that for example an expensive bag might, but also imply that he frequently travels by plane, lending Kanai a cosmopolitan air. These possessions, which are relatively familiar and accessible to the Western reader, create a sharp distinction between Kanai and the poor masses he is "besieged" by.

"Aré moshai, can I just say a word?" Kanai smiled as he bore down on his neighbour with the full force of his persuasion. (Ghosh 2005:5)

"Are mošai, ali lahko samo nekaj rečem?" Kanai se je nasmehnil, ko se je, poln svoje prepričevalne moči, sklanjal k sosedu. (Ghosh 2008:11)

In the example above, Kanai addresses a fellow older male passenger on the train with the Bengali honorific "moshai", a variant of "mohashoi", which is used to convey respect and a formal relationship with the addressee. In the translation, the

expression is only transcribed, which coincides with the norm in Slovenian translations that expressions that appear in the source text in a foreign language are retained as such in the target text, and no information on its meaning is provided to the reader. Moreover, the Slovenian wording of the question is informal, implying intimacy on Kanai's part and resulting in a translation in which the power relationship between the characters is significantly changed: from formal and polite to informal and familiar.

“Here”, said Piya, producing a handful of tissues. “Let me help you clean up” (Ghosh 2005:10)

“Izvolite”, je rekla Piya in izvlekla robčke. “Pomagala vam bom počistiti!” (Ghosh 2008:15)

This example focuses on another instance of honorific speech, in this case arising not from the use of a title, but from Slovenian grammar, which, like several other languages such as German or French, but unlike English, encodes the level of formality in the pronouns and verb forms used by the speaker in his or her utterances. In the scene above, Piya is addressing Kanai after spilling tea on his papers, before they are introduced. In English, the neutral “*here*” is used; in Slovenian, this is translated with the formal and polite “*izvolite*”. This verb form usually indicates a greater social distance between speakers; in other words, it signifies that the addressee is older or higher in status. It should be noted that there is no neutral option in Slovenian; the translator must opt for either formal or the informal verb form, an action that in any translational situation presupposes a certain level of interpretation of the source text.

Would these men have adopted the same attitude if she had been, say, a white European or a Japanese? She doubted it. Not for that matter would they have dared to behave similarly with her Kolkata cousins, who wielded the insignia of their upper-middle-class upbringing like laser-guided weaponry (Ghosh 2005:34)

Ali bi se ta moška enako obnašala do nje, če bi bila bela Evropejka ali Japonka? Dvomila je. Najbrž si ne bi upala tako obnašati do njenih sestričen iz Kolkate, ki sta med otroštvom v dokaz pripadnosti srednjemu višjemu sloju mahali naokrog z laserskimi pištolami (Ghosh 2008:37)

In the example above, Piya poses the question whether the guards would have behaved differently if she were European or Japanese, illustrating the previously made point about the fact that the issue of power relationships is closely related to the issue of identity, which is central to postcolonial criticism. The underlined section of the text features an interesting mistranslation into Slovenian – the metaphorical laser weaponry (used in the source text to illustrate the way in which Piya's cousins exhibit the signs of belonging to middle class—openly and aggressively) is translated concretely as toy laser guns, a material possession from which the reader is supposed to infer that the

children's family was well-off. In order for the sentence to make sense, the translator added that this took place in their childhood ("v otroštvu"). In addition to losing the humorous touch the author brings forward by painting a mental picture of grown women handling their class as weaponry, the reader is also deprived of the notion of the importance of class in Indian society. While it is fair to assume that the "insignia" referred to in the source text encompass not only material possessions, but include (even primarily) behaviour, social attitudes, communication patterns and knowledge, the target text narrows down the complex markers of class to children's toys.

On the walls, there were fading portraits in heavy frames; the pictures were of memsahibs in long dresses and men in knee-length breeches (Ghosh 2005:40)  
Na stenah so viseli zbledeli portreti v masivni okvirjih; na slikah so bili memsahibi v dolgih oblekah in moški v jahalnih hlačah, ki so segale do kolen (Ghosh 2008: 41)

In the final example above, also a mistranslation, we see a description of an old photograph hanging in a colonial house. The term *memsahib*, which derives from the words "madam" and "sahib" and is defined by *Merriam Webster* as referring to a white foreign woman of high social status living in India, especially the wife of a British official, is translated into Slovenian as a masculine noun. Taken together with "*in long dresses*", it implies that memsahibs are in fact male Indians, presumably in a form of local attire. As far as the target text is concerned, the chosen example somewhat obfuscates the power relationships in question: it is implied that the term memsahib is used by non-Indians to refer to Indians, instead of vice-versa. In addition, the *Oxford Dictionary* notes that the term *memsahib* is "often used as a respectful form of address by non-whites", indicating that the use of the noun is not only gender-, but also class- and race-specific.

#### 4. Conclusion

The results indicate that translating narrative and rhetorical strategies for expressing power relationships often presents an issue for the translator, as we have noted that the strategies are intertwined with and strictly dependent on cultural and linguistic contexts. Van Leuven-Zwart (1990:89) notes that previous analyses employing the method of observing the effect of microstructural shifts on the macrostructure of the translated text have indicated a tendency towards specification, citing the translators' aim to make the narrative comprehensible and accessible to the reader. While this strategy is explicitly target text oriented, the examples discussed above point towards the conclusion that the translation in question exhibits certain characteristics of source text orientation.

We have seen that with many Bengali expressions left untranslated and not commented upon in the target text in the form of footnotes or glossaries, as is the case

with the majority of comparable texts, the nuances of power relationships were frequently disguised or difficult for the reader to decode. Moreover, the linguistically necessary introduction of formal or informal verb forms added another layer of meaning to relationships of power – a formal tone to the relationship between Piya and Kenai, or an informal tone to the relationship between Kenai and the people he encountered on his travels.

The underlying reasons can in part be explained by the specific nature of the Slovenian language, for instance the syntactic and lexical distinctions between formal and polite and informal and familiar address. Certain mistranslations can be ascribed to insufficient cultural knowledge on the part of the translator and may be interpreted as indicators of sections that are more likely to puzzle the reader, just as they have the translator. Somewhat unrealistically, the employed translation strategy presupposes that the Slovenian reader will be as familiar with certain aspects of Indian culture and Bengali expressions as her or his English-speaking counterparts.

To conclude, the study shows that relatively minor shifts on the microstructural level of the translated text may result in decisive shifts in its macrostructure and consequently affect the representation of relationships of social power and power dynamics between the characters in the narrative, altering the way in which social relationships are perceived by the reader. As noted by van Dijk, “discourse and communication are crucial in the establishment, the legitimation and the reproduction of power and inequality” (1994:19) and literature represents one of the discourse genres that should be, especially because of its privileged status, subject to close critical scrutiny. This in no way intended to imply that literature and its critical consideration can or should fully shoulder the weight or even replace true social change; however, it is my firm belief that by exploring and laying bare the many shades of inequality that pervade our society, critical analysis of all forms of discourse is crucial for our understanding of how these inequalities persist and perpetuate themselves, so that they can be challenged and subverted.

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# SELLING THEIR RESEARCH: THE LINGUISTIC REALIZATION OF RHETORIC MOVES IN ENGLISH THESIS ABSTRACTS WRITTEN BY HUNGARIAN UNDERGRADUATES

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***Abstract:** Abstracts are short and dense summaries of the main aspects of academic work. Major rhetoric moves, such as the aim the research, description of the methodology, the summary of the results, are identified in 52 undergraduate theses written by Hungarian students of English. Emphasis is given to the academic lexical bundles, the use of tenses and aspects, personal pronouns, modal auxiliaries, hedging in the realization of these moves. Comparison is made between novice and experienced writers. The pedagogical implications of the findings are also discussed.*

***Keywords:** abstract, academic phrases, academic writing, rhetoric moves, undergraduates*

## 1. Introduction

Inexperienced academic writers, such as undergraduate students of English writing their thesis, are faced with multiple challenges while trying to adhere to the requirements of academic discourse. They have to attend to methodological issues, text construction, grammatical and lexical choices and referencing simultaneously, a task which is demanding in the authors' L1, let alone in an L2 as a foreign language. While students in this research show different levels of target language competence, being only at the end of their three-year BA studies, they have a high proficiency in the reading of research articles and books, as they do most of their readings for classes and research in English. Yet, the planning and writing of a thesis as long as 20-35 pages in English, as the main requirement for graduation, remain a major challenge. Previous corpus-based studies have pointed out instances of over-, under- or misuse in the lexical choices made in learners' academic texts (e.g. Hyland 2001, Martínez 2005). For example, research has found a gap between native expert academic writing and university student academic writing (both native and non-native) in terms of the use of formulaic language. L2 writers tend to over-generalize and favor certain phrases and connectors and use academic bundles less (Chen and Baker 2010, Li and Schmitt 2009). Task difficulty, lack of experience in academic text production and the availability of electronic resources may draw students to patchwriting, misuse of sources and, also, unawareness of the functions and the pragmatic and rhetoric potentials of certain lexical and structural choices they make (Pecorari 2003, Martínez 2005, Wette 2010, Weigle and Parker 2012, Petrić 2012). Student writers are often

glad to fulfill requirements by filling up pages with seemingly appropriate linguistic and structural forms, yet, are unaware of the fact that their choices carry meaning. In the case of thesis writing, students need to be familiar with the literacy practices of their chosen disciplines, and to learn that the texts they write are part of a disciplinary discussion. This is so regardless of the fact that most of the theses remain unpublished and that, in the majority of cases, their readership is limited to supervisors and other instructors.

A key element of academic texts, especially research articles, is the abstract. The abstract is usually the last item authors write, but the first or only one people read in order to gain a quick overview of the whole paper or decide to read it further. Therefore, authors need to be very precise and accurate in order to “sell” their research to their potential readers. If the abstract is unclear or does not contain key information, it is very likely that it loses readership. In short, abstracts serve as a window to the content and quality of articles or other shorter academic texts, and they are important to be studied both from the writers’ and the readers’ point of view. Abstracts are short (usually between 150 and 300 words) and provide a dense summary of the background, aims, methods, results and conclusions of the paper (Wallwork 2011). The structure or the length of the abstracts may vary according to the publishers’ or conference organizers’ guidelines. Highly structured abstracts are typical of conferences in health sciences in the case of which online application forms provide pre-set space for the different moves of the abstracts; therefore, all abstracts need to follow the same format (Bayley and Eldredge 2003). In the case of soft sciences, general guidelines are provided in terms of length or number of key words only. In all cases, abstracts, as academic genres, need to follow the conventions of academic discourse and to be formal, objective and well-structured, and to use both academic vocabulary and technical terms. Academic vocabulary points beyond the use of Coxhead’s (2000) academic word list and infers the inclusion of academic lexical phrases as main building blocks of texts.

Academic works, including research abstracts, are built of steps that construct their rhetoric or move structure. Pho (2008) identifies five main moves in research article abstracts, namely situating and presenting the research, describing the methodology and summarizing and discussing the findings. Each move can be identified according to its functions and the questions they answer (see Table 1). The author points out that move identification based on content or function should be supported by the analysis of linguistic realizations. Furthermore, rather than relying on single linguistic features, a cluster of features need to be considered. A move can be realized by textual sections as small as phrases or clauses, but usually moves follow each other in separate sentences or groups of sentences (Lorés 2004, Pho 2008).



<b>Moves</b>	<b>Functions</b>	<b>Questions to ask</b>
1. Situating the research	Setting the scene, topic generalization	What has been known about the field/topic of research?
2. Presenting the research	Setting the purpose of the study, research questions/hypotheses	What is the study about?
3. Describing the methodology	Describing the materials, subjects, variables, procedures	How was the research done?
4. Summarizing the findings	Reporting the main findings of the research	What did the research find?
5. Discussing the findings	Interpreting the results, giving recommendations, implications, applications	What do the results mean? So what?

Table 1: Framework for the analysis of move structure in abstracts (Pho 2008:234)

While most studies that investigate the moves of academic papers do not combine the analysis of moves with the study of their linguistic realization (see for the moves in introductions e.g. Hirano 2009, Sheldon 2011), a number of previous studies have focused on the linguistic features of articles, such as tense use (Malcolm 1987), personal pronouns (Harwood 2005, Martínez 2005), voice (Martínez 2001, Stotesbury 2003), vague language or hedging (Hyland 1996) and lexical phrases or bundles (Biber and Barbieri 2007, Strunkytė and Jurkūnaitė 2008). Very few studies so far have linked choices of linguistic features with rhetorical structure (see e.g. Anderson and Maclean 1997, Lorés 2004, Pho 2008, 2009).

With this perspective, the present study uses Pho's 2008 model to identify the structural organization of undergraduate thesis abstracts written by Hungarian students of English or American studies and their linguistic realization. This specific study population was chosen due to the fact that their academic writing customs have not been fully explored, although a number of previous studies have investigated the language use in essays written by Hungarian undergraduates (e.g. Horváth 2001, Lehmann 2003, Doró 2007, 2008, Zergollern-Miletić and Horváth 2009). As BA thesis writers have difficulties both with research design and writing, their thesis drafts are

usually returned by the supervisor, often several times, for language and content revision. Abstracts, in most cases, are the final steps in thesis production and are written without close supervision. Therefore, we can safely conclude that they give the most accurate picture of the students' academic writing abilities. After the identification of the macrostructure of the theses, the following linguistic features are investigated here: academic vocabulary, academic phrases, verb tense and aspect, self-reference words including the personal pronoun *I*, and finally modal auxiliaries and other forms of hedging.

## **2. Methodology**

The corpus used in this study consists of 52 abstracts taken from BA English or American studies theses written in 2011 by undergraduate students enrolled at a major Hungarian university. Students were instructed to include a 200–300 word abstract both in English and in Hungarian in their theses. The present investigation focuses on the English versions, which build an 11.345-word corpus. The move categories were first coded manually, then the linguistic features underwent both quantitative and qualitative analyses. The applied linguistics papers (n=12) and theses written in other fields (literature, culture, gender studies, history, n=40) were analyzed separately for moves as it was assumed that the linguistics papers, which all include the analysis of empirical data, might have different macrostructures from those that do not necessarily have empirical data collected by the student authors.

## **3. Results and Discussion**

### **3.1. Macrostructure of Thesis Abstracts**

The analysis of the moves revealed that the five moves identified by Pho (2008) were only partly present in the thesis abstracts. The only move that is included in all abstracts is move 2, presentation of the research. As shown in Table 2, the assumption that linguistics papers differ from the others in terms of move structure was supported. Move 1 was found by Pho to be non-obligatory and his findings were similar to those of the student papers which show even lower figures (33% for linguistics paper and 27% for the others). Move 3, methodology of the research, is mentioned in 92% and in 90% of the two subgroups, which is a slightly lower figure than the one found by Pho (2008). One would assume that the methodology move is clearly worded in thesis abstracts, emphasizing the students' own work, but this is not always so. What is more surprising is the lack of the summary of the findings in over half of the non-linguistics theses, leaving the reader puzzled as to what the author did in his or her study. Meanwhile, the findings are clearly stated in all but one applied linguistics papers. Move 5, the discussion of the results, is an option only if the results

are presented first; therefore, only half of the linguistics papers and only one culture paper provide interpretation of the findings. These are figures significantly lower than the 70% found by Pho.

<b>Moves</b>	<b>Applied ling theses (n=12)</b>	<b>Literature, culture, history theses (n=40)</b>	<b>Results of Pho (2008) (n=30)</b>
1. Situating the research	4 (33%)	11 (27%)	40%
2. Presenting the research	12 (100%)	40 (100%)	100%
3. Describing the methodology	11 (92%)	36 (90%)	97%
4. Summarizing the findings	11 (92%)	17 (42%)	100%
5. Discussing the findings	6 (50%)	1 (2.5%)	70%
6. The structure of the thesis	2 (17%)	8 (20%)	--
7. Preparatory steps	--	5 (12%)	--
8. Comments	1 (8%)	9 (22%)	--

Table 2: Move structure of thesis abstracts

It needs to be noted here that moves other than the five indicated by Pho were identified in the thesis abstracts. These are referred here as move 6, reference to the structure of the paper (see example 1), move 7, reference to the preparatory steps of the writing process (see examples 2), and move 8, comments on the topic or the thesis itself (see examples 3). These moves seem to be more appropriate in an introduction rather than a short and dense abstract, and make the author sound less professional and focused.

- (1) *Thus, I will conduct my analysis in five chapters to describe ...Finally, I will summarize my study and conclude that ...*
- (2a) *Furthermore, I collected relevant sources to describe the various methods' potentials, and in order to make the reader familiar with this interesting subject.*
- (2b) *In order to gain a background for my argumentation, I have read through a number of relevant books that deal with the literature and poetry of the age.*
- (3a) *I have been interested in America and its history for a long time. That is the reason why I picked the American Civil War as the topic of my BA thesis.*
- (3b) *I believe my thesis is an important and enjoyable one, because it contains the required amount of background needed in order to understand my argumentation without becoming too superfluous at the expense of poetic analyses.*

Although the majority of previous studies have not focused on the order of the moves, but assumed a logical flow, the analysis of the student corpus revealed a non-linearity from move 1 to move 5. Pho (2008), for example, only found a few instances of move cycles or move embedding. All thesis abstracts show reference to at least two moves, but moves often follow each other in an unexpected order or are referred to more than once. Often times, therefore, the labeling of certain sentences or passages in terms of moves is problematic. Some macrostructures that are unusual in published research articles are found, for example, in theses with move structure 2, 3; moves 2, 1, 3; moves 2, 6, 3; moves 2, 3, 2, 4, 2, 3, and moves 2, 8, 7, 8, 3.

### **3.2. Academic Words and Phrases**

Overall, the results of the analysis of academic word use revealed that 10.1% of the running words in the abstracts consist of the academic word list. This is in line with previous research that shows a close to 10% ratio of academic words in academic texts. The academic verbs that are present in the abstracts are *analyze, approach, constitute, create, define, establish, formulate, identify, imply, initiate, indicate, interpret, invoke, involve, manipulate, modify, motivate, occur, pose, predict, process, reconstruct, reinterpret, require, reveal, specify, summarize, symbolize, target, trace, transform, undertake, undergo, validate, visualize*. These and a number of other verbs, especially in the function of reporting verbs (such as *show, reveal, indicate, argue, propose*), suggest that most students have the productive knowledge of academic language. Manual coding was also done in order to identify longer lexical chunks

typical of academic texts. These academic phrases often introduce moves, which helps both the authors and the readers to identify key aspects of the abstracts. Examples for introductory phrases of move 2 are:

- (4) *The topic of my BA Thesis is the ...*  
*The aim of my thesis is to ...*  
*In this essay I discuss the ...*  
*This paper concerns ...*  
*This thesis wishes primarily to dwell on the ...*  
*The present paper is an attempt to ...*  
*This study analyses and compares...*  
*This paper provides a review of ...*

Most of the phrases in examples (4) are also found in published texts, although the first three are more typical of student writers and are less academic in style. The examples (5) provided for the introductory phrases of the results section of the abstracts all follow the conventions and rhetoric of academic discourse. In conclusion, highly academic, excellent phrases are found in all five major moves in some abstracts, while others are only partly successful in employing them.

- (5) *The thesis concludes that...*  
*The present findings suggest that ...*  
*Although more research is needed to be able to generalize these results, it can be concluded that...*

### **3.3. The Linguistic Realizations of Moves**

#### **3.3.1. Verb Tenses and Aspect**

Pho (2008) shows that the most common combinations of tense and aspect in research abstracts are present simple, past simple and present perfect. The author concludes that certain moves have typical tense and aspect combinations. The *Situating the research* move (move 1) uses present simple and present perfect, the *Presenting the research* move (move 2) present simple or past simple, the *Describing the methodology* and the *Summarizing the findings* moves (moves 3 and 4) typically employ past simple, and the *Discussing the research* move (move 5) present simple. As opposed to Pho's findings, a frequent reference to the future using the auxiliary *will* is seen in the thesis abstracts. It is possible to infer that this is not typical of published academic abstracts. Reference to the future using *will* occurs in 14 abstracts, altogether 55 times, which indicates that in some abstracts the predominant reference is to the future, which is highly problematic in sections other than move 5 when implications, applications or future directions are discussed. The constant reference to the future

suggests that student authors of these texts view their thesis as unfinished or confuse the genre of a research proposal or plan with the final product.

In the thesis corpus, the predominant tense–aspect combination for move 1 is the present simple and the present perfect, for move 2 the present and past simple, while for move 3 the present and past simple, together with reference to the future using *will* and the present perfect. Move 4 usually presents findings using the present and past simple. Most of these results are in line with previous research except for the indication of future plans.

An unjustified mixture of tenses is also seen in a number of abstracts, which again suggests uncertainty about the students' own academic work, the genre conventions or academic language use in general. Examples are seen below in (6) and (7), extracted from two abstracts.

(6) *This thesis proposes to provide an analysis of ...*  
*I am interested in how they reflect ...*  
*I concentrated on the literary techniques ...*

(7) *In my thesis I'm concentrating on ...*  
*I have read ...*  
*I enlisted ...*  
*...will be discussed in my work.*

### 3.3.2. Self-Reference Words

Self-referencing in academic texts is done through the use of the following words: *I, me, my, mine, myself, we, us, our, ours, ourselves, the author(s) and the researcher(s)*. A close examination of the thesis abstracts indicates that of these options students employ only the first person singular personal pronoun *I*. It occurs 145 times in 28 of the 52 abstracts, which shows that more than half of the students position themselves in the center of the research. It is debatable, however, whether the personal pronoun choice was a deliberate one to indicate authorial stance or rather illustrates a less academic, personal style. The analysis of the grammatical subjects reveals that noun phrases with the main words *(BA)thesis, paper, study, essay, work* are also frequently used in the abstracts.

### 3.3.3. Modal Auxiliaries and Hedging

According to Pho (2008) modals and semi-modals (such as *need to*) are usually used in move 5, the interpretation of the results and their implication or application. The other moves employ less auxiliaries and cautious language use. In the student theses, however, the modal verb *may* is found once in move 1, twice in move 2 and four times in move 5. The auxiliary *can* appears 36 times, across all moves. It is often used as a form of cautious data interpretation (...*which can be due to the lack of color*

vocabulary in English...) or as part of fixed phrases (*The present study can contribute to ...; ... it can be concluded that...; we can see that ...*). It also indicates modality (*I will show how differently it can be used, how it can fulfill different roles...*). *Need to* and *might* are not represented in the corpus, while *have to* appears twice in move 4. As discussed in the previous sub-section, there is a surprisingly high frequency rate of the auxiliary *will*.

Other forms of cautious language use and hedging are visible in the abstracts (see examples 8), especially in the choice of verbs or verb phrases, such as *intend*, *attempt*, *make an attempt*, *wish*, *tend* and *try*. Some of these verbs also indicate incomplete work, uncertainty in the aims or outcomes of the research. It is unclear whether they are deliberately used as an indicator of sophisticated lexical use without the awareness that certain lexical choices downgrade the text rather than showing expertise.

- (8) *This thesis intends to examine...*  
*Finally, an effort is made to prove that..*  
*In this paper an attempt is made to find...*  
*I wish to argue...*  
*I attempt to say that...*  
*This essay tends to prove...*  
*I try to show symbols*

#### 4. Conclusion

This study provided empirical support for the observation that great variability exists in the quality and structure of thesis abstracts written by inexperienced authors such as undergraduates. The results show the students' effort to employ the discourse of the academic community they marginally participate in.

The findings reported above suggest that there are important differences in the rhetoric organization of thesis abstracts and published research abstracts. In addition, more successful abstract writing is seen among the applied linguistics abstracts than in abstracts written in other fields. Three moves that are not typical of research article abstracts were also identified. The linguistic realization of these eight moves shows both similarities and differences compared to abstracts written by more experienced researchers. The most striking difference between novice and expert authors' texts lies in the uncertainty and unfocused writing that is visible through the mixture of move cycles, reference to the finished work as future task, hedging and frequent shifts between academic and non-academic styles. These features unquestionably "sell" research papers with less success. It is the task of future research to clarify whether similar problems occur in the theses themselves and to provide support to the

observation that poor abstract writing often announces problematic research reports and theses.

Problems of misuse may be solved by awareness raising through various means, for example, by drawing students' attention to particular lexical choices and concordances in corpora containing texts written by student or novice academic writers and those produced by expert researchers, both natives and non-natives. Lists of academic phrases may also be provided to students; however, instructors of academic writing and supervisors of novice writers should be cautious in providing models that are later overused (Coxhead and Byrd 2007). Guided or self-discovery of various lexical and rhetoric choices should be encouraged together with their functions and strategic potentials.

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SECTION FOUR:  
**LITERATURE STUDIES**

**WAYS OF REPRESENTING ACCUMULATION: THE  
ARCHIVE AND THE COLLECTION IN JONATHAN SAFRAN  
FOER'S *EVERYTHING IS ILLUMINATED* AND JOHN  
FOWLES' *THE COLLECTOR***

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***Abstract:** The paper explores the desire of accumulating in our contemporary society by analysing two processes: that of archiving and that of collecting; and how these are represented in literature, in novels such as *Everything is Illuminated*, which deals with the preservation of memory through the archive; and *The Collector*, which brings a different perspective on the act of collecting, namely, the relationship between collecting, possession and fetishism.*

***Keywords:** archive, collection, possession, tabulation, preservation.*

## **1. Introduction**

Archiving and collecting are two processes that imply storing and accumulating. In this sense, both processes are very similar to each other, more than this, they are complementary: collecting in itself implies the process of archiving, while archiving in its turn, implies the process of collecting. In what follows, I will have a look at how the archive and the collection are represented in Anglo-American literature by examining two novels: *Everything is Illuminated*, by the American author, Jonathan Safran Foer, and *The Collector*, by the British author, John Fowles. The first of the two presents the process of accumulating as Archive, but one similar to a museum, thus public; while the second presents the process of accumulating as Collection, one that is personal and private.

## **2. Accumulation in Time**

The activity of collecting can be traced back into the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when in Europe emerged the first 'wonder cabinets' or as the Germans used to call them, 'Wunderkammern,' where collectors could exhibit pieces of art and curiosities of the time. Objects were classified under the category of *naturalia*, meaning minerals, stuffed animals, plants, ethnographic artefacts, and fossils; and *artificialia* (Belk 2001:32), meaning paintings, weapons, scientific instruments, and mechanical curiosities, such as clocks and automata. Religious objects and relics were often a third and distinct type of curiosities of the cabinets.

The activity of archiving, instead, emerged later, in the nineteenth century Imperial England. With the foundation of institutions such as *The Royal Geographical Society*, *The Royal Photographic Society* and *The British Museum*; the archival industry began because of a need to gather world-wide knowledge, an amount of information which had to be synchronized and unified. This was accomplished by putting together specific forms of “*discreet, quantifiable, and tested knowledge (positive knowledge) into universal principles of aggregated data*” (Enwezor 2008:19) which included photographs, images, documents, maps, surveys, etc.

In defining the archive, we could describe it as a place filled with drawers, filing cabinets, shelves covered by tabulated and indexed documents, “an inert repository of historical artefacts.” But most importantly, the archive is the representation of the “taxonomy, classification and annotation of knowledge” (Enwezor 2008:16), which Foucault understands as a “representative historical form, defined as a filed of archaeological inquiry, a journey through time and space” (in Enwezor 2008:16).

But in the case of the collection, W. Durost presents the following, elaborate, definition:

A collection is basically determined by the nature of the value assigned to the objects, or ideas possessed. If the predominant value of an object or idea for the person possessing it is intrinsic, i.e., if it is valued primarily for use, or purpose, or aesthetically pleasing quality, or other value inherent in the object or accruing to it by whatever circumstances of custom, training, or habit, it is not a collection. If the predominant value is representative or representational, i.e, if said object or idea is valued chiefly for the relation it bears to some other object or idea, or objects, or ideas, such as being one of a series, part of a whole, a specimen of a class, then it is the subject of a collection (qtd. in Pearce 1998:2).

This means that we should make a distinction between accumulating for the collection, and between accumulating objects that we use for everyday purposes. The word ‘collecting’ comes from the Latin ‘*colligere*’ meaning ‘to select and assemble’ (Latin-Dictionary), and therefore implies selection. Accumulation per se means that things are gathered without a specific pattern, and most of the time, have a utilitarian purpose, while objects that are collected are immediately removed from everyday life, such in the case of art objects which exist for their own aesthetic sake. Collecting also implies an orientation to the cultural: it has its interest in those objects that might have some exchange value, or are objects of conservation, or of display.

Both the act of archiving and that of collecting introduce meaning, order, boundaries, coherence, and reason; and both imply making distinctions and creating categories. As Ernst van Alphen suggests, “the ordering of objects collected and

archived is ultimately a form of association, that is, a form of connecting and joining together” (2008: 66).

The difference between archiving and collecting is that in the case of the archive, it usually has an institutional purpose, as the word ‘archive’ comes from the Latin ‘*archivum*,’ and means ‘a place in which public records or historical documents are preserved; the material preserved; a repository or collection especially of information’ (Merriam-Webster); therefore, its role is of an official nature. While in the case of the collection, its purpose is a more personal and private one—it implies a person who is interested in collecting some specific items for themselves. This collection can later be institutionalized, as in the case of museums and art galleries that display usually items belonging to collectors that have been donated or bought. But as mentioned before, the two activities, that of collecting and that of archiving, are complementary: archiving implies the process of collecting items, and collecting also implies the archiving of the collected objects through tabulation and indexing.

### **3. Behind Accumulation: Power and Possession**

But let us now put the question: why archive or collect? We can find one of the answers for this question by having a look at children: between the age of seven and twelve, they are fascinated with laying down their toys, with grouping and handling them – this can be seen as a way to exercise their own control over the outer world. So in this sense, we could say that the desire to archive and collect comes from an unconscious desire for power: by collecting or archiving we are given the power to manipulate and control a micro world of our own – we can play God.

Also, the act of collecting implies possession, and by this a continuous acquisition of objects: the collector always has to acquire new things for the collection, and that’s why the collection is in a continuous growth, it is accumulating. But the desire for acquisition is generated by a ‘missing item,’ and in this way an object becomes valuable just because of its absence. For the French word ‘*objet*,’ the Littré dictionary gives the following definition: ‘Anything which is the cause or subject of passion. Figuratively and most typically: the loved object’ (in Baudrillard 1994:7). But this also implies some form of possession – if an object is invested with our passion, then that means that we desire to own it in one way or another. Therefore, possession applies to a collected object once it is divested of its function and made relative to its owner: “the object, pure and simple, divested of its function, abstracted from any practical context, takes on a strictly subjective status. Now its destiny is to be collected. Whereupon it ceases to be a carpet, a table, a compass, or a knick-knack, and instead turns into an ‘object’, or a ‘piece’” (Baudrillard 1994:8).

For example, Walter Benjamin believes that ownership is the most intimate relationship that one can have to objects, because to a book collector, every book finds

its freedom on his shelves, and therefore suggesting an investment of feelings in the collected items:

One of the finest memories of a collector is the moment when he rescued a book to which he might never have given a thought, much less a wishful look, because he found it lonely and abandoned on the market place and bought it to give it its freedom—the way the prince bought a beautiful slave girl in the Arabian Nights (1968: 64).

Also, an object depends on the fact that it is an 'I' who possesses it. This suggests a narcissistic attitude of the owner, who, in a way, finds his own reflection in his collection; therefore, we might say that it is 'oneself' that one collects: "what these collectors may be attempting is 'symbolic self completion' at times when they have lost a significant human part of their extended self. In this sense too, the drive of completing a collection is also a drive toward self completion" (Belk 2001:90).

The archivist or the collector also has a significant role in what the archive or collection's principle of organization is concerned. He arranges the items according to time and space, or the qualities of the objects themselves, what should be private and what should be public. But as Stewart remarks, by arranging the items according to time, the archivist/collector overlaps his own personal time with the historical time of the archive/collection and thus, creates a fiction of the individual life, which means escaping into a time which is both transcendent to and parallel to historical time:

The collection seeks a form of self-enclosure which is possible because of its ahistoricism. The collection replaces history with classification, with order beyond the realm of temporality. In the collection, time is not something to be restored to an origin; rather, all time is made simultaneous or synchronous within the collection's world. (1993: 151)

In this sense, we might say that the archive or the collection's function is not the restoration of a specific historical context, but rather, the creation of a new context, one that stands in a metaphorical relation to the collector's everyday life. Stewart further argues that the archetypal collection is Noah's Ark, a hermetic world which is "representative yet which erases its context origin" (1993: 152), because while the Earth is destroyed by the flood, the world of the ark remains intact. Therefore, this world should not be one of nostalgia, but one of anticipation, of forgetting the past and starting over.

#### 4. The Archive and the Collection: from Memory to Fetishism

In what follows, I will have a look at how accumulating is represented in the novels of Jonathan Safran Foer and John Fowles, who bring two different perspectives upon this issue. The first, presents the process of accumulating as Archive, meaning the preservation and tabulation of specific historical objects and documents in time; while the second presents the process of accumulating as Collection, meaning the gathering of objects for personal enjoyment.

In Foer's *Everything is Illuminated*, we are introduced to the young Jonathan, a Jewish-American writer, who travels to Ukraine in an attempt to find his grandfather's shtetl, Trachimbrod, and a person named Augustine, a woman who had saved his grandfather from the Nazis during the Second World War. In his quest, he is helped by a young Ukrainian named Alex, his grandfather, and their dog, Sammy Davis, Junior, Junior.

Their search turns out to be very difficult, because apparently, Trachimbrod is a place that no one has heard of, and the old picture which Jonathan carries with him, representing his grandfather and Augustine when they were young, proves to be of great help when they encounter an old lady, who recognizes the people in the picture. She claims that Trachimbrod was completely erased and that she is the only survivor, having as proof all the possessions that once belonged to the people of Trachimbrod gathered in her house. At first, she is believed to be Augustine, because of their high resemblance, but she claims to be, in fact her sister, Lista. A very remarkable scene of the novel is when Alex first walks into her yard:

Many clothes were lying across her yard. I am certain that they were drying after a cleaning, but they were in abnormal arrangements, and they appeared like the clothes of invisible dead bodies. I reasoned that there were many people in the white house, because there were men's clothes and women's clothes and clothes for children and even babies (Foer 2002:116).

This scene of the exterior anticipates what there is enclosed in the interior of the house. The two rooms of Lista's house are described as having many things from the floor to the ceiling: piles of clothes, hundreds of shoes of different sizes, boxes filled with items, while the walls are covered with photographs of many different people. Each box is labelled according to its content: "weddings and other celebrations," "privates: journals/diaries/sketchbooks/underwear," "silver/perfume/pin-wheels," "hygiene/spools/candles," "chess/relics/black magic," "figurines/spectacles," "darkness," "death of the first born," "dust". This description is, evidently, one of the Archive, in which objects are categorized, tabulated and preserved.

One of the functions that such an archive possesses is its ability not only to preserve objects, but also to preserve memory. Each object in the archive links the



present moment to one in the past, and by doing so, it also resurrects a specific narrative of the object. At some point in the novel, Lista exhibits the contents of a box “brimmed with many photographs, and many pieces of paper, and many ribbons, and cloths, and queer things like combs, rings, and flowers” (Foer 2002:151), which is labelled ‘remains.’ When extracting, for example, ‘Miriam’s clip,’ the story of Miriam comes into Lista’s mind, and she begins remembering and narrating her story: how Miriam was a very active girl, who would not sit down because “she was always loving to do things” (Foer 2002: 152); and how she once found her clip under her pillow and realised that she was keeping it there because she would hold it all night in order not to suck her thumb.

Also, when extracting Baruch’s photograph, Lista begins narrating his story, and how he would sit in front of the library all day long, or take books out of the library without being able to read. The photograph plays a very important role in the process of archiving, because it is not just an object that is being archived, but also an archive in itself. As Enwezor remarks, the photograph is “an archival record, document and pictorial testimony of the existence of a recorded fact, an excess of the seen” (2008:12).

But if we were to have a closer look at Lista’s archive, we would dare to say that it is more than an archive, it is in fact a museum in itself, a museum of the Holocaust, probably the one that Hitler intended to create by archiving the belongings of the Jewish people. For the Nazis, even people were seen as items of archiving: when they were taken to labour camps, they would have numbers tattooed on their arms, transforming them from individuals into objects recognized by numbers. Like Ernst van Alphen observes, “like objects in an archive or museum, the inscription classified them as traceable elements within a collection. Upon entering the camps they were also sorted into groups: men with men, women with women; children, the elderly, and pregnant women went to gas chambers”(2008:67).

On the other hand, in Fowles’ *The Collector*, we are presented the character Frederick Clegg, an amateur lepidopterist who wants to add to his collection a new and strikingly different item: that of the art student, Miranda Grey. Because of the collector’s personal passion for the object of the collection, we are faced in this case with the process of accumulating as Collection.

Clegg’s collection is arranged in drawers, according to species, like for example ‘Chalkhill and Adonis Blues,’ ‘var. ceroneus Adonis,’ ‘var. tithonus Chalkhills;’ but he expresses his desire and ambition of adding some new and more valuable pieces, like the ‘Swallowtail,’ the ‘Black Hairstreak,’ the ‘Large Blue,’ ‘rare Fritillaries like the Heath and the Glanville;’ and later, the woman he becomes obsessed with. His infatuation with Miranda begins by following and watching her, like the way a lepidopterist observes the butterflies:

Seeing her always made me feel like I was catching a rarity, going up to it very careful, heart-in-mouth as they say. A Pale Clouded Yellow, for instance. I always thought of her like that, I mean words like elusive and sporadic, and very refined—not like the other ones, even the pretty ones. More for the real connoisseur. (Fowles 2)

He realises that the only way he could collect this ‘rare species’ is by kidnapping her, so after buying a van and a house at the country side, Clegg waits for Miranda one evening when she comes out of the cinema. He captures her, using a rag soaked in chloroform, ties her up in his van, takes her to his house, and locks her in the basement room. After performing this act, Clegg feels that: ‘it was like catching the Mazarine Blue again or a Queen of Spain Fritillary’ (Fowles 12).

His desire to collect Miranda can be seen as the artist’s desire to bring his art to life, like in the Pygmalion myth; in the collector’s case, paradoxically enough, to bring his collection to life. He wants to pin down Miranda, which, in a sense, would imply to kill her; but in the same time, he wants her alive, because her beauty stands in being alive. Clegg’s desire of possessing such an item as Miranda, can also be seen as a form of fetishism, because as fetishism, it implies ‘a targeting of a privileged item’ and ‘its inability to grasp the supposed item of desire’ (Baudrillard 1994:19). This fetishism is manifested in his desire to take photographs of Miranda in erotic positions, like having her tied up to the bed, or half naked, but excluding the possibility of sexual intercourse.

The fact that Miranda dies in the end of pneumonia, can be seen as the end that had awaited her as part of Clegg’s butterfly collection – she has finally been pinned down. And dying of lung disease can be seen as the equivalent of the pinching of a butterfly through its thorax, which is the best way of killing Lepidoptera before storing them. Also, she has found her place like all the other butterflies of his collection that are kept in drawers—she is in a box, under the apple trees. But Miranda is not the last item to complete Clegg’s collection: he has already spotted another interesting ‘species,’ a shop girl who resembles Miranda very well.

## 5. Conclusion

In comparing the two novels, *Everything is Illuminated* and *The Collector*, we can see that in the first one, we are presented the process of accumulating seen as Archive, even as a museum, one that is strongly related to memory and the past, one that is static, finalized, public—open to the viewers. While in the case of the second, we have the process of accumulating seen as Collection, one that is influenced by the desire of possession of the collector, one that is dynamic, we could also say ‘animated,’ and most important: unfinished— therefore, related to the future, but in the same time, private.

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## **TRISTRAM SHANDY – THE PLAYFUL ART OF SEDUCTION**

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**Abstract:** *The main concern of a skilled storyteller is not to report a sequence of events, but to tell a ‘tellable’ story and to ward off the question ‘so what?’ coming from the listener. However, what happens when the story has little to recommend it as ‘tellable’? This is the case of Tristram Shandy who uses sexuality as elaborate rhetorical strategy to constantly tease and arouse his narratees’ imagination.*

**Keywords:** *tellability, sexuality, rhetoric, anticipatory constituents*

### **1. Introduction**

In Laurence Sterne’s novel, *Tristram Shandy* uses sexuality as an elaborate rhetorical strategy to constantly tease and arouse his narratees’ imagination. Thus, his narrative becomes a continuous foreplay with the narratees in which language and sexuality become markers of creativity. In the absence of a story proper, sex is the driving force which can justify the *tellability* of the narrative and seduce the narratees into reading or listening to it.

The relationship between narrator and narratee has been approached from various angles in Laurence Sterne’s *Tristram Shandy*. It is enough to mention Booth’s (1983:221-240) already classical discussion of this novel in *The Rhetoric of Fiction* or Helen Ostovich’s (2006:171-190) analysis of the relationship between Tristram and his female reader. However, little attention has been paid to the rhetorical strategies used by Tristram in order to charm his narratees. For this reason, I will need to resort to conversational storytelling, a branch of rhetorical narratology, which stresses the interactive part of storytelling and sees it as a matter of negotiation between addresser and addressee. At a first glance, as far as *Tristram Shandy* is concerned, using conversational storytelling may seem inappropriate given the fact that, even though it is not identical to oral storytelling, conversational storytelling is still closely connected to it. However, I consider that Sterne’s novel textually recreates a storytelling event in which the main protagonists are Tristram, the narrator and his diverse narratees. Throughout the novel, Tristram, as he himself confesses, also attempts to turn writing into conversation: “WRITING, when properly managed (as you may be sure I think mine is) is but a different name for conversation” (Sterne 1996:75). Apart from conversational storytelling, but still closely connected to it, there is the rhetoric of text which helps me identify what rhetorical devices are used to capture the narratee’s attention and how they are expressed textually.

## 2. Sexuality – A Clever Way to Justify *Tellability*

Skilful storytellers know how to ‘dress up’ and ‘arrange’ their stories to make them appealing and worth listening to. Therefore, according to conversational storytelling, *tellability* is one major characteristic of all stories, whether written or oral. *Tellability* states that “a story must be ‘reportable’ or ‘tellable’: [a] would-be narrator must be able to defend the story as relevant and newsworthy to get and hold the floor and escape censure at its conclusion” (Norrick 2007:134). Similarly, Labov (1972:366) argues that the main concern of a skilled narrator may not be to report a sequence of events, but to tell a ‘tellable’ story and to ward off the question ‘so what?’ coming from the listener. Culler (2001:206) uses Labov’s theory in his discussion of the narratological distinction between story and discourse. Hence, storytellers or narrators order the events, not necessarily in a temporal sequence, but so as to keep the listeners’ or narratees’ attention alert. They also frequently embed in their stories indirect or direct evaluative comments that are part of the discourse or plot and that establish the worth of their story. *Tellability* is also a very paradoxical characteristic: some stories are not worth telling, holding little significance for the potential listeners, others fall into what Norrick (2007:136) called “the dark side of *tellability*”. In the latter category, Norrick includes so-called “transgressive stories”; namely stories that are too intimate, sexually revealing, deviant, too frightening, or they stray too far from community standards.

Apparently, Tristram’s story is not much of a story; the actual tale never materializes. In other words, it barely reaches the lower-bounding threshold of *tellability*. The two main protagonists are the storyteller and his audience, but we have no story, or only a minimal one that can be summed up in just a few words. Actually, Tristram is more of a performer than a storyteller or a writer, focused more on the how of the story and less on the story as such. He is more concerned with what Jeffrey Williams (1998:24-51) calls the plot of narrating (digressions, regressions, progressions) than with the plot proper. Moreover, the plot of narrating makes Tristram’s discourse performative. His exclusive focus on his persona as a performer becomes clear in the improvisational nature of his relationship with the narratees. He frequently toys with them, going from excessive flattery to mockery. In fact, Tristram’s performance is the equivalent of today’s one man show. He is the eighteenth century variant of the stand-up comedian, “the giddy and flexible entertainer, always dynamically involved with his audience and his material, in danger every moment of losing the sympathy of the one and his control over the other” (Piper 1965:17).

Tristram couples his excessive verbosity and performance with his sexual energy. Hence, his subversive nature is reflected in his way of justifying *tellability* by choosing sex both as a transgressive plot and a rhetorical device. Sexuality as a driving force for Tristram’s narrative is present on three levels –in the plot proper, the dialogue between narrator and narratee, and in the telling of the story. However, sex is never

overtly alluded to, only hinted at using innuendoes, allusiveness, or double-entendres. Sex is implicitly present and its various guises are more or less subtle. As usual, Tristram walks a tightrope: he exploits to the maximum his narratees' need for the lewd without overtly breaking community standards. He is aware that even his most prudish narratees (the respected Sir or the stern Critic) have two ears: one that craves for the bawdy and another that is repelled by it.

In the plot proper, one has, first of all, the opening scene, called by Andrew Wright (1969:212) "flagrante delicto". It is the scene in which Tristram turns his narratees into voyeurs looking at his parents as they are actually in the process of conceiving him.

I wish either my father or my mother, or indeed both of them, as they were in duty both equally bound to it, had minded what they were about when they begot me. (Sterne 1996:5)

This very scene sets the tone for the whole book. Automatically, these words plunge Tristram's narratees into a world of intimacy. The conversation between narrator and narratee becomes a private, intimate one, opened up to all possibilities.

Another erotic scene appears in Book Eight, Chapter 22, when Trim tells his master, Tristram's uncle Toby, how he fell in love with a young Beguine who nursed the knee-wound he received in battle. At the time he found shelter in the house of two peasants where he encountered the fair nun. In order to alleviate his pain, one afternoon, as the old man and his wife were gone, the Beguine came into his room to rub his knee.

The fair Beguine, said the corporal, continued rubbing with her whole hand under my knee—till I fear'd her zeal would weary her—I would do a thousand times more,' said she, 'for the love of Christ'—In saying which, she pass'd her hand across the flannel, to the part above my knee, which I had equally complain'd of, and rubb'd it also. I perceiv'd, then, I was beginning to be in love—

As she continued rub-rub-rubbing—I felt it spread from under her hand, an' please your honour, to every part of my frame—

The more she rubb'd, and the longer strokes she took—the more the fire kindled in my veins—till at length, by two or three strokes longer than the rest—my passion rose to the highest pitch—I seiz'd her hand—. (Sterne 1996:405)

Most certainly, Tristram's readers are left to believe that 'the rubbing of the knee' is an erotic euphemism, brimming with sexual connotations. The context is highly suggestive, starting with the many pauses that punctuate Trim's story and ending with words such as "zeal", "strokes", "the highest pitch", and, of course, "passion". However, similarly to the majority of Tristram's embedded tales, this erotic anecdote is left suspended, much to the readers' frustrations. Uncle Toby

impatiently cuts short Trim's account, which is clearly approaching a sexual climax, by saying "And then thou clapped'st it to thy lips, Trim, said my uncle Toby—and madest a speech" (1996:405).

Another seemingly innocent story is that of Hafen Slawkenbergius, a man equipped with a huge nose admired by both women and men. The story comes after Tristram's explanation of how nature has mischievously equipped his ancestors and, in particular, the male line of the house with small noses. Following this injustice, Tristram's grandfather has been required by his wife to pay a sum of three hundred pounds a year. The reason she put forward was, namely, that he had "little or no nose" at all. Therefore, before going further, the narrator intends to clarify things by giving a clear definition of as trifling a word as 'nose':

I define a nose, as follows, — intreating only beforehand, and beseeching my readers, both male and female, of what age, complexion and condition soever, for the love of God and their own souls, to guard against the temptations and suggestions of the devil, and suffer him by no art or wile to put into my definition. — For by the word Nose, throughout all this long chapter of noses, and in every other part of my work, where the word Nose occurs, I declare, by that word I mean a Nose, and nothing more, or less. (Sterne 1996:150)

However, by emphatically insisting on the word, occurring five times and three times with a capital letter in the above passage, things obviously turn differently. While pretending to escape popular undertones, Tristram is the one who plays the role of the tempting devil. Therefore, Tristram uses the "devious art of suggestion that manages to insinuate exactly what it purports to deny" (Furst 1988:189). The narratee is thus openly encouraged to replace the word 'nose' by the male organ each time it appears throughout the long chapter of noses and everywhere else in the book. This example is representative of the manner in which narratees are often encouraged to understand Tristram's words tendentiously rather than neutrally.

When it comes to the chapter "upon whiskers" (Sterne 1996: 242), Tristram gives the appearance of sexual innuendos where there are none, creating a context in which the word 'whiskers' becomes indecent and overladen with sexual overtones.

—Whiskers! cried the queen of Navarre, dropping her knotting ball, as La Fosseuse uttered the word—Whiskers, madam, said La Fosseuse, pinning the ball to the queen's apron, and making a courtesy as she repeated it. La Fosseuse's voice *was naturally soft and low*, yet 'twas an articulate voice: and every letter of the word Whiskers fell distinctly upon the queen of Navarre's ear—Whiskers! cried the queen, laying a greater stress upon the word, and as if she had still distrusted her ears—Whiskers! replied La Fosseuse, repeating the word a third time—There is not a cavalier, madam, of his age in Navarre, continued the maid of honour, pressing the

page's interest upon the queen, that has so gallant a pair—Of what? cried Margaret, smiling—Of whiskers, said La Fosseuse, with infinite modesty. (Sterne 1996:242)

Actually, whiskers and especially a pair of them have no apparent correspondent. But since the word “whiskers” is often preceded by a dash, suggesting pause and hesitancy and by such words as “thin gauze”, “desire”, “a voice naturally soft and low”, all pointing to a possible erotic euphemism, readers tend to apply the same reasoning they used for the ‘nose story’ and attempt to find a sexual equivalent for whiskers. Additionally, characters’ mixture between exaggerated pathos and prudishness, when it comes to whiskers, evokes indecent connotations. Not to mention that the word is also capitalised and thus foregrounded.

As stated before, sexuality exceeds the plot and permeates the dialogue between narrator and narratee. For Ruth Perry (2002:51), following Freud’s and Lacan’s theories, language and sexuality coexist. According to the same author, “sex was just another language and language just another form of sex” and “all the conversations in *Tristram Shandy* are sexual” (Perry 2002:51-52).

The most dynamic, flirtatious, and agonistic relationship between narrator and narratee in Sterne’s novel is that between Tristram and his female reader. He continuously teases her with sexual innuendoes and then tenderly and coquettishly addresses her as “my dear girl”. He chides her for her wild imagination and then suggests that Satan is playing with her imagination. According to Helen Ostovich (2006:180), Tristram is hypersensitive to Madam’s sexuality by constantly warning her against potentially obscene episodes in the narrative, often implying that his imagination is pure, while hers is prurient. His protest that noses are mere noses is a case in point (Ostovich 2006:180). However, Satan is in fact Tristram himself, tantalizing his narratees with the promise of bawdy stories.

Now don't let Satan, my dear girl, in this chapter, take advantage of any one spot of rising ground to get astride of your imagination, if you can any ways help it; or if he is so nimble as to slip on—let me beg of you, like an unback'd filly, to frisk it, to squirt it, to jump it, to rear it, to bound it—and to kick it, with long kicks and short kicks, till like Tickletohy's mare, you break a strap or a crupper, and throw his worship into the dirt.—You need not kill him.— (Sterne 1996:155)

### **3. Sex as Rhetoric**

However, most importantly, sexuality, as a driving force for Tristram’s narrative, is present in the telling of the story too. There is a close relationship between rhetoric and eroticism, what we may call ‘textual erotics’, because the rhetoric construction of a narrative invites its audience to follow a certain trajectory of desire (Scholes et al. 2006:208). Peter Brooks (1984:37) argues that the reading of plot is a



form of desire that carries us forward and urges us to finish the text. We may talk about the desire to tell, to subjugate, and seduce the listener and the desire to listen and to be implicated in “the thrust of a desire that never can quite speak its name” (Brooks 1984:61). Goody (2007:30) also makes the connection between storytelling and seduction: “[telling] a story, creating one’s fictional biography or personal life, is part of many a courting encounter. The story and its telling either seduce or prevent seduction, as with Shaharazad and Sinbad”. Hence, one of the most important attributes of the storyteller is to captivate and enthrall his public and to make sure that his story is a success. Tristram’s narrative is a very long foreplay with his narratee in which language is brimming with sexual tension: double-entendres, innuendoes, and asterisks to mark omissions of possibly indecent words (aposiopesis). Such a narrative postpones through various tricks any satisfaction of the reader’s curiosity.

How does one translate sexuality into rhetoric or, more specifically, what rhetoric strategies does Tristram use to seduce his various narratees? One rhetorical device is the use of *anticipatory constituents*. Geoffrey Leech and Mick Short (2007:181) introduce and discuss these constituents in the syntax, thus by an *anticipatory constituent*, they mean any subordinate or dependent constituent which is non-final. Their main function is “to bring an element of suspense into the syntax” (Leech and Short 2007:182). One of the examples given by Leech and Short to illustrate how an anticipatory constituent work in the sentence is: “[that they have suffered through negligence] is the truth” (2007: 181). However, what I argue here is that the use of this rhetorical device can be extended to the whole narrative too. Due to the fact that they anticipate a certain key moment in the novel, before that moment actually happens, they are part of the discourse or plot. A good storyteller uses *anticipatory constituents* to create suspense and to grab the listener’s attention. As it will be seen, Tristram overuses this rhetorical device and instead of creating suspense, it has the opposite effect, it dilutes the narrative and postpones the satisfaction of the narratees’ desire; the desire to listen and the desire for closure.

The narrator continuously teases his narratees with the promise of lewd stories. This is one major trick he uses to justify *tellability*, with the risk of falling into the dark side of *tellability*. However, his stories stay in the realm of allusiveness and innuendoes, they never become explicit.

No wonder I itch so much as I do, to get at these amours—They are the choicest morsel of my whole story! and when I do get at ’em—assure yourselves, good folks—(nor do I value whose squeamish stomach takes offence at it) I shall not be at all nice in the choice of my words!—and that’s the thing I have to declare. (Sterne 1996:236)

Superlatives like “choicest” or the assurance he gives to his narratees that they are going to listen to something absolutely outrageous are all meant to arouse their curiosity and keep them prisoners of this narrative. Two hundred pages later, he still

does not deliver the “choicest morsel” of his story (the love affair between the widow Wadman and uncle Toby). Ironically, after a long line of such assurances, Tristram changes his mind and asks his narratees to write the story for him. He again tantalises his readership with the existence of a “choicest morsel” at the disposal of the storyteller. His confession that he has hastened to this part of the story with earnest desire is plain irony, since all he has ever done is to delay the moment as much as possible; he willingly gets lost in various digressions.

Let us drop the metaphor.

—And the story too—if you please: for though I have all along been hastening towards this part of it, with so much earnest desire, as well knowing it to be the choicest morsel of what I had to offer to the world, yet now that I am got to it, any one is welcome to take my pen, and go on with the story for me that will—I see the difficulties of the descriptions I’m going to give—and feel my want of powers. (Sterne 1996:443)

In fact, one may argue that Tristram’s narrative is all based on the anticipatory factor; he anticipates more than he can or will actually deliver. As stated, all his narrative is a constant foreplay with the narratee, offering little or no satisfaction of the latter’s curiosity. He continuously promises to deliver the story of his birth and he does it only late in the novel. This is also the case of the much promised chapter on ‘whiskers’ and ‘buttons’, all overtly advertised as erotic euphemisms. Multiple meanings and sexual overtones intensify Tristram’s ‘intercourse’ with his narratees. Ostovich argues that the physical presence of the readers in Sterne’s novel, Tristram’s disputatious conversations with them, and his “sly combination of indecorously overlapping meanings” (2006:174) encourage a different type of literary intercourse with the reader. In fact, if we extrapolate Tristram’s almost erotic relationship with Madam Reader to the reading of the whole novel, the act of reading itself becomes sexual, in which the readers’ desire for closure is seldom if ever fulfilled. One can even venture to say that at the core of the novel there is no sex but the promise of sex.

*Anticipatory constituents* function also as evaluative comments, abstracts, or trailers that can justify ‘tellability’. To put it simply, *anticipatory constituents* advertise for a story. Even negative, evaluative words, many times coupled with sexual innuendos, can tease the reader more than positive superlatives.

when a single word and no more uttered from the opposite side of the table drew every one’s ears towards it—a word of all others in the dictionary the last in that place to be expected—a word I am ashamed to write—yet must be written—must be read—illegal—uncanonical—guess ten thousand guesses, multiplied into themselves—rack—torture your invention for ever, you’re where you was—In short, I’ll tell it in the next chapter. (Sterne 1996:222, my emphasis)

These stories are often far from their trailers and their endings are anti-climactic. This is in fact the case of the much advertised love affair between uncle Toby and Mrs. Wadman, which ends in comic bathos since Toby is sexually impaired. As stated, the tales Tristram constantly promises to deliver seldom materialise (one story that never gets to be told is the one about the right and wrong end of a woman). Actually, the discussion could be extended to the whole novel since there is considerable debate about whether *Tristram Shandy* has an open ending or is just unfinished due to the fact that its author died.

However, when some of these stories do materialise after many pages or chapters, Tristram flouts *the memory principle*, which states that the burden on the reader's immediate syntactic memory should be reduced "by avoiding major *anticipatory constituents*" (Leech and Short 2007:184). The principle reflects a constraint which affects the listener or the reader. In other words, the more Tristram postpones his stories, the more his narratees are likely to forget all about them.

If the narratees are baffled by Tristram's rhetorical gymnastics (judging after his repeated entreaty "bear with me"), the 'real' readers or mock readers expect Tristram to digress and never finish the story. This is part of the game; the readers distance themselves from the narratees and laugh with Tristram and Sterne at their expense. They know deep down that there is no juicy love affair between Toby and the widow since the former is sexually impaired. The contractual nature of storytelling, which stipulates that a storyteller has to deliver a story while the listener/reader has certain obligations too, takes a different dimension when isolated from the context of the book. The reader expects Tristram to continuously flout all storytelling rules: if he did not do so, he would breach the contract.

#### **4. Conclusion**

In the absence of a story proper, Tristram, the playful narrator of his life story has to resort to other tricks in order to make his autobiography 'tellable'. Hence, Tristram embeds in his narrative stories full of not-so-subtle sexual overtones, reminding the reader of Boccaccio's *Decameron*. Additionally, sexual innuendoes suffuse the conversation between Tristram and his various narratees, especially Madam Reader. However, most importantly, sexuality or eroticism becomes an important rhetorical strategy that, through the use of *anticipatory constituents*, invites the narratees to follow a certain trajectory of desire.

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# THE IMPOSSIBLE TRADITION OF THE PINDARIC ODE IN ENGLAND

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***Abstract:** The “burden of the past” (W. J. Bate) has persistently remained in the focus of poets’ attention across various periods of the history of Western poetry. Questions of tradition, historical belatedness, and “anxieti[es] of influence” (H. Bloom) have fueled both theorists and practitioners of poetry. The English Pindaric tradition confronts these questions uniquely. It has shown consciousness of its own historicity from the beginning. The vocation of the Pindaric poet and his relation to the inimitable master, Pindar, persist as central themes throughout the reception history. They contribute to the evolution of a tradition where poets increasingly question the possibility of autonomous poetic creation.*

***Keywords:** form, irregularity, Pindaric ode, poetic vocation, tradition*

## 1. Introduction

In the history of the English ode, the Pindaric has made a significant contribution both to the thematic and formal characteristics of that genre. Surprisingly, these contributions are largely based on a misunderstanding of the meter and line structure of Pindar’s odes. Two aspects, real or perceived, of the original Pindaric poetry, nevertheless, persisted in the nearly two hundred years of the English reception history. One of these is the authority of the divinely legitimized poetic voice, which is emulated in the early stages of the tradition and framed as a source of vocational anxiety later. In terms of form, Pindar’s legacy survived in a rapturous presentation of elevated subject matter usually in irregular stanzas, or alternatively, in regular stanzas strongly suggesting irregularity. In outlining the main stages of the English Pindaric tradition, I would like to draw attention to a unique paradox underlying this history; that insofar as works of art within a tradition may be said to emulate their predecessors, or to be in dialogue with them, the English Pindaric tradition problematizes why such an emulation or dialogue with Pindar had become increasingly impossible.

## 2. Pindar’s Epinician Odes

Pindar’s *epinikai*, or victory songs, were written in celebration of athletic victories. Though the poems ostensibly immortalize individual athletic achievements, they do so by exposing “the special significance of the occasion ... not only to the

victor, but to the rest of the audience” (Nisetich 1990:42). The wider significance of the individual achievement derives from its relation to the mythical past in which the poet embeds the athletic victory. The task of the poem is to reveal those connections and parallels between victory and myth, victor and gods, the ephemeral event and immortality that make the event itself worth committing to its literary afterlife. The frequent transitions between the present and the past most probably did not present any difficulty for the original audience, for whom the various thematic elements of the epinician poem – the celebration of the victor, his family, and city; the mythological and religious reflections; and the gnomic statements – were well-known formulas (Nisetich 1990:40, 44). This is probably also the reason why the poet could afford to compress his thoughts instead of fully elaborating them, and in this way tailor the text to the requirements of the performance. A lengthy, detailed presentation of ideas would not have fitted well with a danced and sung choral performance (Nisetich 1990:47). Pindar scholars often point out that because contemporary readers are not familiar with the thematic and structural formulas and because we do not have any comparable experience of danced and sung poetry, Pindar’s odes have come to present the kind of difficulty that is only surmountable with specialist knowledge.

The meter of Pindar’s odes has been a source of misconceptions throughout the reception history. The highly complex meter of the poems, sometimes Aeolic and sometimes Doric, was not fully understood when the first editions in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries B.C. were produced. The imperfect understanding of the meter and, as a result, the imperfect line-division of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century edition by Aristophanes of Byzantium remained authoritative down to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Characteristic of Pindar’s style was the occasional long line, which in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century edition was broken into shorter sections that sometimes ended in mid-word. Because of the presence of these unexplained and seemingly arbitrary short lines, Pindar’s poems suggested for many early imitators, first, that the poet of the *epinikai* enjoyed a freedom of poetic expression that defied metrical constraints, and second, that the poems are expressive of the state of divine inspiration in which they were ostensibly composed (Nisetich 1990:13-21).

Pindar’s victory odes were written in triads, i.e. in groups of three stanzas where the first stanza is called the *strophe* or *turn*, the second stanza the *antistrophe* or *counterturn*, and the third stanza the *epode* or *stand*. The lines of the strophe may be of varying lengths but the corresponding lines of each strophe and antistrophe are metrically identical. The lines of the epode show a metrical pattern altogether different from the rhythm of the corresponding lines of the strophe and antistrophe (Nisetich 1990:34).

### 3. Restoration and Neoclassical Reception

The condensed, para-tactical style of Pindar's poetry and the incorrect colometry of its early editions lie at the heart of the subsequent Pindaric fashion in England. Already at the earliest stages of the reception history, these aspects had falsely been interpreted as stylistic and formal manifestations of divinely inspired poetry. In reality, however, what appeared as irregular had in fact been composed in accordance with rules that had, soon after Pindar's death, become obsolete (Fränkel 1975:425-426). The para-tactical style is at war with logic only if the reader is not able to anticipate the elided steps of the argumentation, and the line-division suggested formal irregularity only because the correct meter escaped the editors. Neither of these 'mistakes' is derivative from an intrinsic quality in the poetry itself but much rather from the extrinsic condition of its anteriority.

In the English reception, the Pindaric influence is usually correlated either with formal irregularity or a regular form which, nevertheless, imitates an irregular, capricious line structure. Although Pindaric influences can be found already in the Renaissance ode, most notably in Ben Jonson's "To the Immortall Memorie, and Friendship of that Noble Paire, Sir Lucius Cary, and Sir H. Morrison" (1640), the Pindaric did not make a lasting effect until Abraham Cowley published his collection of "Pindarique Odes Written in Imitation of the Stile and Manner of the Odes of Pindar" in 1656. Cowley's publication consisted both of a theoretical treatise on the question of translation as well as poetic illustrations of it, and may, therefore, be seen as the first systematic attempt to domesticate the genre in England. The preface on translation immediately draws attention to the difficulties arising from the historicity of the enterprise:

If a man should undertake to translate *Pindar* word for word, it would be thought that one *Mad man* had translated another ... We must consider in *Pindar* the great difference of time betwixt his age and ours, which changes, as in *Pictures*, at least the *Colours of Poetry*, the no less difference betwixt the *Religions* and *Customs* of our Countryes, and a thousand particularities of places, persons, and manners, which do but confusedly appear to our Eyes at so great a distance. And lastly, ... we must consider that our Ears are strangers to the Musick of his *Numbers*. (Cowley 1905:155)

Without considering the historical, religious, cultural, and poetic differences between present and past, the translation would implicate both the original poet and his translator as mad men. Neither a literal translation, nor a poetic paraphrase is a viable option for Cowley because the literal meaning of Pindar's poems is not immediately accessible for the modern reader. Cowley's solution for this impasse is to adapt the style of the epinician odes to the modern context: preserve everything from the past that is still meaningful, abandon all that have lost meaning, and supply the losses with

comparable parallels from the present:

[A]fter all these losses sustained by *Pindar*, all we can adde to him by our wit or invention (not deserting his subject) is not like to make him a *Richer man* than he was in his *own Country* ... Upon this ground, I have in these two *Odes of Pindar* taken, left out, and added what I please; nor make it so much my aim to let the Reader know precisely what he spoke, as what was his *way* and *manner* of speaking ... This *Essay* is but to try how it will look in an *English habit* ... (Cowley 1905:155-156)

As Carol Maddison suggested, Cowley's Pindar turns out as a 17<sup>th</sup> century English voice adjusted to the aesthetic norms of the Restoration period. Pindar's para-tactical style, perceived as a mark of immediate divine vision, is replaced in the translation with "carefully concatenated pieces of arguments", and the apparent formal irregularity of the original poems is suggested in metrically irregular, but nevertheless, rhyming lines (Maddison 1960:372). In other words, Cowley substituted the logical and formal freedom that was associated with Pindar's poems for logical rigor and a controlled formal irregularity.

Cowley's adaptations of Pindar's *Olympian 2* and *Nemean 1*, his own poems written in Pindar's style, and most importantly the new irregular form made an extraordinary impact in the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The Pindaric became a widely popular genre. Contemporary criticism, as expressed in the words of John Norris of Bemerton, considered it "the highest and most magnificent kind of writing in verse; and consequently fit only for great and noble subjects" (qtd. in Rothstein 1981:7). But in reality, the irregular form of the Pindaric was used "for so many purposes that the genre lost its specific force and meaning" (Rothstein 1981:7). With the exception of Dryden's odes, Restoration-era Pindarics written after Cowley largely failed to achieve canonical status, and by the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century the irregular ode seemed to have taken a turn towards decline.

William Congreve was the first to protest against the deflation of the genre, though his first attempts at the Pindaric – "Upon a Lady's Singing" (1692) and "Ode to the King on the Taking of Namure" (1695) – reflect Cowley's influence in the irregularity of form. In 1706, Congreve published a new Pindaric poem written in Pindar's triadic structure – "A Pindarique Ode Humbly offer'd to the Queen On the Victorious Progress of Her Majesty's Arms, under the Conduct of the Duke of Marlborough" – together with "A Discourse on the Pindarique Ode." The "Discourse" offers a revised description of the formal and metrical structure of Pindar's epinician odes, and hopes to serve as a corrective to the formal misconceptions in the tradition. The irregular ode – what it had become in the wake of Cowley's influence – offended Congreve's aesthetic sensibility both because complete formal and metrical irregularity were now considered aesthetic monstrosities and because the premise from which they had first been derived turned out to be false:



The Character of these late Pindariques, is a Bundle of rambling incoherent Thoughts, express'd in a like parcel of irregular Stanza's, which also consist of such another Complication of disproportion'd, uncertain and perplex'd Verses and Rhimes ... On the contrary, there is nothing more regular than the Odes of Pindar, both as to the exact Observation of the Measures and Numbers of his Stanza's and Verses, and the perpetual Coherence of his Thoughts. (Congreve 1706)

Where the aesthetic of the irregular ode saw formal freedom as a necessary consequence of treating "great and noble ideas," Congreve finds a necessary correlation between the absence of formal regularity and thematic chaos. The freedom of the poet's manner of expression, in other words, is not necessitated by his desire to articulate noble ideas that defy formal and metrical rules. Such a freedom, instead, reveals only incoherence, and it may even be suspected to actively generate it. Congreve's "Discourse," to my knowledge, is the first published text in English which points to the historic misunderstandings of Pindar's meter and para-tactic style which had, nevertheless, played such a formative role in the reception history.

Edward Young was another major voice in the 18<sup>th</sup> century in favor of regularizing the Pindaric. Though Young's poems do not observe the triadic structure of Pindar's poems, they are monostrophic odes which retain the same metrical pattern in each stanza. What is interesting in Young's formal regularity is that it nevertheless gives the impression of an irregular line structure. His Pindaric odes typically use a six-line iambic stanza, where the third and sixth lines are longer tetra- or pentameter lines, whereas the first, second, fourth, and fifth lines are shorter di- or tetrameter lines. The visual effect of these stanzas is of a wavelike movement, suggestive of the stormy commotion and uncontrollable natural powers that the poems use as a metaphorical frame of reference. The visual association is also motivated by the subject matter Young likes to define, somewhat pedantically, in the titles: "Ocean: An Ode" (1730), "The Merchant. A Naval Lyrick: Written in Imitation of Pindar's Spirit. On the British Trade, and Navigation" (1730).

Both "Ocean" and "The Merchant," like Congreve's "Pindarique Ode," were published with theoretical para-texts, which suggests that the Pindaric at this time still did not recover from the bad reputation the irregular Restoration ode had earned for it, and that it was still a highly contested genre, which needed theoretical propping whichever form – irregular, regular triadic, or regular monostrophic – it took. "On Lyrick Poetry," which Young prefixed to "Ocean," offers yet another genre definition. In this, he re-iterates, now specifically in the vocabulary of the sublime, the elevation, nobility, and magnificence associated with the spirit of this kind of poetry:

its thoughts should be uncommon, sublime, and moral; Its numbers full, easy, and most harmonious; Its expression pure, strong, delicate, yet unaffected; and of a curious

felicity beyond other Poems; Its conduct should be rapturous, somewhat abrupt, and immethodical to the vulgar Eye. That apparent order, and connections, which gives form and life to some compositions, takes away the very Soul of this. Fire, elevation, and select thought, are indispensable; an humble, tame, and vulgar Ode is the most pitiful error a pen can commit. (Young 1730:11)

What is new in Young's description is the differentiation between the composition as it appears to the reader and the contrary reality of the compositional process, i.e. between apparent irregularity and a concealed underlying order:

Judgment, indeed, that masculine power of mind, in Ode, as in all compositions, should bear the Supreme Sway; and a beautiful Imagination, as its Mistress, should be subdued to its dominion ... But then in Ode, there is this difference from other kinds of Poetry; That, there, the Imagination, like a very beautiful Mistress, is indulged in the appearance of domineering; tho' the Judgment, like an Artful Lover, in reality carries its point. (Young 1730:12)

The ode, in other words, should appear imaginative, inspired, rapturous, and abrupt but in reality it should be regulated and controlled by the judgment. The relation between the imaginative surface and the underlying order in the structure of the Pindaric ode is not primarily a relation of truth and appearance. This would suggest that the imaginative is either less true than what is created by the judgment, or not true at all. In the appreciation of Pindaric poetry, however, both types of experience must be simultaneously present and true, and the poem must simultaneously invite an imaginative and an intellectual kind of response. In other words, the Pindaric must be experienced both as the autonomous expression of the imagination and as a series of ideas presented in a controlled and logical manner.

Young does not spell out exactly how the negotiation between the judgment and the imagination works. We may, however, find an explanation in his introductory remarks about the relation between the merits of a poem and the poet's "Idea of Perfection" in the chosen genre. In proportion to the degree to which the poet possesses this standard, Young claims, he is able to approximate it. Poets who do not possess it, however, can only produce bad poetry: "To our having, or not having this *Idea of Perfection* is chiefly owing the Merit, or Demerit of our Performances ... He that has an *Idea of Perfection* in the Work he undertakes *may* fail in it; he that has not, *must*" (Young 1730:9-10). The "Idea of Perfection" is, of course, captured in Young's description of the ode quoted above, and it is ultimately derived from his understanding of Pindar's epinician poetry. A successful poem must position itself vis-à-vis this poetic standard, which is as platonic and metaphysical as it is historical. Pindar is "the great Standard of Antiquity" (Young 1730:14) as far as the epinician ode is concerned, and his poetry is the greatest historical embodiment of the "Idea of

Perfection” in this genre. As elsewhere in Young, the great historical antecedent presents the latecomer with the challenge of upholding the standard without imitating it, of recreating the “Idea of Perfection” but producing at the same time an “Original” (Young 1730:14). We may see the judgment-imagination distinction as a way to mitigate this difficulty. The judgment, in this sense, guarantees both the underlying order in the poem and its adherence to the poetic standard. At the same time, it remains for the imagination, first, to create the illusion that the poem results from an autonomous act of creation and, second, to make sure that the new poem is not only an imitation of the original but it is itself an “Original” in its own right.

#### **4. Imitation and Originality in the Pindaric Tradition**

The relation of the modern artist to his great historical antecedent in any chosen genre had been formative for the way the 18<sup>th</sup> century generally thought about art. The consequences of this question for the Pindaric tradition are, however, unique. I would like to argue that the Pindaric tradition in England had been a self-conscious tradition from the beginning, and it became an increasingly impossible tradition as well in the course of its reception history. By self-consciousness in the tradition, I am referring to the presence of a self-reflective poetic voice constantly examining its claims to authority. This self-investigation takes the form of a sort of “anxiety of influence” towards Pindar as the founder of the tradition – which I mean here literally rather than in Bloom’s more violent sense. Historically, the self-reflection of Pindaric poets has yielded more and more skepticism about the possibility of imitating Pindar, and this increasingly insurmountable difficulty in the reception history is what I am suggesting here by the term ‘impossible tradition’.

Pindar’s epinician poetry itself may be understood as a self-conscious poetic enterprise preoccupied with the legitimacy of its own authority (Nisetich 1990:42-47). He derives authority from his proximity to the Muse, and through the muse from divinity in general. The aim of the victory ode is to immortalize the victor and to reveal through the poet’s understanding of divinity the relevance of the athletic victory to the community at large. The poet, in this role of interpreter, “mediate[s] between the victor’s world and the world of the gods” (Nisetich 1990:42). The mortal poet, however, can only confer immortality if the poem is able to escape the limitations of its immediate temporal, cultural, and geographical context, if, in other words, it is remembered long and widely. The poet’s immediate relation to the Muse guarantees this transcendence. Pindar’s invocations are, therefore, a way to present “his credentials” for the task at hand: to immortalize his poem and in the same instance the victor himself (Nisetich 1990:43). The audience thus perceives the inspired poet as key both to a masterpiece and to divine vision.

When in *Nemean 3* Pindar addresses the Muse as “O Lady Muse, my mother” (transl. F. Nisetich) he offers us irrefutable credentials. The familial relationship

between the poet and his Muse implies that a partial identity exists between the two, and consequently that divinity is part of the poet's nature (Nisetich 1990:43). The poet, therefore, is one of the few mortals who, from his unique vantage point, can claim access to divine knowledge. The audience must concede that a poem produced from this proximity to the gods must itself be considered a more-than-human achievement. This oracular authority and the self-confidence with which Pindar relates himself to the divine inspiration of his poetry is precisely what seems to evaporate from the voice of the modern Pindaric poet.

If we trace the convention of invocation and poetic self-reflection through the English reception history, we find two major Pindaric voices in the tradition: those who self-confidently embrace the vatic role of the Pindaric poet and those who remain insecure about identifying with this role. To the self-confident group belong, as poets, Cowley, Congreve, and Young. Why these poets of the early reception are able to identify with the Pindaric voice may be explained by the specific purposes for which they used the Pindaric form. Cowley's aim was to domesticate the Pindaric, or in other words to turn an essentially unfamiliar object into a recognizable approximate that would perform the same function and create the same effect in the translator's literary-cultural context as the original did in its own. The fact that Cowley could, without any adjustment, retain the confident invocations and self-reflective statements in his adaptations of Pindar shows, first, how much this convention was considered a feature of Pindar's manner of speech, and second, that the concept of the divinely inspired poet was still very much resonant in Cowley's time. (Cowley's Pindar adaptations were published only a decade before Milton's *Paradise Lost*.)

In the case of Congreve and Young, we must distinguish, as it has already been done in another context (Most 1985:12), between a literary-poetic and a theoretical-scholarly strain in the tradition. The appropriation of the Pindaric voice, which happens automatically in the poems, seems to be treated with skepticism in the corresponding theoretical para-texts, either as to the divine nature of that voice, or as to the possibility of appropriation. Thus, Congreve, as poet, invoking Calliope in his "Pindarique Ode" confidently asserts that the Muse has answered his call: "The Lyre is struck! the Sounds I hear! O Muse, propitious to my Pray'r!" (lines 32-3) Not so in his "Discourse," where, as theorist, he underscores the feeling of "being sensible that I am as distant from the Force and Elevation of Pindar, as others have hitherto been from the Harmony and Regularity of his Numbers" (Congreve 1706).

Young, similarly, has no reservations using the convention of divine inspiration in "Ocean": "Where? where are they,/ Whom Paan's ray/ Has touch'd, and bid divinely rave?/ What, none aspire?/ I snatch the lyre,/ And plunge into the foaming wave" (lines 19-24), or in the opening stanza of "The Merchant": "The God descends; and Transports warm my Soul." As theorist, on the other hand, he challenges the very idea of Pindar's divine inspiration in the Preface to "The Merchant", where he seems to locate "Genius" not in its ancient divine origins but very much within the bounds of

the natural world: Pindar is “as Natural as Anacreon, tho’ not so Familiar”. If we were to compare them to a “fixt Star” and a “Flower of the Field”, Young explains, Pindar would be the star and Anacreon the flower, but both in this comparison are part of the physical world, and share a mortal nature. Young, therefore, clearly operates with different theoretical and conventional/poetic concepts of genius. In what seems to be his authoritative understanding, genius (i.e. the genius of the modern poet) is appropriated (“collected” and “possess’d of”) by the systematic study of the oeuvre of an original genius. Its “energy” can then be “[exerted] in Subjects and Designs of our own” (Young 1730). In poetic practice, on the other hand, a conventional use of the concept aligns him with the specific poetic tradition in which he wishes to position himself.

Why did Congreve and Young differentiate between a theoretical and a poetic response to the convention of divine inspiration? Why did they feel it necessary, as poets, to write in the manner of a divinely-inspired poet, when, as theorists, they either rejected that notion or felt unable to live up to it? The Pindaric poems of Congreve and Young place a more pronounced emphasis on the public aspect of the epinician odes than some of their predecessors. (Cowley’s Pindarics, for example, find a more personal tone even as they address topics of a public nature.) They are patriotic poems celebrating Britain’s emerging national identity as a naval and commercial power. The encomiastic function of the original victory songs is here used in the service of praising the sovereign and legitimizing British imperialist politics. As Suvir Kaul has shown discussing Young’s odes “To the King” and “Ocean”, the Pindaric form and its subject matter work hand in hand; the theme of the glorious British nation, where glory is achieved through hardship, difficulty, and sacrifice, requires a fittingly challenging form. Mastery over the Pindaric form is, therefore, analogous with mastery over political challenges (Kaul 2000:194). The poet in this sense becomes the king’s surrogate, and his control of the uncontrollable Pindaric form is as much a feat as the sovereign’s victory in the international political arena. The analogy between the Pindaric poet and the sovereign whom he celebrates is not unlike the relationship between Pindar and the ancient tyrants and athletes whom he celebrated, and whose achievement he thought comparable to his own poetic achievement (Fitzgerald 1987:25). Kaul’s understanding of the relationship between the Pindaric form and subject matter in Young’s ode may be extended to explain the confident appropriation of the role of the divinely-inspired poet in the political public odes of the period in general. An effective encomium requires a confident encomiast, and if the object of praise is a monarch, a divinely inspired panegyric gives authority to the praise at the same time that it legitimizes the reign.

Beside these confident voices, an alternative strain runs in the tradition as well, which denies that the appropriation of the Pindaric voice is possible. An early representative of this insecurity is Horace. In his *Ode IV.2*, he describes Pindar’s

genius as inaccessible and inimitable, and warns that any poet who tries to imitate this divinely-inspired voice must fail:

Anyone ... who strives to compete with Pindar relies on wings that have been waxed with Daedalus' skill, and is destined to give his name to a glassy sea. Like a river rushing down a mountainside, swollen by rains above its normal banks, Pindar boils and surges immeasurably on with his deep booming voice ... A mighty breeze lifts the swan of Dirce [Pindar] ... when he soars into the lofty regions of the clouds. I, in manner and method like a Matine bee that with incessant toil sips the lovely thyme around the woods and riverbanks of well-watered Tibur, fashion in a small way my painstaking songs. (Horace 2004:221-23)

In response to the danger of failure, Horace outlines the features of an alternative aesthetic for the ode; one that contains no comparable danger of imitation because it is based on "toil", i.e. on personal exertion, rather than the external agency of a "lift[ing] breeze". The rival aesthetic is characteristically humble and sensible, where the rival poet is more like a "Matine bee". He is industrious rather than inspired, and the result of his work is more like honey – sweet but thick and dense – in comparison with the easy fluidity with which Pindar's river rushes and breaks its banks. Pindar, in contrast to the industrious bee, is compared to a magnificent swan. In this carefully constructed analogy, Horace carves out his own "imaginative space" (Bloom 1997:5) in the *agon* with Pindar at the same time that he seemingly upholds his predecessor as by far the more successful contender in the swan-bee contest. The image of the swan is further associated with the story of Zeus and Leda, where it served as Zeus' disguise in the raping of Leda. Helen, their offspring, goes down in history as the source of Troy's fall and the indirect cause of the foundation of Rome. Pindar's poetry, understood from this mythological angle, is like Helen: unsurpassed in beauty, and containing both the seeds of its self-destruction as a tradition and the possibility of renewal in a related but radically new tradition. The new tradition of Horace, unlike the tradition of Pindar, is fundamentally sustainable: the possibility of its growth lies in foregoing more-than-human excellence in favor of reliable human achievement. The new poetics, Horace seems to be suggesting, does not interpret the divine, nor does it mediate between the world of men and that of the gods. But it, nevertheless, has the advantage over divinely-inspired poetry that it is self-sufficient and free from the contingency of divine inspiration.

Horace's warning of the danger of imitation underscores the basic paradox of the Pindaric tradition. The paradox lies in the fact that Pindar is perceived as the inimitable master at the same time that he serves as the foundational model for the tradition. We, thus, have a tradition that is based on a model one of whose defining characteristics is that it cannot be imitated. Joseph Addison (1958), in an article for *The*

*Spectator* (3 September, 1711), re-formulates Horace's sentiment regarding the imitation of Pindar:

Pindar was a great Genius of the first Class, who was hurried on by a Natural Fire and Impetuosity to vast Conceptions of things, and noble sallies of the Imagination ... When I see People copying Works, which, as *Horace* has represented them, are singular in their Kind and inimitable; when I see men following Irregularities by Rule, and by the little Tricks of Art straining after the most unbounded Flights of Nature, I cannot but apply to them that Passage of *Terence*: ... *incerta haec si tu postules/Ratione certa facere, nihilo plus agas./Quam si des operam, ut cum ratione insanias*. In short a modern Pindarick Writer compared with *Pindar*, is like a Sister among the *Camisars* compared with *Virgil's* Sybil: There is the Distortion, Grimace, and outward Figure, but nothing of that divine Impulse which raises the Mind above it self, and makes the Sounds more than humane. (Addison 1958:483-484)

In Addison's distinction of natural and educated genius, Pindar falls into the first category: authors who "by the mere Strength of natural Parts" (Addison 1958:482) produce great works of art. The educated genius, in contrast, relies on "Rules" and the "Corrections and Restraints of Art" (Addison 1958:484). Imitation as a form of artistic creation is characteristic of the educated genius only; the natural genius creates wholly out of an inner necessity (or, as in Pindar's case, out of "divine Impulse"). Such a distinction ultimately classifies authors on the basis of whether a specific author is a rule-creator or a rule-observer, a potential tradition-founder or a tradition-receiver. To some extent, Addison speaks of all traditions in reprimanding the "modern Pindarick Writer" for "straining after the most unbounded Flights of Nature" "by the little Tricks of Art" (Addison 1958:484). Horace's example seems to suggest that one way in which a poet may become a tradition-founder is when tradition-receiving reveals itself as an endless and impossible pursuit of an unachievable ideal. The unfolding drama of the English Pindaric tradition lies precisely in the force of this recognition: that the tradition cannot be properly received, its ideal cannot be achieved, but at the same time the recognition does not automatically confer on the poet – as it was the case with Horace – the powers of founding a new tradition.

This is, of course, descriptive of traditions in general. What makes the Pindaric different from other traditions in this regard, however, is that here the impossibility of the perfect imitation of the ideal is not a secondary but a defining characteristic. What the reception history perceived as the specifically Pindaric quality of the *epinikai* is the unique and unrepeatable power of these poetic utterances and the divine immediacy with which they were delivered. In a revealing metaphor, Young compares Pindar's muse to "a stately, imperious, and accomplish'd Beauty; equally disdaining the use of Art, and the fear of any Rival" (Young 1730:13). In this formulation, Pindar's poetry appears both as "imperious," i.e. tyrannical in its relation to other poems of its kind

because it claims absolute dominance for itself, and as excluding all forms of “Art” (imitation or composition by rules) from its creative ethos. The paradox, therefore, lies in attempting to write in the vein of a poetry that is perceived as the outcome of completely autonomous acts of creation. When visionary or inimitable creation, in this way, becomes a defining convention of a genre, poets face an insurmountable difficulty. The moment the poet makes use of Pindaric conventions, he forgoes his claim to originality. When a body of poetry is thus distinguished by the inimitability of its individual poems, it naturally turns in on itself, and becomes increasingly preoccupied with its own limitations and possibilities.

## **5. Conclusion**

‘Impossible tradition’, then, refers to a tradition whose foundational model contains as an essential feature the impossibility of imitation. Apart from its birth in the poetry of Cowley and its patriotic youth in the poetry of Congreve and Young, the English Pindaric tradition increasingly adopted a self-reflexive tone and a negative identity. The negative self-conception was fully embraced in the two great Pindaric odes of the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century: Thomas Gray’s “On the Progress of Poesy” and William Collins’ “Ode on the Poetical Character”. Both of these poems focus on the absence of an inspired, visionary poetic voice in the contemporary poetic scene and the poet’s heightened self-awareness in failing to inhabit that role. The tone of insecurity and the absence of poetic fulfillment frequently returns in the Romantic ode as well, in Wordsworth’s Immortality Ode, Coleridge’s “Dejection: An Ode”, or Keats’ “Ode to a Nightingale” – to name only the most famous ones. In conclusion to this paper, however, I would like to refer to another ode from the Romantic period, Shelley’s “Ode to the West Wind”, as a sort of culmination of this self-reflective, negative strain in English ode writing. As an extended invocation of its Muse, the poem sustains an unresolved separation from its inspiration (Leighton 1984:115). It is, arguably, an unanswered prayer for a sustainable unity between inspiration and composition, and, as elsewhere in Shelley’s poetry and poetics, they turn out to be mutually exclusive concepts: “when composition begins, inspiration is already on the decline” (Shelley 2002:531). Pindar and Shelley may thus be read as the opposite poles of a shared tradition. In Pindar, the strongest possible unity exists between the poet and his Muse: the relation between mother and son who, to some degree, share the same divine nature. In Shelley, on the other hand, any proximity between the poet and his Muse can only exist prior to the existence of the poem. The poem’s relation to the inspiration, here, is expressed in the ontological contradiction that the existence of the one is predicated on the absence of the other. In between these two poles, we find a tradition of increasing poetic self-reflection and a growing sense of creative anxiety.



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# IDENTITY FORMATION IN PAUL AUSTER'S FICTIONAL URBAN SPACE

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**Abstract:** *How does the contemporary self depicted in Paul Auster's fiction constitute himself in the metropolis New York City? I will investigate the extent to which New York City influences the shaping of a metropolitan identity in two selected literary works by Paul Auster: City of Glass and Sunset Park.*

**Keywords:** *American literature, heterotopia, identity, urban space*

*"In New York I feel plugged into a strong alternating current of hope and despair."*

*Ted Morgan*

## 1. Introduction

This paper focuses on the process of identity formation in the urban space created by the contemporary US-American writer Paul Auster in two of his novels, *City of Glass* (the first part of *The New York Trilogy*) and *Sunset Park*. In these two narratives, the protagonists' struggles to constitute their identities are based on their relationships with the metropolis as well as their professions, which are inextricably linked to the process of identity formation. The two narratives differ, however, in regard to the locations within New York City, the urban space in both narratives: in *City of Glass* the protagonist Daniel Quinn moves from the domestic space to the public streets of Manhattan, whereas *Sunset Park's* protagonist Miles Heller and his three friends seek refuge in a house in Brooklyn.

Based on this shift from Manhattan to Brooklyn and the characters' transition from the private space to the public space in *City of Glass* and vice versa in *Sunset Park*, I claim that Auster takes on a more political stance in his writings. The two places represent two different concepts of identity formation in urban space: Quinn attempts to find his lost self in a Manhattan neighborhood that stands for the successfully established urban life and "a sophisticated life of art", as Martha Nadell describes it in "Writing Brooklyn" (Nadell 2010:111), while Miles and his friends move to Brooklyn, "the site for mediations on the language befitting modern urban life; on the contrast between an imagined New York cosmopolitanism and an ostensibly authentic ethnic, working-class; [...] on the spatial and temporal construction of collective and individual identity" (Nadell 2010:110). Auster replaces Manhattan with Brooklyn as his literary *topos*. Quinn fails to reestablish his identity in

the streets of Manhattan, but the new setting in *Sunset Park* offers a different approach to the process of identity formation and provides the characters with the opportunity to temporarily turn their moment of crisis into a moment of calm and productivity. When the characters' artistic minds engage in discourse with each other, "nothingness" can be avoided and meaning and identity can be established. Though the achievement is not permanent, the period of time in which the characters successfully proceed to (re)construct their identities stresses what art, education, communication, and togetherness can achieve.

## **2. The Postmodern New York City and Its Con- and Destruction of Identity in *City of Glass***

As Frederic Jameson claims, "[s]pace is for us an existential and cultural dominant" (Jameson 1991:365). Auster depicts New York City as the postmodern urban space in which Quinn's fragmented self attempts to reconstruct a coherent and meaningful identity. From the very beginning of the novel, the streets of Manhattan are presented as a space in which one can easily be lost. Quinn feels "lost [not only] in the city, but within himself as well" (Auster 1988:4). He is a man who has distanced himself from society and from interaction and communication with others in reaction to the deaths of his wife and his three-year-old son five years earlier (Auster 1988:3). The loss of his family has caused him to feel incomplete and made it impossible for him to continue to play the role that he used to in Manhattan society. Quinn's mourning process has also affected his work, which used to be an essential part of his former self as a father and a husband. Quinn secretly adopts an additional role, that of his pseudonym "William Wilson:"

William Wilson, after all, was an invention, and even though he was born within Quinn himself, he now led an independent life. Quinn treated him with deference, at times even admiration, but he never went so far as to believe that he and William Wilson were the same man. (Auster 1988:4)

He needs another identity to take the place that he thinks to be discredited and to avoid the obliteration of his self altogether. "William Wilson" enables him to continue writing his novels as well as to negotiate his business deals (Auster 1988:5). In addition to "William Wilson," the private investigator Max Work – the main character of Quinn's novels – becomes part of his 'original' identity, "a presence in Quinn's life, his interior brother, his comrade in solitude" (Auster 1988:6). Although Quinn is aware of the fact that Max Work, like "William Wilson," is an "imaginary person" (Auster 1988:9), Work serves as a substitute identity for Quinn. Even more than "William Wilson", Max Work embodies male strength and domination; in contrast to Quinn, Work is "aggressive, quick-tongued, at home in whatever spot he happened to find

himself” (Auster 1988:9). Work is in charge of the narrative that was being created for him to the point where he “demands that the world reveal itself to him” (Auster 1988:8).

In addition to this pseudonym, William Wilson, and the fictional character, Max Work, Quinn decides to take on one more role – that of the alleged private detective, Paul Auster, a fictional character in the novel who shares its author’s name. After someone apparently dials the wrong number and asks to speak to the private detective Paul Auster in order to get his professional help, Quinn decides to say he is Auster and take the job; his decision to accept the job offer underlines his struggle with his own identity as well as the determination to find and create a new one. Through his adoption of the identity of a third character he seeks one more opportunity to further escape his lost self and to regain authority and stability through a new figuration.

At the same time, the metropolis provides a place of refuge for him. Whenever he needs to escape the closeness of his small apartment, Quinn walks around in the “inexhaustible space, a labyrinth of endless steps” (Auster 1988:3). He leaves the domestic sphere with the intention of freeing himself from his changed life and escaping the struggle of reestablishing his identity. While moving through the streets of Manhattan, he distances himself from the world, the people around him as well as from his own self, and experiences a peaceful state of mind:

Each time he took a walk, he felt as though he were leaving himself behind, and by giving himself up to the movement of the streets, by reducing himself to a seeing eye, he was able to escape the obligation to think, and this, more than anything else, brought him a measure of peace, a salutary emptiness within. (Auster 1988:4)

Even though Quinn physically becomes a part of the metropolis, he mentally distances himself from his surroundings:

On his best walks, he was able to feel that he was nowhere. And this, finally, was all he ever asked for: to be nowhere. New York was the nowhere he had built around himself, and he realized that he had no intention of ever leaving it again. (Auster 1988:4)

At this point Quinn claims authority over New York. He uses the metropolis for the personal aim of constructing a space for himself where escape and existence are possible for him at the same time. This is essential, since the adoption of three other identities only leads to “being a man with no interior, a man with no thoughts. And if there were no thoughts available to him, if his own inner life had been made inaccessible, then there was no place for him to retreat to” (Auster 1988:61). In order to construct such a place, Quinn successfully establishes his own version of New York, his personal heterotopia. In his 1969 essay, “Of Other Spaces,” Michel Foucault

distinguishes between three different spaces: Utopias, heterotopias and mirrors. He defines heterotopic spaces as

places that do exist and that are formed in the very founding of society - which are something like counter-sites, a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which the real sites, all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted. Places of this kind are outside of all places, even though it may be possible to indicate their location in reality. Because these places are absolutely different from all the sites that they reflect and speak about, I shall call them, by way of contrast to utopias, heterotopias. (Foucault 1986:24)

During the first half of the narrative, Quinn seems to be able to construct a new form of identity, one that depends on the synergy between the physical and mental self and the metropolis: "His excursions through the city had taught him to understand the connectedness of inner and outer" (Auster 1988:61).

Over the course of the investigation that he pursues as PI Paul Auster, Quinn distances himself increasingly from his domestic space, his apartment, and ultimately becomes a part of the city: "Remarkable as it seems, no one ever noticed Quinn. It was as though he had melted into the walls of the city" (Auster 1988:117). He leaves his former identity as well as those of "William Wilson" and Max Work behind and dissociates himself as far as possible from any social contacts and interactions. Quinn almost vanishes in the city, into the urban space, which offers anonymity to those who want to escape their past lives and identities.

At first, the intimacy with the metropolis, with its maze of walls and alleys, suggests a new beginning for Quinn. However, this project fails on two occasions. When he

wrote his initials DQ (Daniel Quinn), on the first page [of the red notebook]. It was the first time in five years that he had put his own name in one of his notebooks. He stopped to consider this fact for a moment but then dismissed it as irrelevant. (Auster 1988:39)

Instead of facing his past and his own former identity, Quinn refuses to reflect upon the significance of this moment and his situation in general and continues to lose himself in his adopted identities.

The second occasion in which Quinn has a chance to reestablish his own former identity is the moment when he actually meets (the character) Paul Auster, who tells Quinn that he himself is a writer and not a private detective. The fact that Auster has a wife and a son with whom he lives in an apartment in the city enrages Quinn: "It was too much for Quinn. He felt as though Auster were taunting him with the things he had lost, and he responded with envy and rage, a lacerating self-pity. Yes, he too would have liked to have this wife and this child..." (Auster 1988:101-102). Quinn is

confronted with the fact that he no longer exists in the organized structures of his family and the metropolis. This very moment could have been a turning point for Quinn; he could have chosen to regain his lost – his own – identity by transforming his rage into psychological strength and rebuilding his life. Instead, he becomes desperate and gives in to nothingness: “Quinn was nowhere now. He had nothing, he knew nothing, he knew that he knew nothing.” (Auster 1988:104) He adapts to the streets and even comes to resemble a homeless person (Auster 1988:121).

“But it was only now, as his life continued in the alley, that he began to understand the true nature of solitude. He had nothing to fall back on anymore but himself.” (Auster 1988:118) In this situation, Quinn’s solitude prevails; he has lost the power over his life, other people and the metropolis, and finally, over the identities he had constructed and adopted. All that is left is a disintegrated and lonely self that has left its domestic space and transitioned into the streets of its self-created heterotopic space. Once again, Quinn attempts to distance himself from the circumstances and surroundings that threaten and even destroy what is left of his identity. New York City no longer enables the constitution of his identity. “Everything had changed” (Auster 1988:124). Quinn is about to disappear into the narrative, to vanish altogether into the metropolitan space and, because of this obliterate every notion of his identity. For Quinn, Auster’s Manhattan has become a “tragedy of a utopian dream made reality” (Baudrillard 1989:30) much as Quinn himself has become what Baudrillard calls one of the “Americans [who] have no identity” (Baudrillard 1989:34).

### **3. The Quest for an Alternative Living Environment in *Sunset Park***

Auster’s concern with the discourse of identity formation manifests itself not only in the Manhattan of *City of Glass* but also in the Brooklyn of *Sunset Park*. The struggle of the self to (re)construct one’s identity continues in this New York City neighborhood as a quest for an alternative living environment, which is inextricably connected to the characters’ quest for their individual identities. By moving into the house in Sunset Park, Miles, Bing, Ellen, and Alice construct a heterotopic entity, in which they are temporarily able to materialize their longings. This ephemeral heterotopic entity, however, represents different kinds of heterotopic spaces that depend on each character’s personal circumstances.

The struggle to support themselves financially and the attempt not to lose themselves in their existential struggle bring the characters together in the house in Brooklyn. The occupation of this house becomes the project in which they attempt to constitute their identities and rebel against their current personal working and living conditions:

When Ellen Brice told him about the abandoned house in Sunset Park this past summer, [Bing] saw it as an opportunity to put his ideas to the test, to move beyond his

invisible, solitary attacks on the system and participate in a communal action. It is the boldest step he has yet taken, and he has no trouble reconciling the illegality of what they are doing with their right to do it. These are desperate times for everyone, and a crumbling wooden house standing empty in a neighborhood as ragged as this one is nothing if not an open invitation to vandals and arsonists, an eyesore begging to be broken into and pillaged, a menace to the well-being of the community. By occupying that house, he and his friends are protecting the safety of the street, making life more livable for everyone around them. (Auster 2010:77)

Bing cites the current collective economic situation to justify their occupation of the house. He further imagines this act to be a service to the people of the neighborhood of Sunset Park. This act allows Bing and his friends to regain partial control of their lives. The regain of partial control motivates them to follow their individual dreams and projects, and in order to structure their own little community, they produce their own routine and rules:

Bing is telling [Miles] about the various routines and protocols that have been established since they moved in. Each person has a job to perform, but beyond the responsibilities of that job, everyone is free to come and go at will. (Auster 2010:126)

According to Foucault, a “heterotopia of compensation” is constructed in order to function as “a space that is other, another real space, as perfect, as meticulous, as well arranged as ours is messy, ill constructed, and jumbled. This [...] type would be the heterotopia, not of illusion, but of compensation [...]” (Foucault 1986:27). The friends create their heterotopia of compensation out of a real space in which each contributes to the little community and works to establish his or her individual life. The “job” inside the house enables the characters to compensate for their work failures outside of the heterotopic space and to create an environment that serves their personal purposes.

Miles’s perception of what the move and the occupation signify differs from that of his friends. Miles is in a relationship with Pilar, an under-age high school student in Florida, whose family has blackmailed him into leaving her alone. Afraid of being arrested for seducing a minor, he escapes to New York City. The metropolis and the house in Brooklyn represent a place of refuge, but the house also feels like a prison:

The only problem is cash, the same problem all the others are facing. He no longer has a job, and the three thousand dollars he brought with him amount to little more than pennies. Like it or not, then, for the time being he is stuck, and unless something comes along that dramatically alters his circumstances, he will just have to make the best of it. So his prison sentence begins. Pilar’s sister has turned him into the newest member of the Sunset Park Four. (Auster 2010:127)



Miles's situation differs from that of his friends because he has had to leave his established living and working environment in order to protect himself from possible arrest and a prison sentence. Thus, he experiences the housing situation in Sunset Park as an alternative version of a state prison: for him the house could be described as a heterotopia of deviation. Foucault suggests that heterotopias of deviation are places where those "individuals whose behavior is deviant in relation to the required mean or norm are placed [...] of course prisons" (Foucault 1986:24-25). In Miles's case the heterotopia is created based on two factors: first, he breaks the law of society by engaging in a sexual relationship with a minor, and secondly, he punishes himself by leaving Pilar. Hence, both parties – society and Pilar's family on the one hand and Miles on the other – contribute to the creation of this particular heterotopic space.

Miles distinguishes himself and his fellow housemates from the rest of the world by labeling the group the "Sunset Park Four" (Auster 2010:127). Although he feels like a part of this group, he has trouble adjusting to the neighborhood outside of the house:

He wanders around in the streets, trying to familiarize himself with the neighborhood, but he quickly loses interest in Sunset Park. There is something dead about the place, he finds, the mournful emptiness of poverty and immigrant struggle [...], a small world apart from the world where time moves so slowly that few people bother to wear a watch. (Auster 2010:132)

According to Foucault, "[t]he heterotopia begins to function at full capacity when men arrive at a sort of absolute break with their traditional time" (Foucault 1986:26). This form of a heterotopia is then referred to as a heterochrony (Foucault 1986:26). The despair of the people living in the neighborhood of Sunset Park has led them to construct a heterochrony in reaction to the "poverty and immigrant struggle" (Auster 2010:132). But this is not Miles's struggle and therefore, he does not identify with the neighborhood. He is from the "West Village in Manhattan to be precise" (Auster 2010:16) and his attitude towards the neighborhood in Brooklyn depicts that, although he physically left Manhattan and Florida behind, he never did so mentally. Like Quinn in *City of Glass*, Miles feels that he cannot continue as he used to in the mainstream society of the metropolis. His behavior is a reaction to the events and circumstances in his life and is owed to the fact that Miles does not have the courage to confront his past and his problems and take on responsibility: "He has turned himself into a black sheep. That is the role he has willed himself to play, and he will go on playing it even in New York as he wanders back to the flock he left behind." (Auster 2010:68)

Ellen is also troubled by the new situation but for different reasons. While her financial burden is lifted by moving into the house, the inner conflict caused by her emotions weighs heavy on her mind since "she is advancing now, traveling deeper and

deeper into the netherworld of her own nothingness, the place in her that coincides with everything she is not” (Auster 2010:215).

Unlike Bing, Ellen knows that the living situation in the house in Sunset Park is temporary. She is convinced that “sooner or later you will be gone from Sunset Park, this ratty little house will be torn down and forgotten, and the life you are living now will fade into oblivion, not one person will remember you were here, not even you.” (Auster 2010:224) Ellen’s statement underlines the despair and disillusionment of the “Sunset Park Four” and links their possible destiny to that of Quinn in *City of Glass*. After the squatters’ physical confrontation with the police, who have come to evacuate the house, Bing is arrested, Alice ends up in the hospital, and Ellen and Miles manage to escape. Their heterotopic space is destroyed, and in losing the house in Sunset Park, they lose their hope and faith in a promising future. At this moment the destruction of their heterotopias results in the destruction of their calm and productivity. Therefore, the house in Brooklyn serves as a place of refuge only within its limits of space and time, as an ephemeral heterotopic entity.

#### **4. Conclusion**

*City of Glass* and *Sunset Park* both depict the struggle to (re)establish identity through a self-created heterotopia in New York City. This process is truly the “strong alternating current of hope and despair” (“New York in Quotes” 2008:n.p.) that Ted Morgan describes. Auster allows Miles and his friends to turn their moment of crisis into a moment of calm and productivity as they unite in the house in Sunset Park. “The Sunset Park Four” demonstrate that identity can be (temporarily) achieved and “nothingness” replaced through art, education, communication, and togetherness, leaving us with a notion of hope rather than despair.

Both narratives, however, leave the reader with an inconclusive ending. Quinn seems to have vanished into the metropolis, and “at this point the story grows obscure” (Auster 1988:132). Miles concludes that “there is no future for them anymore, no hope for them anymore” (Auster 2010:307), while traveling back to Manhattan on Brooklyn Bridge. The Brooklyn Bridge has been a favorite motif for writers, especially during the twentieth century, representing the hope of “moving literally from Brooklyn to Manhattan and figuratively from an ethnic, working-class community to a sophisticated life of art” (Nadell 2010:111), but since Miles actually comes from this “sophisticated life” (Nadell 2010:111) and his family would welcome him back into it at any time, this journey is a journey of *méconnaissance* for Miles. Neither Quinn nor Miles own up to New York City.

Do Quinn’s and Miles’s failures indicate that we are left with broken individuals in a “city of ruins”, as Marshall Berman (2007:38) refers to New York City? Stillman Sr., another character in *City of Glass*, explains his reason for coming to the metropolis as follows:

I have come to New York because it is the most forlorn of places, the most abject. The brokenness is everywhere, the disarray universal. You have only to open your eyes to see it. The broken people, the broken things, the broken thoughts. (Auster 1988:78)

This dystopian portrait of New York City and its “brokenness” in every respect manifests the emotional bankruptcy of the characters in the postmodern urban. As we transition from *City of Glass* to *Sunset Park*, from Manhattan to Brooklyn, the emotionally bankrupt self has contributed to, as Bing observes, “a throwaway culture spawned by the greed of profit-driven corporations, the landscape has grown ever more shabby, ever more alienating, ever more empty with meaning and consolidating purpose” (Auster 2010:72). Art, education, communication, and togetherness have been abandoned in this empty and meaningless society of the metropolis and been replaced through new technologies, “all things digital” (Auster 2010:72). Even though the metropolis has always been a place for and of innovation, these new technologies complicate the interrelation between the self and the metropolis even further. We will continue to observe, admire, and criticize the interaction among these three constituents as they progress both in the real and in the fictional world.

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## RE-ASSEMBLING THE CITY IN IVAN VLADISLAVIĆ'S NOVELS

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***Abstract:** The paper analyses the various aspects of the city as described by the South African writer Ivan Vladislavić in the novel *Portrait with Keys*. Hunters, gatherers and urban poachers are the inhabitants of the South African city bordering the veld, a city whose economic centre has been moved to the suburbs due to high rates of crime.*

***Key words:** identity, Johannesburg, labyrinth, violence*

### 1. Introduction

Replacing Apartheid themes and subject matters in the post-Apartheid South African literature has been a demanding task. Some of the literary topics preferred by the 'old guard', the influential "white quartet" (Kellas 2004) formed of J. M. Coetzee, Nadine Gordimer, André Brink and Breyten Breytenbach have been replaced with issues connected to multiculturalism, the status of the writer, the banalisation of violence due to mass-media coverage, the reconciliation with the violent past, the implications of economic and cultural globalization, the struggle against illness, globalization and loss of cultural and national identity, displacement, economic exile and migration. Due to the fact that the grand Apartheid narrative belongs to the history of literature, many different narratives are constructing the present South African literature. A new generation of writers has to maintain South Africa on the map of universal literature as it is their duty to identify contemporary and original topics that should connect the 20<sup>th</sup> century South Africa to the trend imposed by the globalization process and, at the same time, emphasize the diversity, multiculturalism multiracialism and other particularities of this "jagged end of a continent" (Gordimer 1998:278).

One of the main representatives of the 21<sup>st</sup> century South African literature is Ivan Vladislavić, born in Pretoria in 1957. His first short stories were published in the volumes *Missing Persons* and *Propaganda by Monuments*, after 1990. The volume *Portrait with Keys. The City of Johannesburg Unlocked* was published in 2006 and it is a collection of reflections on post-Apartheid South Africa and on some sensitive issues such as: random acts of violence, the (im)possibility of defining the concept of 'home' and finding a place to match the definition, racism, displacement versus relocation, the city against the veld, loss of memories versus preserving memory by gathering objects. The reflections are guidelines on how to travel through the city of Johannesburg (Joburg) and they form a map of itineraries which are listed in an index that "traces the

order of the [...] published cycles and suggests some other thematic pathways through the book. The routes are classified as [...] long, moderate and short” (Vladislavić 2007:195).

## 2. Mapping the City: Memory and Identity

Ivan Vladislavić’s identity as a writer has been shaped by various cultures, as he declares in a 1999 interview:

The name is Croatian. My grandparents on my father’s side were Croatian immigrants. My father was born in South Africa. And on my mother’s side my background is Irish and English, with a dash of German. I’m second-generation South African, on both sides (Warnes 2000:273).

In the same interview with Christopher Warnes, Vladislavić also states that he has written his work under the influence of events and transformations that have been taking place all over the world, as by his own experiences and his reading of Dickens, Stevenson, T. S. Eliot, Kundera, Schulz, Barth, Vonnegut, or Elias Canetti. Thus, in *Portrait with Keys* the narrator mentions Canetti and quotes from the essay *Crowds and Power* in order to relate the city of Vienna from the nineteen-twenties to the city of Johannesburg in the year 2000. They are both cities “with secret street-names; policemen tell you where you are if they trust you” (Vladislavić 2007:126-127).

The narrator in Vladislavić’s *Portrait with Keys* underlines the fact that Johannesburg is a city defined by crime. However, he also points out that it is similar to any city at a certain given moment and he describes a meeting with two beggars, reminding the readers of Canetti’s meetings with beggars during the writer’s childhood in Vienna. The event that took place in Vienna almost a century ago is used by Ivan Vladislavić, who re-assembles it in constructing the portrait of Johannesburg. In Vienna, a servant refuses to help some beggars shut the house door while they are asking for pity: „Have mercy, Madam! Poor worms are not to blame!” (Canetti 1984: 91). In Johannesburg, Vlad, the narrator, also refuses to let the beggars into the house. However, he agrees to bring them some food from the fridge and shuts the door without locking it – a gesture difficult to understand in a city where crime has increased since the end of the Apartheid. The two beggars take advantage of the unlocked door and steal what they can find in a small room near the entrance door: a box of souvenirs. The stolen box makes the narrator realize that he can no longer remember his grandfather without the souvenirs. In fact, the lack of memories is triggered by the missing box containing his grandfather’s badges:

They were badges of identity, simple markers of a life story. The mere gesture of spreading them out, with a casual sweep of hand, produced the plot. My grandfather’s

absence during the war years, his time 'up north' was never clearer to me than in the missing chapters in the story told by the badges. (Vladislavić 2007: 80)

Vladislavić portrays the postcolonial city accentuating its resemblance to other cosmopolitan cities rather than emphasizing differences. His generation of writers is marked by the freedom of movement and is redefining identity according to the multitude of spaces that form the other world. The end of Apartheid also means that South African cities can join the globalization process and that they can be regarded as similar to other cities from the developed countries. The centre has moved to periphery, both figuratively and literally. In post-Apartheid Johannesburg, the centre literally moved to the periphery as the town centre was occupied by poor Africans and immigrants. That is why it is easy to get lost in the new city, as it becomes impossible to identify accessible and familiar spaces:

Then, in the mid-nineties, the parkade began to shrink. The demand for parking fell, level by level, like a barometer of change in the city centre. The people with cars were clearly going elsewhere [...] I soon lost my sense of direction. Eventually I found myself in a crowded corner of the basement, where the cars were all huddled like refugees. [...] My brother told me that he couldn't face the city anymore (Vladislavić 2007: 31-32).

For the narrator and his brother the fact that they no longer recognize the city and they get lost in it equals the loss of identity. They search for familiar places and buildings in order to find their way on the new map of the city. The itineraries they trace in order to map the labyrinth of the city are meant to be used both by the readers who have never visited the city and by the inhabitants who find the changes difficult to understand. The labyrinth of demolitions and constructions, of movements from the centre toward periphery and vice versa is shaped by modern hunters, poachers and gatherers.

For Ivan Vladislavić, memories are not reliable: no one should testify about past events based on memories, without evidence. Yet, writers have the privilege to present the past to future generations, they may invent memories for the city based on the evidence preserved by buildings and other man-made constructions. In fact, the city functions as a mnemonic system. However, the moment when houses are demolished and replaced by enormous office buildings made of steel and glass, the inhabitants lose their way and their identities. The feeling that ancestors used to have when they built houses, that "you can't take it with you when you go, but you can leave something behind; this house will stand for a hundred years" (Vladislavić 2007:70) is no longer valid in the new globalized South Africa. Vlad, the narrator in *Portrait with Keys*, sells his house and comes to see it a week later: "within the week, the new owners knocked the walls flat and paved the plot for a parking area, as if the lives we lived there had no

more substance than a pop song” (Vladislavić 2007:87). Memory can no longer rely on buildings or on the comfort of piles of objects. The only method to preserve memories seems to remain writing about events the moment when they take place. Thus, literature helps the readers find their identity and traces their ways through the world:

We are stories. It is a notion so simple even a child could understand it. Would that it ended there. But we are stories within stories. Stories within stories within stories. We recede endlessly, framed and reframed, until we are unreadable to ourselves (Vladislavić 2007:102).

### **2.1. The Frontier City: Crime as a Polluting Factor**

Vladislavić reinvents frontiers, traces new limits to old spaces, and marks the new South Africa by a redefinition of the individual. This process is based on the change of the point of view on a well-known space, offering a new perspective for European travellers in a Johannesburg visited through reading its portrait. The map is compulsory and vital to survive in the urban space: the visitor has to decipher dozens of details in order to reach the destination. Nevertheless, there is no right or wrong interpretation of the city map, due to the fact that wrong directions take travelers (and readers) to surprisingly interesting destinations that eventually build the story of a lifetime:

It is also that the complexities of cities, the flows of traffic across ever-changing grids, coupled with the peculiarities of physical addresses, occupations, interests and needs, produces for each one of us a particular pattern of familiar or habitual movement over the skin of the earth, which, if we could see it from a vantage point in the sky, would appear as unique as a fingerprint (Vladislavić 2007:16).

Unfortunately, the high rate of crime in Johannesburg is a polluting factor in the city. Although pollution of the environment is not as serious as in other parts of the world, mental pollution is a serious issue and it determines many residents to leave the city and relocate to other areas.

In *Portrait with Keys*, Vladislavić sees crime as primitive form of survival, a mentality of hunter - gatherer who has moved to the city: everything can be hunted or gathered: car wheels, garden furniture or plants to be re-sold on the black market. As the majority of South African writers, Vladislavić underlines the fact that crime affects all inhabitants of Johannesburg, regardless of their skin colour. Another type of hunter who lives in the modern urban area is the urban poacher, a survivor who may be admired for his courage: he spends his days walking around the town, scavenging, meeting other poachers, passing along information “sometimes teaming up to do ‘jobs’, sometimes steering each other in the wrong direction” (Vladislavić 2007:129).

Nature is constantly encountered in this portrait of the city: the former gold mines are now covered by grass, trees are growing and birds have returned to reclaim their space. However poachers do not allow nature to modify the landscape, so they build and demolish at their own will: "Nature is for other people, in other places" (Vladislavić 2007:90). City dwellers who want to live closer to nature move to the periphery: "The smell of grass is quenching after a summer day, the dusk lays a cool hand on the back of your neck" (Vladislavić 2007:98). The poetry of the veld reminds the readers that Johannesburg is also defined by its frontiers not only by its center dominated by crime:

Johannesburg is a frontier city, a place of contested boundaries. Territory must be secured and defended or it will be lost. Today the contest is fierce and so the defenses multiply. Walls replace fences, high walls replace low ones, even the highest walls acquire electrified wires and spikes. In the wealthier suburbs the pattern is to knock things flat and start all over. Around here people must make the most of what they've already got, and therefore the walls tend to grow by increments (Vladislavić 2007:173).

New constructions either built by multinationals or by South Africans who are searching for safety imply demolishing old, historical buildings. The South African society seems to fight against memories and history, especially since many places remind of the Apartheid violence and crimes.

The former gold mines, which are deserted at present remind of the origins of the city. Yet, the narrator considers them abject places: the vlei, an area of low marshy ground, full of contaminated water, pollutes the suburbs that are built around the gold mines. The palimpsest city accepts both its past and its present:

Johannesburg is an elusive metropolis because of the multiplicity of registers in which it is African (or perhaps not at all, or not enough); European (or perhaps not, or no longer), or even American (by virtue of its embeddedness in commodity exchange and its culture of consumption) (Nuttall and Mbembe 2008:25).

### **3. Conclusion**

In a 1969 interview, Nadine Gordimer states that

we all write one book, but we write it piecemeal and often from very different points of view throughout our lives. You move on, you change, and your writing changes with this advancement. Or sometimes you regress and the writing appears to go back too. But in the end, for a writer, your work is your life and it's a totality. (Bazin 1990:44)



This definition of writing may also be applied to Ivan Vladislavić's *Portrait with keys*. It is composed of fragments, of definitions of the city and its dwellers in an attempt to draw the map of a labyrinth that is continually changing. The city of Johannesburg is defined by the veld and the vlei, by urban hunters, poachers and gatherers, Vladislavić offering both general traits that are common for global cities and specific elements that are claimed by the South African city.

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# **NARRATIVES OF SPACES, PLACES, AND PEOPLE: M.C. BEATON'S HIGHLANDS AND HIGHLANDERS**

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***Abstract.** The paper attempts to suggest re-reading literary texts from the perspective of the interconnections between settings and individuals in the process of forging the latter's place-identity. This environmental concept, meant to foreground the importance of the place for the development of the sense of the self, is to be operated with in a selection of books authored by the Scottish mystery writer, M.C. Beaton.*

***Keywords:** emplacement, otherness, place-identity, the self*

## **1. Argument**

Were we to illustrate how the concepts of place identity and place attachment operate in environmental psychology, respectively how “emotional attachment to a residential environment functions to develop and maintain identity processes” (Twigger-Ross and Uzzel 1996:205), Scottish fiction would be an excellent choice. It has become a distinctive, mature literary force, exposing and asserting Scottishness through settings and characters, thus demonstrating the writers’ fundamental appeal and relevance as well as their permanent force of cohesion; such factors have significantly contributed to the progress of Scottish literature, originally considered as powerless, neglected, and marginalized. Scottish writing can be thought of as a competing site for maintaining distinctiveness and uniqueness through one’s continuity of personal lifestyle, self, values, beliefs, language, and, for the purpose of our demonstration, the constraints of the environment, that is, the Highlands, the region “quite distinct in culture and society from the rest of Scotland” (Daiches 1993:140). To put it differently, writers always manifest an interest in foregrounding traditions, heritages against the background of otherness, embodied in the so-called “adjectival culture”, emerging from “the congeries of beliefs, values, and attachments that give societies their character, and allow their members to make sense of their lives and aspirations” ( Ryan 1998:63).

## **2. Spaces of the Body and Mind**

According to most studies we accessed for this topic, we can understand that place-identity theory, considered a major contributor to the field of psychology, states that when there is a growing attachment to places, it may lead to one’s identifying

oneself with the places in question, both at a larger scale (nation, city, etc) and a smaller scale (neighbourhood, workplaces, homes, rooms), determining individuals to refer to physical places when they refer to themselves (see Hauge 2007). Thus place attachment is defined as “the feelings we develop towards places that are highly familiar to us” (Hauge 2007, online), places that we belong to, in which we find the right description of our identity and personality, and which best describe our self, our lifestyle, our beliefs and attitudes. Scotland and Scottish identity represent possibly radical aspects of national features, most often standing for the symptom of a deracinated nation, and validating the Caledonian historical, cultural, ethical experience in different ways, such as by exposing problems/tensions of language, of class, of politics, or religion that resulted from accumulated historical wrongs. There is a bit of irony in Angus Calder’s statement that a Scot is commonly “someone living in the area which comes under Scots law, so long as that person also supports Scottish athletes against those of other countries or identifies strongly with some other aspect of Scottish culture – our folk-music say. A Scot abroad is anyone who still fulfils the latter condition.” (Calder 1994:52).

Consequently, asserting one’s Scottishness/being a Scot means in fact foregrounding one’s distinguishing character or personality, as identity is always linked to “specific aspects of self-definition” (Hauge 2007, online), identity being seen as a condition within the process of identification. Theorists acknowledge the fact that “identity is created both internally in the mind, and through the body’s interaction with the outside world” as “there is no place without self, and no self without place.” (Hauge 2007, online); hereinafter the incorporation of the place into the individual’s self comes as a natural way of operating with one’s memories, ideas, conceptions, interpretations against a specific background – the very essence of the newly coined place-identity, seen as a substructure of self-identity. Places, hence Scottish settings, are the sources of identity that contain meaningful symbols, personal and social memories as part of shared histories, elements of intergroup relations; places can have different meanings at different times as they can affect one’s self differently, through “attenuation/accentuation threat and dislocation” (Hauge 2007, online) emerging from the subjective feeling of one’s identification with home and neighbourhood.

### **3. The Sense of Place**

We are much inclined to agree with the fact that place has a considerable effect on human identity as it points to the degree to which environmental preferences shape people’s features and how places are likely to be influenced by people’s identities, fostered within the process of personalizing one’s home and environment in the attempt of making them reflect who the residents of those places are. Considering that place can be seen as a “product of physical attributes, human conceptions, and activities” (Hauge 2007, online), that is, an entity of tangible and intangible

characteristics, we infer that place is “a geographical space that has acquired meaning as a result of a person’s interaction with the space” (Hauge 2007, online) within the constant process of reciprocal influence between these two elements of the same unit, people and places. Space and place in Scottish writing can be referred to as fundamental elements of rendering Scottishness, namely through Scottish setting expressed in a demotic Scottish, if possible, in order to display an imaginary, still recognisable world.

Within the small village of Luchdubh, M.C. Beaton (b. 1936) individualises both private places (crofts, houses, fields, pastures, ploughlands, pig-sties, boats, shop, the hotel, its bar, the castle), and public places (the waterfront, the church, the pier, the beach, the cliff), which are likely to stand for strength and firmness, for real or imagined histories, for the visualisation of the Caledonian chronotope, that synthesis of a slowly passing time and a hidden remote waiting-to-be-discovered space:

Drim was a small huddle of cottages on a flat piece of land surrounded by towering mountains at the end of a thin, narrow sea loch. There was a church and a community hall and a general store, and the road down to the village was a precipitous single-track. (Beaton 2009b:39)

There was also a castle, owned by Major Neal, rented to an American, a place that was “a Gothic building, built during the height of the Victorian vogue for homes in the Highlands”, which still preserved a “mock draw-bridge and portcullis, but no moat, the first owner having run out of money before one could be dug.” (Beaton 2009b:39).

The place bearing traditions, cultural heritage, history, heroes, survival stories, is going to experience unusual events, thefts, robberies, and murders in the series of books authored by M.C. Beaton (Marion Chesney, Glasgow-born novelist). The series thus develops a strong sense of place manifested as awareness of and emphasis on a positive feeling of being part of a place, of rootedness, of feeling home in this part of the world.

“There is something in the Highlander that does not regard the illegal making of whisky as a crime,” said Hamish. “Out in the Hebrides, there was a new policeman, new to the area, and he arrested two of the local and charged them with running an illegal still. He had to take refuge on the roof of the police station as the locals tried to burn it down. There are chust some things a Highland policeman has to turn a blind eye to. Even farther south, they can get a bit vindictive.” (Beaton 2009a:143)

Narrativised aspects of life, once they are spatially identified, show that life is tellable, even if it is about the oddities and dullness of isolated people, that apparently insignificant, minor incidents break familiarity and turn into unusual, sometimes even fantastic experiences, that everyday events can shape and foreground identities,

participating in a symbolic conversation between tellers and audience meant to underline the individual's confidence in being decoded properly:

They took her [Patricia Martyn-Broyd, a writer] to a restaurant across from the television centre. It was called Tatty Tommy's Tartan Howf and was scented with the aroma of old cooking fat. They were served by Tatty Tommy himself, a large bruiser with a shaved head, an earring and blue eye shadow. (...) She bleakly ordered Tatty Tommy's Tumshies, Tatties and Haggis, thinking that an ethnic dish of haggis, turnips and potatoes might be safer than some of the more exotic offerings on the menu; but it transpired that the haggis was dry as bone, the turnips watery and the potatoes had that chemical flavour of the reconstituted packed kind. (Beaton 2009a:22)

By scrutinising the ordinariness of the everyday life of this tight-knit community in the Highlands, readers can easily map those qualities and attributes that are relevant in picturing the Scottish character, such as: stability and unchanged tradition – “He [Hamish] said goodbye to Jimmy and went out and got into the police Land Rover. As he drove along the waterfront, he saw with a sort of amazement that Lochdubh, tranquil in the evening light, looked the same.”; a highly descriptive occupation against an appropriate background – “The fishing boats were chugging out down the sea loch from the harbour, children played on the shingly beach, the mountains soared up into the clear air and people were coming and going from Patel's shop, which stayed open late.”; awareness of one's milieu and cultural belonging – “It was only when he was halfway that he remembered he had not delivered the fish to Angus. The Highland part of him hoped the seer would not zap him with something bad, but the commonsense side told himself severely that such a fear was ridiculous.” (Beaton 2009a:186).

#### **4. My Home Is in the Highlands**

We are ready to believe that indeed home and home place are vital spatial elements in one's life as they best shape one's identity, lifestyle, values, and the general interaction and behaviour between and among individuals in communities: “(...) ‘I am Hamish Macbeth,’ he said with another of those charming smiles. ‘I am the village policeman in Lochdubh. (...) ‘I don't know much of anywhere except the Highlands of Scotland,’ said Hamish ruefully. (...) ‘I am an armchair traveller.’ (...)” (Beaton 2009b:6-7).

An important concept to operate with is that of *home* which, in spite of its multiple connotations in terms of geography (e.g. village, city, country) or in terms of sensual meanings (a place of comfort, convenience, efficiency, leisure, ease, pleasure, domesticity, intimacy), becomes the perfect site of a “wealth of unreflexive, habitual practices” (Edensor 2002:58), encouraging the experience of home-making as one

through which we make ourselves comfortable with the world we live in: “Maggie Bane lived in a trim bungalow on the outskirts of Braikie called My Highland Home.” (Beaton 2009a:79-80).

Home is the micro-environment which facilitates a display and performance of objects and activities meant to foreground the link to the national constructions of one’s self, as home points to where and how we are located among objects, artefacts, rituals, practices that “configure who we are in our particularity” and stand for a “form of identity sustenance and cultural resistance” (Edensor 2002: 62). Home is an environment of primary importance as it reveals details of one’s self in terms of room arrangement, selection and decoration, the setting of objects as to house and provide events and experiences:

Hamish went into an uncomfortable, overdecorated room. Although not a Highlander, Edie had adopted the Highland way of keeping one room for ‘best’, so it had that clean, glittering look and stuffy, unused smell. It was all in shades of pink. Barbara Cartland would have loved it. There was a pink three-piece suite upholstered in some nasty slippery material. Pink curtains hung at the boarded-up window, and the walls were painted in a shade Hamish recognized as being called blush pink. (Beaton 2009b:217)

Tim Edensor believes that in this globalising world, one’s identity, either individual, group or national one, can be best expressed and experienced in mundane, quotidian forms (cf. Edensor 2002:VI), as these forms enable people to make and remake connections between certain levels, that is, the local and the national, the national and the global, so that the everyday and the extraordinary could generate the image of a whole culture in its dynamism, in its reaction and interference with universal forces, in its progress and advancement to an acknowledged uniqueness and specificity. Here are some examples to demonstrate how everydayness and ordinariness can render one’s peculiar self such as Major Neal’s eating habits – “Major Neal, with true Highland thrift, was eating his lunch at the television company’s mobile restaurant set up in the forecourt of the castle.” (Beaton 2009b: 89), or Dr Brodie’s regular practice week – “Monday’s the busy day when they all come in with their bad backs. It’s the Highland disease. Every Monday morning, a bad back strikes them and they want a line so they do not have to go to work.” (Beaton 2008:86), or the villagers’ end of the day, as seen by the protagonist of the novel:

Hamish parked the car at the police station, locked his hens away for the night, checked on his sheep, and then went for a walk along the waterfront in the watery greenish light of the Highland gloaming. The little waves of the sea loch, calmer now that the wind had moderated, slapped at the pebbled shore. (...) There were smells of cooking and strong tea as the villagers prepared their evening meals. The lights of television sets flickered behind cottage windows, bringing the outside world to

Lochdubh where villagers probably studied the latest fighting in Somalia with indifferent eyes while they talked about more interesting death close at hand. (Beaton 2009a:85-86)

Reading identities in terms of people's everyday life experiences, in their leisure pursuits, in their work practices, their domestic routines and community involvement, enables one to grasp their general attempt to fashion a particular culture which is later to become the repository and heritage for the generations to come through the values, myths, symbols they embody and through which they can be differentiated from others. Details help in acknowledging diversity: "But you know what the Highlands are like. Everyone knows everyone else. I heard you had been away" (Beaton 2009b:6). In the Highlands, "Husbands are always angry. That's their nature, and the nature of us women is not to pay a blind bit o' notice." (Beaton 2009b:172). Communication in the Highlands means that "the Highland tomtoms had been beating." (Beaton 2009a:61). At the Smiley brothers' croft, "They neffer harmed a fly in their lives. All they did was make a wee bit o' whisky which is every Highlandman's right." (Beaton 2009a:238)

Theorists in the field of social psychology agree that there are several essential indicators to measure ethnic group attachments, such as the sense of belonging to that ethnic group, the particular relevance of ethnic identity, the valuation of ethnic ancestry, and the importance of carrying on ethnic traditions and customs (see Phan and Breton 2009:98), even if they render a rather negative and discouraging image of the individual/group referred to, such as the northern Scots, assessed by a very member of the community, Mrs Macbean, in her conversation with a non-Highlander, Sarah Hudson, as follows:

"I never thought of any crime being committed up here," said Sarah. "I mean, people like me come up here for the quality of life."

"Quality of life! Ha! Sheep and rain and cold and a lot o' stupid teuchters."

"Teuchters?"

"Highlanders. Sly, malicious and stupid. I hate the bastards."

Sarah looked puzzled. "But they're all Scottish. Just like you."

"Don't insult me ." Sarah covered her glass as another roller flew through the air. Mrs Macbean leaned forward and whispered, "It's like one o' those primitive tribes up the Amazon. They havenae *evolved*." (Beaton 2009a:132-133)

Most often ethnic identity emerges from the interaction between place and social behaviour, being the epitome of the interconnections between inherited cultures and emotions on the one hand, and the feeling of belonging to an authentic, specific territorial community, even if that territory sometimes fades into memories or past experiences, on the other; it speaks of values and meanings generated by the

individual reactions to the physicality and spirituality of a particular space or place:

Lochdubh began to prepare for Christmas. Fairy lights were strung from the cottages to the standard lamps on the waterfront. Christmas trees appeared in cottage windows, fake Christmas trees. There were fir trees all over the surrounding hills but the housewives of Lochdubh did not want the business of vacuuming pine needles from their carpets and so there were plastic trees of silver and gold and of an improbable green. (...) The Currie sisters alone did not have any Christmas decorations, following the old Scottish Calvinistic belief that Christmas decorations were sinful. (Beaton 2009a:274-275)

The traditional image of a monolithic ethnic group is added a new dimension, that of diversity, alterity as an effect of the growing migration facilitated by the globalising tendencies sensed in all the areas of our individual and national being. It thus allows the old places to be open to newcomers getting emplaced on Scottish territories, yet preserving their aura of difference and peculiarity, generously and positively acknowledged, as exemplified in the conversation between two Highlanders, Hamish Macbeth and Jimmy Anderson, regarding the Other, that is, Harry Frame, referred to as different:

The biggest scandal in his [Harry Frame's] background is that he's actually English. Gossip has it that he thought this Scottish independence lark was a good way to get an identity and get backing. He puts it about that he was educated in England but born in Glasgow. Actually he was born to respectable middle-class parents in Somerset. (Beaton 2009b:226)

If the identity structure can be regulated by an accommodation-assimilation process, by absorption of new components, and adjustments in the existing identity structure (see Hauge), then we may conclude that Scottish identity gets much enriched due to this positive operation with modalities of recognition and integration of cultural otherness, and in the years to come, place-identity will be completed by the common experiences of this new emplacement of neighbourhoods developing a different sense of place and different meanings of spaces. Changes have already started within the process of industrial developments and as consequences of economic reconfigurations:

Why such an excrescence should pollute the landscape of Sutherland, Hamish did not know. There had once been a lot of industry back in the fifties – paper mills, brick works, electronics factories – and the tower blocks had been thrown up to house the influx of workers from cities like Glasgow and Edinburgh. But the workers had brought their love of strikes north with them and gradually the following generations had preferred to live on the dole and not even pretend to work. Factories had closed



down and the winds of Sutherland whipped through their shattered windows and fireweed grew in vacant lots. (Beaton 2009a:49)

It is the very instant when Scottish writing reveals new strategic tendencies against persisting traditional visions, thus foregrounding the authentic, the particular, and the local as part of a larger, globalised, universal framework, a condition that even remote villagers become cognisant of:

It was like one of those science-fiction movies about the twenty-first century where anarchy rules and gangs roam the streets. The last industry to go was the fishing industry, killed off by the European Union, with its stringent fishing quotas and restrictions which only the British seemed to obey, and by local lethargy. And then there were drugs. Drugs had crept north up the snaking new motorways which cut through the mountains: drugs like a plague, drugs causing crime; drugs breeding new white-faced malnourished children, AIDS from dirty shared needles, and death. (Beaton 2009a:49-50)

## **5. Conclusion**

The text selection in the present paper attempts to demonstrate that identity can be expressed on the level of place and emplacement and can be examined in relation to how it is manifested through places, behaviour patterns and everyday practices. Places generate a sense of place and place attachment as a natural outcome of the complex relationships between humans and their surrounding elements, as observed in the ways in which place grows on the Highlanders profiled in M.C. Beaton's mystery novels, determining characters to exhibit their feelings of identification with their home and neighbourhood as part of their everyday life and lifestyle. The author seems to have perceived a certain need to re-define Scottishness, as if revealing the truth of Carla Sassi's statements according to which "Scottishness comes after an unpredictable consequence of the literary text, and certainly is not its active aim, even less its primary source of inspiration" (Sassi 2005:168-169). Consequently, books that foreground the Caledonian cultural profile and proceed to the questioning of its validity in the contemporary age, by displaying the Scottish image and the Scottish imagination, are a good and challenging attempt to validate national identity from the perspective of a controversial Otherness, redefined and reconsidered through places and everydayness.

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# “THE POWERS THAT DECIDE” IN THE J. R. WARD MESSAGE BOARD

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***Abstract:** Romance has the reputation of being an opiate for the masses. This paper intends to analyze if it is indeed a fantasy imposed from above or if there is room for negotiation. The chosen space is vampire romance writer J. R. Ward's forum. Power will be discussed through the lens of Foucault's Panopticon and de Certeau's productive consumption, among others.*

***Keywords:** fan studies, power relations, romance, Panopticon, productive consumption*

## 1. Introduction

The intention of this paper is to analyze if popular fiction is truly a one way street with writers producing and readers simply consuming, or if there is room for negotiation between those who write and those who read. In order to achieve this I will analyze the relationship of power between an author of vampire romance, J. R. Ward, and her readers, as this relationship transpires in a virtual community.

J. R. Ward and her marketing team set up a message board, or a forum back in 2006, where readers are invited to join and discuss the *Black Dagger Brotherhood* books, a contemporary, paranormal, vampire romance series. The forum is part of the BDB brand and it is in essence one of the “battlegrounds” between the will of the author and that of her readers. It is also the place where her fans can interact with her as the author but also among themselves. Like any virtual community it is monitored by moderators and administrators and it is governed by its own rules and regulations.

Because of the way in which the forum is organized and it functions, the relationships of power bear a strong similarity to some features of Michel Foucault's Panopticon as they appeared in his seminal *Discipline and Punish* (1995). In fact, the first element that drew my attention to this convergence was the designation that all forum members use to refer to one another, namely *cellie*, short from cell mate. Even more revealing is the author's username, The WARDen, a linguistic twist on the “stage” name the writer Jessica Bird uses as author of the *Black Dagger Brotherhood*, namely J. R. Ward.

The forum is not a prison, however, fans come and go, some join but do not participate at all, others participate but then migrate away after the novelty has worn off. Nonetheless, it is not a trouble-free community, allegiances to various characters occasionally flare up in various conflicts. Also, due to the sheer number of members,

the rules governing the forum have grown more and more restrictive in order to curb unwanted behaviour.

Secondly, the nature of the forum makes users both constantly visible, even when one is not present in the forum, and invisible, more so if the user signs in as “invisible”. This in turn bestows power both to the moderator but also to the regular members and it is this mechanism that is analyzed by Foucault in relation to the Panopticon.

## **2. Short Overview of Michel Foucault's *Panopticism***

The Panopticon is discussed in one of Foucault's fundamental works, *Discipline and Punish* (1995) and is presented as a crossroads in the history of Western civilisation, a moment that marked the turning point for a new type of society. This crucial moment occurred in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and the change it brought was closely linked to punishment for criminals: it was no longer conceived as a spectacle but applied as discipline. It is Enlightenment, which bequeathed human liberties to Western society, which also invented discipline. In turn, discipline linked people closely and inextricably to one another in ways that the law or the sovereign authority had not been able to up to that point (Foucault 1995:222).

The precursor of such a society can be found in the restrictive methods employed when human settlements were confronted with the plague; the breakthrough, however, came with the architectural design of the Panopticon, a type of prison envisaged by the English philosopher and theorist, Jeremy Bentham at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. This new type of prison was meant to segregate the chaotic crowd of inmates in well-organized, isolated cubicles, arranged around a central tower and thus subjected to constant axial visibility in relation to this surveillance tower. At the same time, the inmates are denied lateral vision, i.e. they cannot see one another, or the guard surveying them, however the guard can see all of them.

At the same time, a cardinal feature of the Panopticon is that the inmates can never know when they are being watched, which automatically affects their behaviour: they behave as if they are surveyed at all times. This is the principal manifestation of power: the alert, omnipresent gaze (Foucault 1995:195) that exercises control even when it does not, because it is enough for the person at the other end, be it prisoner or forum member, to assume that s/he is being watched.

The Panopticon automatizes and disindividualizes power (Foucault 1995:202), which means that it no longer matters who exercises power, who sits in that guard tower. At the same time it amplifies power (Foucault 1995:207), its structure allowing it to spread to encompass as many bodies as possible, but also to intensify in strength and control. It comes as little surprise then that, despite Jeremy Bentham's unsuccessful efforts at the time to build this type of prison, its model has been adopted under various guises in Western society, defining macro and micro relationships of

power in society: prisons have come to resemble schools, factories, barracks, hospitals and, why not, a virtual forum.

### **3. Relationships of Power in the J. R. Ward Message Board**

The Internet has been dubbed the great equalizer, bringing together people from all walks of life, offering platforms for community building, communities that could never have been organized outside the virtual landscape, communities whose sheer number of members would have been impossible to round up offline. The J. R. Ward message board is such a community.

Apart from the much lauded lateral relationships which they facilitate, as well as creating brand communities, lovemarks, affinity spaces, affective alliances (Jenkins, 2006, loc. 1430-31) and collective intelligence, forums and virtual fan gatherings are also discreetly but thoroughly regulated. The authority levels of the J. R. Ward message board consist of administrators and moderators whose job is to oversee the forum's day to day running, to make sure that the rules are observed, to answer members' various queries and in general to supervise conversations and posts ensuring that various conflicts do not escalate.

The forum might not have the obvious structure of a panopticon, yet it manages to ensure one of panopticism's main tenets: constant, albeit discontinuous visibility (Foucault 1995:202), as well as, I would contend, simultaneous invisibility of authority. One such example would be the manner in which the rules of the forum are displayed. The physical organization of the forum is such that the rules are pinned, namely they appear at the top of each section and subsection, ensuring the same axial visibility of authority Foucault was mentioning.

The rules that govern the forum and fans' behaviour are mainly aimed at maintaining an environment conducive to civil discussions. Some of them censor profanity in the forum, others establish the maximum accepted size of avatars and signatures, some limit the language and visual content in the main forum to under PG-13 standards, others interestingly prohibit the fans from manifesting "ownership" over the fictional characters especially in their usernames (because "ownership" belongs to the writer).

So what exactly is J. R. Ward's position in the forum? Firstly, she does not appear to involve herself in matters that concern the rules, and rule-breaking, yet she does occasionally intervene to calm the fans' tempers. She also appears to interact laterally with the fans that are forum members and defer to the authority of the moderators. There is at least one instance when she admits to having been chastised for her "potty mouth".

Another important indication of her ambiguous position in the forum is her username: The WARDen, a pun on her *nom de plume*. Forum members also have unusual monikers; they do not address one another as members but as *cellies*, from cell

mate. It is also an official label under their avatars. This perhaps unconscious distribution of relationships is a muted but startling connection to Foucault's discussion on panopticism.

The WARDen acts like the central axis around which the forum is built. It is in relation to her and her name that the *cellies* receive their appellation. In this respect she appears to be the sovereign body, even more so when we take into consideration the rule regarding "ownership" of the fictional characters and of the story. Infringing copyright is similar to what Foucault calls a violation of the sovereign body. Nevertheless, while J. R. Ward may be the central axis of the message board, much like the structure of discipline and punishment post-18<sup>th</sup> century, the power of authority lies in multiplicity (Foucault 1995:220), and in the forum, with the administrators and moderators. Discipline in the Panopticon-like structure is enforced by someone other than the sovereign.

In a panoptic system, power becomes automated and anonymous, and later when the disciplinary system becomes incorporated in society, surveillance becomes faceless, invisible. However, a virtual forum does not operate like a panoptic prison with its vertical display and central guard tower. In the J. R. Ward message board, power manifests itself rather paradoxically.

Firstly, the moderators and administrators of the forum are known, high profile figures. Due to the nature of how a virtual community operates, any public post that they, or any other member, make is visible to anyone. They, of course, have additional controls that regular *cellies* do not have access to, and which allow them to manage the board by deleting posts and threads or closing discussions. They are generally able to make any modification necessary to any member or website software or content. Their power is considerable.

On the other hand, presence in a virtual community is communicated through a sign, usually an image and a text, an avatar and a username. Additionally, there is an unmitigated distance between the sign and the real-life referent, which allows for a high level of uncertainty, a gap between the forum member's persona and their offline identity. Foucault (1995:201) specifies that in the panoptic model of power, the inmates do not know or see their guards; more so, it matters little who is in the tower, behind the surveillance apparatus, who exercises power and especially when. It is enough for the object of surveillance to believe s/he is being watched.

Constant visibility of the inmate is a hallmark of the classic Panopticon. What is more, the inmate should see the tower of control at all times, but not who is inside. Power should be unverifiable (Foucault 1995:200, 201).

In the J. R. Ward message board, much like in most virtual communities, surveillance operates a little differently. The moderators, and the users as a matter of fact, are trapped between being visible and invisible. There is also no central tower to constantly remind users that they are being monitored. Supervision does not rely on an axial component, but, rather, it comes from within the ranks, it is lateral. The

moderators and administrators do not supervise from a separate space, but from among regular forum users. This can sometimes lead to apparent familiarity and approachability between moderators and fans, rather than distance.

The fans do not see one another's real selves in the forum. Neither do they see the real life moderators. So in that sense all of them are invisible to each other. What is more, one can join the forum without becoming the object of the field of visibility unless one decides to participate in the discussions. Therefore, due to its nature, the virtual world gives regular users power that the Panopticon inmates do not enjoy: it is the ability to witness the activities of other members and moderators without being seen, which is generally referred to as "lurking". Moderators and administrators enjoy this power as well since it allows them to supervise without being noticed most of the times. Not to mention that there is also the possibility of signing in the forum as invisible which makes it almost impossible to guess when someone is watching.

It is once a user posts that s/he subjects themselves to visibility. At the same time, unless a thread is deleted, posts remain visible for a long time, for anyone to read. danah boyd [sic], a long-time analyst of social networks, identifies it as one of the four main properties of the Internet: persistence (boyd 2008). Once something is released on the Web, it is nearly impossible to retrieve or delete. Thus, being active in a virtual community also means subjecting yourself to visibility.

This invisibility of the authority figures in the forum occasionally gives users license and power to flout the rules in the idea that nobody might actually be watching at that moment. Authority is thus flexible most times in the forum. It does intervene when certain violations of conduct mostly become glaring and fans' affinities or dislikes for certain characters turn unruly. For instance, an entire subsection of the forum dedicated to one of the most popular vampire characters of the *Black Dagger Brotherhood*, Vishous, was removed because of fans' constant disregard for the rules.

The character was introduced to the readers in the very first book of the BDB series, *Dark Lover*, as one of the members of the Brotherhood, with a troubled past and a cursed gift of predicting the future. He develops a close friendship with the human detective, Butch O'Neal who will later become a vampire as well. As the series progresses, Vishous is revealed to be a very tortured character, with a preference for BDSM and a bisexual nature. His feelings for Butch evolve into more than just friendship even though, in his own novel, *Lover Unbound* (2007), he falls in love with a human, female doctor who saves his life, Jane.

It is this ambiguity and the readers' frustration surrounding the end to *Lover Unbound* that has kept interest for this character alive. Fans join communities not only to meet other fans and to share similar experiences, they also come on these fan pilgrimages seeking a connection with the fictional characters (Brooker qtd. in Gray 2007, loc. 3008). Fans' attitudes towards Vishous and the way in which J. R. Ward wrote his story is one of the bones of contention in the forum. There are two groups:

one that favours the idea of Vishous in a gay relationship with his best friend, Butch, a former cop who, right before Vishous's story, became a happily mated vampire in *Lover Revealed* (2007); the other affective alliance cheers for Vishous in a heterosexual love story with Jane, as J. R. Ward wrote it in *Lover Unbound*.

Since Vishous is a bisexual character, it is not difficult to see how fans' loyalty and dissatisfaction might have erupted in *Vishous's Villa* in what was deemed as sufficiently criminal behaviour to have administrators intervene decisively to delete an entire discussion hub. One Internet source mentions that this happened around Thanksgiving 2010, and it was due to the hate fans manifested towards Jane. Such a determined move was undoubtedly intended to reinstate order and cut off any other disputes. As a side effect, it also probably helped serve as a reminder of the administrators' and moderators' authority.

Although, at the moment, we can only speculate how the fans involved acted and reacted, the threads and questions about *Vishous's Villa* echoed for a long time afterward in the forum with moderators and administrators consistently replying that the subsection would remain closed. Such determination could be an indirect indication of the seriousness of offenses that must have taken place in the subsection.

Connected to this (in)visibility of power and authority is the discussion surrounding an important element of surveillance itself, namely the gaze. It gives power to the invisible guard in the visible tower. It is faceless, permanent and, paradoxically, always alert even when it is not there (Foucault 1995:195). And, due to the fact that the objects of the gaze cannot be certain of when they are being watched, they must needs behave as if they are being watched at all times.

As mentioned above, this does not mean that users will not test the bounds of this (in)visibility, searching for ways in which to trick surveillance. Indeed, this strategy of control cannot be perpetuated without the existence of escape hatches, loopholes within the texture of power that allow forum members to bend if not break the rules without attracting the gaze of the authorities.

Michel de Certeau analyzed these silent infringements of the controlled crowd in *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1984), where he pointed out how the disenfranchised, the silent majority of everyday consumers (de Certeau 1984:xi) struggle against the top-down regulations, within the bounds imposed by them, to recreate, reuse, remake the world around them. He contends that consumers are *bricoleurs*, poachers; they do not just ingurgitate the images, signs and rules that surround them, they make them their own, by re-understanding, re-producing them from their own social, cultural or psychological framework (de Certeau 1984:xiii).

He goes on to emphasize that to the strategy of those in power, the silent masses will always oppose tactics of their own (de Certeau 1984:xiv). This claim seems to be substantiated in the J. R. Ward message board by fans who have devised ways to circumvent at least one of the major rules in the forum, namely not manifesting “ownership” over the brothers. The fans worked around this rule by using



their avatars and signatures to make a statement. For instance, since they were forbidden to use the BDB characters' names in their usernames and thus manifest "ownership", the forum members used avatars and, sometimes, matching signatures to show their preferences.

Other tactics that forum members employed were centered around a constant interest: trying to convince the author to write about the characters they would love to read about. One such example revolved around another gay vampire couple, Quinn and Blay, which took fans' efforts outside the forum, resulting in an apparent triumph when J. R. Ward finally acquiesced, announcing in 2012 that this unresolved couple will be written together, in a separate novel, called *Lover At Last*.

There has been a similar push inside the forum in connection to Butch and Vishous, whose friendship along the series had unmistakable homoerotic undertones. Even though the two were written off in happy heterosexual relationships, the fans' interest in them and especially in Vishous has not waned. Some fans felt betrayed by the fact that J. R. Ward misled their interest and hesitated to support Vishous and his newly-found female mate. What they took as a sign of the author's hesitation was the ending to *Lover Unbound*, where unlike other vampires' mates, or *shellans*, Jane dies only to be resurrected as a ghost. This "neither... nor" state left even Vishous/Jane supporters unhappy, since it left room to interpret this as Jane becoming insubstantial in the relationship and it fuelled the Vishous/Butch shippers, or supporters, who saw it as J. R. Ward reconsidering at the last moment and resurrecting Jane in order to placate more mainstream readers who prefer a traditional, heterosexual close to their romance.

Moreover, Vishous is one of the fans' favourite vampire character, his popularity being another example of fans trying to exercise side pressure on the writer, not by suggesting storylines, which is considered fanfiction and is therefore prohibited, but by discussing the character among themselves in the forum. One such example would be the *Introduction* section where newcomers present themselves; one of the most common ways to establish a link with other fans and at the same time communicate details about who one is (or wishes to be) is to tell the others what characters are one's favourites. Aficionados of the characters usually chime in with similar opinions, likes and dislikes.

Another illustrative example is the "Who is your favourite brother?" poll, where Vishous currently has the highest number of votes. Voting is usually accompanied by the fans' thoughts on what makes Vishous such an interesting and attractive character and on his relationships with other characters, especially Butch, his mate, Jane, and recently his sister, Payne. It is an ideal occasion for fans to put their impressions across and express either their dissatisfaction with the Vishous/Butch outcome or to endorse J. R. Ward's decision for Vishous. The general sentiment, however, was that they wanted to read more about the three characters, Vishous, Butch and Jane, especially with the ninth installment in the series, *Lover Unleashed* (2011), built around Vishous's sister.

Apparently, this indirect pressure bore fruit again, since the trio feature prominently in this latest release. There is a sexually charged scene between Butch and Vishous, as well as a segue into Jane and Vishous's life as a couple after the ghost ending of *Lover Unbound*, almost as if to show the fans how such a relationship would work.

In other words, it seems the readers, the *cellies*, the non-producers of culture have managed to use the strategies of the strong to their own advantage. Despite the rules of the forum and the writer's efforts not to let her fans influence her writing, the members of the J. R. Ward board have succeeded in obtaining small victories when it comes to what they want to read, perhaps without even being aware of their own ways of operating.

Why does this happen? Why are the fans so involved in the books they read? The answers to these questions entail another discussion of power, and, with J. R. Ward being so adamant about protecting it, one of ownership of the fictional world and its characters.

In his detailed analysis of the faceless mass of consumers as “victims” of the money-making system (e.g. the J. R. Ward message board as a marketing tool), Michel de Certeau (1984, loc.115-18) points out that even if consumers are duped, consumption is not uniform. Consumers, although they are what he calls “non-producers of culture”, will make something out of what they consume and that “something” may not be what the initial producers of the text/image had in mind.

At the same time, he points out that reading has become an exacerbated activity in a society obsessed with images and text and, probably more than any other activity, reading is a sign of silent production. Because, while engrossed in this activity, the reader and the world of his/her imagination will slip into the author's place. In this way, readers poach on what they are reading, the text becomes habitable, the readers are renters who change the spaces they inhabit (de Certeau 1984:xxi).

Following de Certeau's line of thinking, we can say that J. R. Ward's readers make the Black Dagger Brotherhood their own. They picture the way Caldwell, the vampires, the lessers, and especially the main characters are supposed to look, which is further corroborated by the threads in the forum where the members post pictures, some hand drawn, some of actors, models or celebrities, to show what they imagine the characters to look like. The manner in which each visualizes the stories is not identical to the others', and it stands to reason that it differs from what the writer had in mind. In this way, the readers create something new out of what they consume.

It could be further argued that, in the end, and despite J. R. Ward and her team's efforts, the characters and the stories no longer pertain to them alone since each fan, each reader has their own variant of the same world. This is why there are rules in place forbidding fans from appropriating the characters. Nevertheless, it is an undisputed side-effect of coming in contact with the fans: one side cannot exist without being impacted on and influenced by the other.

Foucault calls the Panopticon “a privileged place for experiments” (1995:204), it is a laboratory of power just like forum can be seen as a fertile ground for experimentation. It is the space where J. R. Ward can test ideas, test the market, making sure that her fans remain with her by offering additional information, teaser chapters, slices of life that they can't find in the books; by stoking their affinities, like in Blay and Qhuinn's case, or their curiousness, like she did prior to Payne's book being released or by (non)confirming her fans' guesses with her trademark “Keep Reading”.

It is in the forum that she takes pains to inure her readers to her decisions, especially if these run against her fans' wishes, like in the case of Vishous and Jane, or again Blay and Qhuinn. In return, it is the fans who unwittingly work for her as brand advocates (Roberts 2004:170) that lay the groundwork for other readers by carrying words of the newest developments into other social networks and Internet message boards. Thus, by the time the latest book is ready to come out, fans will have already had time to adjust to the author's decisions.

Therefore, we can contend that the forum also functions as an amplifier. Foucault also refers to the Panopticon as a structure that augments and propagates power allowing discipline to penetrate all layers and levels of society. It gives power to minds over minds (Foucault 1995:206, 207).

For all its almost 50,000 members, the forum has only a handful of moderators and administrators. The community operates on self-discipline and is to a certain degree self-regulatory, with the exception of the occasional flareups. Regular *cellies* will warn and admonish one another if they overstep long before the authorities intervene, so we can say that discipline is internalized. Secondly, as already discussed above, the forum amplifies J. R. Ward's auctorial choices, becoming the launchpad for future books, with her loyalists spreading the word and, unbeknownst to them, doing part of her marketing. Thirdly, the forum amplifies the author's own cachet. It is her realm. She is The WARDen. Her central position does enhance her status as creator of the Black Dagger Brotherhood universe and she is considered the source of all knowledge about the characters.

One final element I would like to mention in connection to the Panopticon and the manner in which it endorses discipline is that a byproduct of the system are the techniques it employs for making what Foucault (1995:211) calls useful individuals. The ultimate purpose of the site is to sell the fictional world and the characters of the *Black Dagger Brotherhood* and *Fallen Angels*. True to the principles of narrowcasting, it acts like a funnel drawing readers in and, ideally, keeping them as active members and customers. Beyond world building and author-reader interaction, the truth is that part of the effort the author and her team put in is geared also towards making a profit, by turning fans into buyers. Yet, it would be a mistake to believe that the forum limits itself only to that.

It is worth pointing out the mechanisms by which the forum achieves this goal. Drawing on panopticism again, it tells us that these relationships of discipline and power carefully fabricate the individual within the system (Foucault 1995:217). Thus, keeping the fans involved in the fictional universe of the Black Dagger Brotherhood and that of the forum will give fans the feeling that they are an active part in the creation of a novel, that they have a stake in the stories, and that ultimately they do influence the end result. It is what keeps them anticipating a new release and eventually buying the book to confirm the outcome of their efforts.

#### 4. Conclusions

This paper set out to analyze the relationship between J. R. Ward, as an embodiment of a large branch of popular fiction, namely romance, and her readers, her fans. With the help of Michel Foucault's theory on the Panopticon and Michel de Certeau's ideas of *bricolage*, or poaching on the lives of others, I have pointed out that the balance of power among writer and audience is not as one-sided as previously thought. Consumption may be one way, J. R. Ward's main goal may be financially motivated, nevertheless, the consumers, her readers are simply passive receptors. The process of producing meaning is not the privilege of the writer. In fact, what the fans read may very well be quite different from what the writer had in mind when she put the story down on paper.

Neither are the readers helpless when it comes to what they want to read. With the Internet offering so many community-building facilities, and so many bridges being built between writers and their readers, the latter have gained some unexpected leverage to use the power of the community as a means of pushing back and imposing their will on the writer. And while it may not be a widespread practice or it may not be always successful, they all, individually, have one power that no source of authority can deny them – the power to switch off.

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## QUEENSHIP, POWER, AND ELIZABETHAN MENTALITIES IN SHAKESPEARE'S HISTORIES

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***Abstract:** The paper looks at the way in which the notion of queenship – in connection or in contrast with that of kingship and royalty in general – is reflected in Shakespeare's historical tetralogies and in *Henry VIII*. It is argued that all royal figures, male and female, featured in these plays, are presented by Shakespeare in accordance not only with Tudor historiography, but also with Elizabeth I's own strategies of self-representation. Thus, the major notions to be looked into are virtue, legitimacy, agency, as well as, more generally, early modern religious and political issues concerning gender relations.*

***Keywords:** agency, gender relations, legitimacy, queenship, Tudor England, virtue*

### 1. Introduction

There are, basically, three ways in which literary criticism has interpreted Shakespeare's chronicle plays: as early studies in dramatic excellence, preparing the great tragedies; as forms of entertainment in no way different from those of other genres, like comedies or tragedies; or, more recently and more relevantly for the purpose of this paper, as political texts, to be read in close connection with the historical context that has occasioned them (Tennenhouse 1996:109). Starting from this third direction of interpretation, this paper looks at Shakespeare's first tetralogy (*Henry VI 1, 2, 3* and *Richard III*) and at his late historical play *Henry VIII* with a view to understanding how much Elizabethan insight – as both propaganda and anxiety – is encoded here.

During the Tudor and Stuart periods, monarchy was faced with various priorities of political representation, as well as with various forms of political opposition, which led to the configuration of a series of semiotic strategies, revising the problematics of power and the practices of political authority in accordance with particular historical, religious, or cultural contexts. As Leonard Tennenhouse (1996:110) argues, "as the inherited prerogatives of the monarch were challenged [...] literature had to employ radically discontinuous political strategies for idealizing

political authority.” And Shakespeare’s use of political subject in his histories transforms his work from a symbolic act into a document alluding to contemporary circumstances, echoed by events of the recent or distant past.

All the chronicle plays have been read of late keeping in mind what Stephen Greenblatt (1996:40-44) calls “the Elizabethan poetics of power”, meaning that the political heroes of the past are identified with the personalities of the present, icons of flesh and blood in relation to whom all political symbols gain value. Henry VIII, in a play closer to court entertainments and masques, is an aesthetic body, whose performance reinforces genealogy (the lavish spectacle of pregnant Anne Bullen’s coronation and Princess Elizabeth’s christening) and perpetuates the power of blood, just like Henry V is a martial body, whose presence on the stage of a theatre-State legitimizes his power, his success, and the loyalty of his subjects. In *Henry V*, for that matter, according to Stephen Greenblatt (1996:44), starting with the Prologue and the lines uttered by the Chorus, power is shaped around the figure of the king, which must have made perfect sense to the Elizabethan audiences, who easily connected Hal with their queen, “a ruler without a standing army, without a highly developed bureaucracy, without an extensive police force, a ruler whose power is constituted in theatrical celebrations of royal glory and theatrical violence.” Therefore, the monarch’s physical body, on display and often disputed, is central in the chronicle plays, because it is the best tool offered to the audience in order to understand power and ratify it, whether we talk about the body of the father securing succession (*Henry VIII*), the overwhelming body of the conqueror (*Henry V*), the body whose limitations lead to the collapse of monarchy (*Richard II*), or the body that articulates self-sacrifice (*2 Henry IV*). All these bodies, more or less aestheticized, are reminders of Queen Elizabeth’s own body/bodies and her politics of self-representation, in visual arts, public pageantry, literature, performance, etc.

## **2. Ruling Queens and Consorts in Shakespeare’s Histories**

Although Queen Elizabeth I invests huge energies in her legitimate image as queen regnant, the issue of ruling women in medieval and early modern literature is far from a tension-free subject. The best example is probably Giovanni Boccaccio’s history of famous women, *De mulieribus claris* (real or mythological female characters), a book he writes as a sequel to his influential *De casibus virorum illustrium* (1355-1374), which triggered an entire Renaissance tradition, reaching the translated work of John Lydgate, *The Fall of Princes* (1439), and even Elizabethan playwrights – Shakespeare and Marlowe included – who perpetuated a so-called *de casibus* historiographic tradition. The collections of biographies deal with the life, rise and fall of famous noble people, attempting to teach a moral lesson or to pass on a philosophical-religious notion related to providence, good and bad luck, etc. In his book devoted to female figures, which was a source of inspiration for one of the

earliest instances of feminist writing – Christine de Pizan’s *Book of the City of Ladies* (1405; see Dascál 2008) – Boccaccio (2012) evokes noble women who displayed intelligence and bravery and are remembered for their deeds together with infamous ladies, who displayed unnatural impulses and grotesque needs, the latter category outnumbering the former by far.

This is not surprising, argues French historian Philippe Delorme (2011) in a recent book on scandalous European queens and princesses, because history has always been written by men, certain of their physical, moral and intellectual superiority, hence misogynous, and biased. When women ruled with determination, he carries on, they were considered cruel and ruthless; when they were persuasive, they were accused of seduction or witchcraft; what was admirable and virtuous in men, was despicable in women, causing shame, misfortune and chaos in one’s family and country.

And to discuss female figures in Shakespeare’s chronicle plays in connection with Queen Elizabeth I (or, more generally, with Tudor women) is to remember, first of all, the English dynastic situation in the early and first half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. No female monarch had ever ruled in her own right on English soil and those who had – temporarily – assumed power and the crown, such as Matilda, the daughter of Henry I, or Isabella, the wife of Edward II, had been vilified, punished, ostracized. So, for a young dynasty as the Tudors, having no male issue was more than a mere matter of paternal ambition. Henry VIII’s pains to secure a royal son for the throne of England, absurd and even criminal, are to be understood in this line of thought. He goes as far as to declare his first born (female) children bastards once his third wife gives him his son Edward. In his turn, Edward, feeling his death nearing, writes a testament in which he leaves the throne to his cousin’s yet unborn sons. Indeed, if Henry VIII’s England was at a loss during his first marriage because he only had a daughter, there was still a chance, while the king was alive, to secure succession in the male line (as it actually happened). If England during the Wars of the Roses was in a crisis because the crown was disputed by factions of the same big family, there was always a male pretender around whom the belligerent camps could organize themselves. But when Edward VI dies at the age of 16, with no male issue, all his lawful successors – siblings and cousins – are women. It is a premiere, which throws England into confusion and consternation. His three followers – Lady Jane Grey, queen only for nine days, Mary and Elizabeth – will be the first queens regnant in the history of the country and will change the dynastic course, the rules of succession and the mentality of the people. Nonetheless, throughout the reigns of Mary and Elizabeth, courtiers, commoners, foreign princes and diplomats expect salvation and security from the birth (or nomination) of a male successor. This finally happens with the ascension to the throne of James VI of Scotland. The Tudor dynasty is over, but no crisis emerges in 1603 because James is legitimate (Elizabeth’s cousin), Protestant, and, most importantly, male.



Apart from her own establishment as a female monarch, Elizabeth has to deal with the traditional preoccupations of Tudor kings, namely offering the English subjects the illusion of stability (after more than a century of civil war) and continuity (of a family at the head of the country with little genuine genealogical legitimacy – Henry VII kills the last Plantagenet king and crowns himself, then kills the last Plantagenet male, Edward Clarence, Richard III's nephew, while his son, Henry VIII, kills the very last of the Plantagenets, Margaret Pole, in order to remove any chance of a Plantagenet come-back against the Tudors). This stabilization is effectively done during Elizabeth's reign through a constant revisitation of English national history (Petrina and Tossi 2011:6), which justifies the popularity of the genre of chronicles – both narrative and dramatic – in the last decades of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Elizabeth, as a Tudor, but also as a daughter once rejected and denied by her own royal father, needs constant reaffirmation, and propaganda finds an efficient form of expression in historiography. The staged historiography is the most successful because “it proposes an indirect dialogue with established powers and offers the cyclical repetition of the past through its representation as an eternally re-staged present” (Petrina and Tossi 2011:8). Hence the interest in the traumatic effects of English civil wars and the promotion of historical events as an exemplum, but the same narratives are the very loci where the official representation of queenship is at work (Finn 2012: 5).

Starting from Kavita Mudan Finn's observation that several Shakespearian histories feature women in prominent political and rhetorical positions, I would like to evoke these figures insisting on the ambivalent manner in which Shakespeare chooses to present them, sitting on the fence about female power. One of the most concentrated illustrations of this stance can be found in *Henry VIII*, where Shakespeare demonstrates that the potential power of women, which is erotic (here, in the case of Anne Bullen), but also demonic (elsewhere, in the case of the wailing queens of the first tetralogy), therefore clearly negative, can be contained. In this late historical play, the female potential is kept under control through ceremony. Anne's pregnant body, which has proved so disruptive for Henry's family, his country's faith and foreign affairs, is contained while being aestheticized at the king's second wife's coronation. This event brings Anne back to order as she becomes an official representation of herself, in accordance with the traditional, medieval visual representation of queenship. The other woman in *Henry VIII*, Katherine of Aragon, is presented as a passive, victimized queen, who insists, during all her public appearances, on her difference and vulnerability – as a foreigner and as a female: “I am a most poor woman, and a stranger/ Born out of your dominions” (II,iv,13-14). She is persistently presented as an ideal wife, whose chastity is declared by herself before and during the trial (in a litany of chaste wifely qualities) and confirmed by her husband: “I have been to you a true and humble wife” (II,iv,23) – “That man I'th'world who shall report he has/A better wife, let him in naught be trusted/ For speaking false in that” (II,iv,132-4).

The woman who appears throughout Shakespeare's first tetralogy is Margaret of Anjou, wife of Henry VI. The playwright presents her as displaying the most masculine ambitions of all consorts, highly erotic, demonic, a she-wolf of France. It is not a coincidence that she is introduced in *1 Henry VI*, where another Frenchwoman with the ambitions of a leader appears, Joan la Pucelle. Shakespeare's criticism of the Maid of Orléans, with nationalist overtones, is mostly directed against a woman whose visions, charisma, success in battle and in her king-making plans, political flair and patriotism are not the result of divine intercession – a quality medieval historiography does attribute to virtuous queens –, as she and the French claim, but of witchcraft and evil doing. When she realizes she will lose the battle, Joan conjures demons, "You speedy helpers, that are substitutes/ Under the lordly monarch of the north", to "aid her in [her] enterprise." (V,iii,5-7) The swift appearance of fiends and familiar spirits, la Pucelle goes on, is proof of their accustomed diligence to her. Moreover, caught by the English, although initially she holds to the story of her virginity (and, through this, to the image of divine intercession), when faced with the typical English common sense and the soldiers' disbelief, she begs for her life because she is pregnant, occasioning bawdy comments in the English camp about the projects she carried out with the Dauphin. While the French warriors fall prey to the Amazonian allure of Joan, a woman clad in armour, wondrous and invincible on the battlefield, comparable to glorious female figures in Christian iconography (Deborah, Helen, Emperor Constantine's mother, or a female counterpart of St. Denis, the patron saint of France) and classical mythology (the Amazon queen, Venus, Astraea's daughter – a dangerous similarity with Queen Elizabeth's self-representation), the English cannot be fooled by the peasant girl's antics. They see her only as a "high-minded strumpet" (Talbot, I,v,12) and an "enchantress" (York, V,iii,42). To push the connection between the two-faced Maid of Orléans and Margaret of Anjou even further, Shakespeare makes la Pucelle declare the paternity of the baby she invents in order to save her skin being Reignier's, The King of Naples, Margaret's father.

Margaret is presented as a young and beautiful woman, whose charms draw the attention of many Englishmen. Unhistorically, Shakespeare suggests she has an affair with Suffolk, who, in exchange for her favours, advances her cause to the naïve and unsuspecting King Henry VI, who immediately falls prey to her erotic powers. The implication is that, had Henry chosen wiser, as his counselors advised, his own fate and the fate of England might have been different, with a more becoming queen – i.e. chaste and submissive. Also unhistorically, Margaret is brought in as a prisoner of war and presented as a trophy, Shakespeare thus emphasizing the notion of sexual desire and the impropriety of the union between Henry VI and the Frenchwoman, much as he does in *Titus Andronicus*, where Tamora, as a prisoner, stirs the young Emperor's lust.

In *2 Henry VI*, Margaret's cruelty, ambition and selfishness is announced from the very opening of the play by a Lady Macbeth-like character, Elinor, Duke Humphrey's wife, who becomes responsible for her husband's demise because she

craves for what is not hers, the English crown. She urges Duke Humphrey to reach out for King Henry's diadem, offering her own arm: "Put forth thy hand; reach at the glorious gold./ What? Is't too short? I'll lengthen it with mine" (I,ii,11-12). The play presents the struggle for power between Henry VI and the Duke of York, who wants the crown for himself on grounds of the monarch's insanity and therefore incapacity to rule. While the king remains distant and aloof, absent from the battlefield, Margaret is the one who leads the battle and confronts York, giving him further reason to claim kingship, since it is disputed between the sons of York (true Plantagenets, "thy betters in their birth", V,i,119, the Duke alluding to Henry VI's poor choice for a bride, beneath his station, a woman belonging to the lesser ranks of European nobility, with no dowry) and "the outcast of Naples", a foreigner who, therefore, cannot and would not act in the best interests of England, turning, by extension, into the country's "bloody scourge" (V,i,118). This exchange prepares the ground for *3 Henry VI*, which abounds in bloody scenes of spectacular deaths, performed as grotesque rituals. This is meant to emphasize the trauma of war, especially one waged by brothers against brothers, but Margaret of Anjou is at the heart of it all. While King Henry is aggrieved and would like to turn a pacifist, Queen Margaret's ambition knows no limit, the wife scolding her husband for his lack of action ("Art thou king, and wilt be forced?/ I shame to hear thee speak. Ah, timorous wretch!/ Thou hast undone thyself, my son, and me" (I,i,230-2). She lectures him on honour and valour, which she claims she possesses, while he, the king regnant, lacks: "Had I been there, which am a silly woman,/ The soldiers should have tossed me on their pikes/ Before I would have granted to that act./ But thou prefer'st thy life before thine honour" (I,i,243-6). This is a clear inversion of gender roles, both in the domestic and in the public sphere, with the wife criticizing the husband's decisions and the queen consort urging the king to choose another political strategy, more suitable to her own interests than his.

All the cruelty of war in this third play is concentrated in Margaret, who rules, heads an army, orders executions, while her patient, prudent husband entreats her to better judgment. In fact, history explains (Castor 2011) that Margaret of Anjou, quite young and inexperienced when she was crowned Queen of England, was a most unfortunate queen, married to a man who was a simpleton, unfit to rule, often prone to catatonic trances, who left the country exposed and the succession of the Lancasters to the throne of England uncertain. After giving birth to a son, the heir, Margaret, though alone and vulnerable at the English court, among male ambitions which did not coincide with the ruling family's interests, felt bound to defend her only child's life and rights. With domestic and foreign help from France, she replaced her son at the head of an army, because the boy was not yet of age (in fact, he died at the age of 16, during his first battle in the War of the Roses).

But Shakespeare chooses to present her in an utterly negative light, as "She-wolf of France, but worse than wolves of France,/ Whose tongue more poisons than the adder's tooth!" (York, I,iv,11-2), a foreign queen who will not act in the best interests

of England, who, though noble by birth, is only an upstart, getting rich through the hard and honest work of her undeserved English subjects (“Yet not so wealthy as an English yeoman” I,iv,123), who had no merit in men’s admiration for her, because, while beauty matters, “Tis virtue that doth make [women] most admired” (I,iv,130) and, in this respect, the queen finds herself “at the Antipodes”. This is part of her verbal duel with York, when he is captured and about to lose his life. Again, gender roles are reversed because, while Margaret shows only cruelty and mockery (she forces York to wear a paper crown and makes him wipe his face with a cloth imbued with York’s son’s blood, she remorselessly killed this child and then his father, her enemy, etc.), the duke does not find it beneath his male dignity to mourn his son and weep in front of his enemies. York, an experienced warrior and a most noble lord of England, cries, enumerating female qualities which “the false Frenchwoman” obviously doesn’t possess: “Women are soft, mild, pitiful, and flexible;/ Thou stern, obdurate, flinty, rough, remorseless” (I,iv,141-2). The Marian image of femininity as grieved maternity is turned grotesquely upside down, a *Pietà à rebours*. York urges the ruthless queen to watch a hapless father’s tears: “This cloth thou dipped’st in blood of my sweet boy,/ And I with tears do wash the blood away” (I,iv,157-8).

A little later, after Margaret has York executed in a humiliating manner, the verbal duel continues with the duke’s sons, Edward, George and Richard, who carry the family tradition both in claiming the crown for the Yorkist faction and in confronting Margaret, as non-English, non-Plantagenet and non-womanly. Climactically, they put all the blame for the civil war on her shoulders: “Hadst thou been meek, our title still had slept,/ And we, in pity of the gentle King,/ Had slipped our claim until another age.” (II,ii,160-2)

Towards the end of *3 Henry VI*, another queen consort surfaces, Lady Elizabeth Grey, wife of Edward IV York. Marian iconography and demonic accusations flow again into each other, as it happens in *1 Henry VI*. Her hair let down, a picture of despair and vulnerability, Elizabeth waits for Edward together with her two small boys, fatherless as a consequence of the civil war. The mourning widow, standing by the roadside, appeals to the man’s power and the king’s influence to help her regain her husband’s lands and fortune, presenting herself as an embodiment of misery and destitution. Her vulnerability seems to be, however, charged with eroticism because Edward falls immediately in love and proposes to her. Although she evokes female virtue (translated as loyalty, submission, and piety) in her plea (“My love till death, my humble thanks, my prayers—/ That love with virtue begs and virtue grants”, III,ii,62-3), Edward’s brothers, mother, Warwick the kingmaker, Queen Margaret, the French and the English camp are all displeased with the match. An apparent Madonna with children, Elizabeth is presented as the daughter of Jaquetta, Duchess of Bedford, a woman with a bad reputation as a sorceress. Historically, Elizabeth’s mother was indeed accused of witchcraft while her daughter was in disgrace, during Edward IV’s exile in Burgundy (Finn 2012:25).

Secondly, though their marriage is one of love, praised as such in 15<sup>th</sup> century English folk songs and tales, Shakespeare chooses to present their union as incongruous and morganatic, scorned by both Edward's friends and by his enemies. Richard criticizes Elizabeth's ambition, which made her rise far above her status, a commoner putting on the airs of royalty: "Since every Jack became a gentleman./ There's many a gentle person made a Jack" (*Richard III*, I,iii,72-3), while Margaret comments on her vanity and on the wicked charms that caught a king: "Poor painted queen, vain flourish of my fortune!/ Why strew'st thou sugar on that bottled spider?" (I,iii,241-2). Her false beauty and dubious machinations to ensnare the sun in splendour, as Edward portrayed himself (quite rightfully, since he was young, handsome and athletic, charismatic and very popular) are set in contrast with real virtue, embodied by Lady Bona of Savoy, the sister of the King of France, with whom Edward is expected to marry. Bona has everything female virtue may comprise of: she is "fair", "gracious", royalty, and a virgin, born and raised to be queen and lawful mother of kings. Besides, this marriage would satisfy the ambition of English lords, would be a successful diplomatic move in terms of international policy, in short, it would secure the Yorkist claim to the English throne. In contrast, Edward's marrying a widow and a commoner is resented by his courtiers and allies, offends important international partners (such as King Lewis of France) and threatens to undermine the basic rules of royal marriages, performed with a view to dynastic succession (Elizabeth Grey is not a virgin and already has two sons of her own). A bad marital choice was a subject which rang a familiar bell to Elizabethan audiences: Henry VIII's six weddings were notorious, while Mary Tudor's unpopular choice of a foreign, Catholic husband contributed to her own unpopularity and probably influenced many of the tyrannical measures she took against her people, which brought her the nickname of "Bloody".

Although, in reality, Elizabeth Grey was more slandered than Margaret of Anjou (she was herself suspected of witchcraft and evil deeds, she was regarded as an upstart who placed all her family members in high and undeserved positions at court, and, upon Edward's death, she was called a whore and her sons were declared bastards (see Finn 2012)), Shakespeare chooses to insist more on Henry VI's wife and her negative traits, probably because she was not English and because she was at least indirectly responsible for some of the most gruesome episodes in the Wars of the Roses. In *Richard III*, as the last play of the tetralogy, Shakespeare conveniently brings all the consorts together, giving them all the same part to play and having them all join (verbal) forces against a common evil, Richard, despite former divergences, conflicting interests, and radically different characters and backgrounds. Margaret of Anjou, Elizabeth Grey, Duchess Cecily (widow of the Duke of York, Edward IV's father), Anne Neville and Elizabeth of York (first born child of Edward IV and future wife of Henry VII) are all wailing queens, sharing the same social status (royal widows, mothers of killed sons) and the same rhetorical skills (they all curse and make prophecies of great perlocutionary force). In a way, they seem to return to a female

province, as if to atone for their former trespassing; they are again (almost) helpless women, kept away from public life and decision making, after their former attempts to usurp men's offices, duties and privileges. *Henry VI* accustomed the audience with Margaret's persuasive strategies and her ability to talk men into action (e.g. her oration to the soldiers before the decisive battle against Edward IV). In *Richard III*, though, she no longer uses language for military purposes, but in a context more readily associated with feminine preoccupations. It is the domestic context, of home and family, where, alongside other women and children, she mourns the dead and deplors her current status. But this domestic context is still a negative one, since Margaret uses language to curse and her rhetoric has such an impact on her audience that she seems possessed by demonic power. Historically, Margaret was exiled in France after her husband's defeat, where she died a year before Edward IV (Castor 2011). Unhistorically, Shakespeare keeps her alive and on English soil during Richard III's ascent for an increased dramatic effect. Although rivals initially, Margaret, Elizabeth and the Duchess will be one and the same voice towards the end of the play, when they predict the usurper's demise and Richmond's messianic arrival. If, individually, the effect of their words may be minimal, together, as an ominous ancient chorus, uttering implacable sentences, the women achieve as much as swords on the battlefield: "Queen Elizabeth: My words are dull. Oh, quicken them with thine! Queen Margaret: Thy woes will make them sharp, and pierce like mine." (IV,iv,124-5) And the Duchess concludes, like a trim conductor leading an apocalyptic orchestra: "The trumpet sounds. Be copious in exclams." (IV,iv,135)

Their joint efforts have the desired effect upon Richard, who tries to counterbalance women's bad words with sounds of war and martial gestures, in an attempt to restore traditional gender roles, with women wailing (powerlessly) while men fight, and to preserve social and political hierarchies, with the inviolable body of God's anointed king safe from any subject's treacherous machinations: "A flourish, trumpets! Strike alarum, drums! Let not the heavens hear these telltale women" (IV,iv,149-53) Interestingly, Elizabeth has more to say in *Richard III* than in *3 Henry VI*, even though it is in the latter play that she performs more significantly, on or off the stage: she catches the attention of the king and marries him, then she produces a male heir, securing the Yorkist claim to the English crown. But there, she is more talked about than she actually talks herself. In the last part of the tetralogy, she recovers her voice, apparently following the example of her rival (Margaret) and mother-in-law (the Duchess). However, she emerges as a very clever and focused woman in the verbal duels with Richard, brilliant exchanges covering a whole scene, closer to the witty repartees of the later novels of manners than to 16<sup>th</sup> century dramatic replies. For this, Shakespeare must have inspired himself from Thomas More's *Richard III* (1516-1517; Wegemer 2007), where Henry VIII's advisor also pictures Elizabeth Woodville as an intelligent, self-possessed woman, perfectly capable of arguing at length with the cardinal who has come to take away her sons and imprison

them in the Tower. She shows extraordinary power and passion in confronting King Richard's envoys, but like More's depiction of Hastings, she lacks – according to Gerard Wegemer (2007:38) – the judgment and character stemming from true virtue, essential in order to accomplish justice. In the end, she fails to protect her sons and they are taken away from her, just like in Shakespeare's *Richard III*, where her brother-in-law finally persuades her to give away her eldest daughter, Elizabeth, to wed her brothers' murderer. Other elements Shakespeare must have borrowed from Thomas More include the urge to discuss the place of marriage in English society, starting from Edward's and Elizabeth Grey's love. In More's play (cf. Wegemer 2007), Edward IV comments on the consequences of politicizing marriage: he places personal happiness in opposition with the desire to increase wealth and foreign alliances, which drives most monarchs. Duchess Cecily, on the other hand, deplores the personal choices her son made to the detriment of political duties, arguing that the sacrosanct majesty of a prince's blood would spawn mongrel, degenerate kings, therefore criticizing the royal heir's idea of wedding a commoner, with no dowry and no significant connections.

In Shakespeare's *Richard III*, Margaret accuses Elizabeth of being “a queen in jest, only to fill the scene” (IV,iv,91). In fact, those female characters, who are only extras and spares in the economy of the play, are Anne Neville and Elizabeth of York. Their potential is dramatic and intense, given their bridging role. Anne, daughter of Warwick the kingmaker, a Yorkist supporter first, marries into the Lancastrian faction (she weds Edward, Margaret's and Henry VI's son) and then is used by Richard III, who makes her his own wife, in order to secure an alliance with the powerful English nobility. Elizabeth of York, desired by Richard in order to win back the trust of the Yorkist supporters faithful to the former King Edward IV, is won by Richmond (Henry Tudor), whose claim to the throne, as a secondary branch of the Lancastrian camp, would otherwise be glib. Despite their strategic importance, these two consorts are neglected by Shakespeare, who chooses to present them as mere puppets in the game for power, vulnerable targets and ideal victims. Anne, in mourning for her first husband at the beginning of the play, falls prey to Richard's seductive machinations and remains a shadow until the end. Although she is Richard III's queen, Anne feels closer to the cause of the queens in disgrace, Margaret, Elizabeth and Duchess Cecily, joining them in their grief and utter frustration. Her death, towards the end of the play, is almost unnoticed, a predictable outcome of a short life of victimization. Elizabeth of York is even more absent, physically and verbally, an unassuming pawn in the strategic negotiations between Elizabeth Grey and Richard, as well as a useful – and just as passive – instrument in Henry Tudor's efforts to establish a new dynasty.

### 3. Conclusions

Elizabeth I is a powerful presence in the historical performances of the 1590s. Although she easily identifies herself with English kings of the past, the moral, gender and aesthetic issues of her representation and self-representation are more apparent in the evocation of the English kings' consorts. Although she and, to be sure, many of her subjects find Henry V's victory against his foreign enemies, evoked in the 1599 play, very similar to Elizabeth's success against the Spanish Armada in 1588, his project of bringing together all the nations of the British isles under the same banner on the battlefield close to Elizabeth's plans of developing her subjects' awareness of a national identity (Sauer and Wright 2010), the Virgin Queen's presence is more palpable in the endless speculations about the queens' chastity in the first historical tetralogy. Although Elizabeth liked to see herself as a new Richard II – a monarch who fought civil rebellions, redressed (briefly) the economy and promoted court culture, enjoyed poetry and made an unprecedented effort to cultivate his own image, with an emergent royal pageantry and emphasis on sumptuousness – the Elizabethan anxieties about the queen regnant's ambitions are more apparent in the ambivalent evocation of female Amazonian figures. Although she, as a Tudor sovereign, is everything exaggeratedly evil Richard III (the lawful king removed by the Tudors) was not, Bess is many of the things that Margaret of Anjou, Elizabeth Grey, princesses and duchesses were before her.

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# DAVID JONES AND THE SELF-CONSCIOUS USES OF TRADITION

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***Abstract:** This paper will explore the way that the poetry of David Jones, while generally recognised as being modernist, nevertheless promotes a continuation of the Western literary tradition (as opposed to more revolutionary strands of modernism), but does this while introducing a self-conscious understanding of the role and workings of tradition, an element lacking in pre-modern traditional literature. Other figures with a similar interest in the viability of a self-consciously understood practice of (literary or philosophical) tradition, in continuity with pre-modern tradition, but in modern conditions (Thomas Mann, John Henry Newman, Alasdair MacIntyre), will also be discussed.*

***Keywords:** David Jones, modernism, self-consciousness, tradition.*

## 1. Introduction

The twentieth-century Anglo-Welsh poet and painter David Jones is regularly described as a modernist in relation to his poetry, and was recognised as one of their own by prominent modernist poets, such as T. S. Eliot (2003:vii-viii), but at the same time he had a profound concern with tradition, and his poetic work abounds with historical motifs. In this paper I shall argue that his modernism and traditionalism are not necessarily contradictory, but, while anti-traditional strands of modernism undoubtedly exist, there are other strands of modernism, which attempt to save tradition by re-presenting it in a deliberate, theoretically self-conscious way. This self-conscious use of tradition involves the development of a theory of tradition, which users of tradition in earlier epochs did not need, when the spontaneous use of tradition was still the norm. I shall discuss the theory of tradition, as it started to be developed by Newman, and has continued to be developed by MacIntyre, and shall then explore how a self-conscious attitude to tradition informs attempts by Thomas Mann, Evelyn Waugh, and finally, David Jones (on whom most emphasis will be placed), to reinstate tradition even while making room for the insights made available by the modern experience.

## 2. The Self-Conscious Uses of Tradition

John Henry Newman was led to theorise tradition and how it works during the period leading up to his conversion to Catholicism from Anglicanism, as part of an attempt to respond to Anglican criticisms of Catholic doctrine, criticisms which claimed that

Catholic doctrine contained elements not contained in early Christian beliefs. His answer to these criticisms was formulated in his *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* of 1845, in which he argues that a living tradition can, over time, develop, explicitly, ideas which are implicit, but undeveloped, in forms of the tradition. He illustrates this argument with an attempt to show how later definitions of doctrine, which have taken place during the Catholic Church's history, may have unfolded the original content of the earlier belief in a way earlier believers would not have been able to, but do not contain anything which does not follow from what they did believe. Thus a tradition can change in the sense of developing, without changing in the sense of discarding its basic principles and ceasing to be the same tradition. The first chapter, 'The Development of Ideas', explains in general terms how any living idea develops over time, as its various facets are examined, described, a theory emerges, as well as a systematisation for the various aspects, and how this process continues open-endedly. Newman's theory has been taken up and developed recently by philosophers such as Alasdair MacIntyre, the virtue ethicist, who, in his book *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (1988: 353-4), recognised Newman's contribution to elaborating the theorisation of tradition. The following quotation illustrates MacIntyre's understanding of how tradition works, in the context of traditions of scientific theorising: "The criterion of a successful theory is that it enables us to understand its predecessors in a newly intelligible way. ... It introduces new standards for evaluating the past ... It recasts the narrative which constitutes the continuous reconstruction of the scientific tradition" (MacIntyre 2006:11). Thus a tradition, to have a claim to truth, must be able to explain the story of its development in terms of the way it has faced the challenges it has met during its development, and how it has either incorporated or rejected elements of theory according to criteria it carries within itself.

The concept of tradition expounded by thinkers such as Newman and MacIntyre, as of a rational system of thought, with potential for growth, and which can be understood, reflexively, from within itself, through the telling of its own story, contrasts with enlightenment views of tradition as irrational and requiring replacement by rational systems of thought newly constructed from simple foundations. A number of writers of the period during which modernism was flourishing, and who may be considered as modernist at least in some respects, nevertheless departed from the enlightenment anti-traditional approach favoured by many modernists, and cultivated a reaffirmation of tradition, but tradition conscious of its own modes of development, rather than an unselfconscious pre-modern kind of tradition. I shall use the late writings of Thomas Mann as my first illustration of this current.

In his 1945 novel *Doktor Faustus* Thomas Mann thematised the modern artist who sees the artist's task as the defeating of traditions and the creation of a traditionless art. He did this by creating a character, Adrian Leverkühn, who is a twentieth-century avant-garde composer. Leverkühn aims to compose the ultimate example of a piece in each musical genre, in order to bring each genre to a close, and

then, having defeated all traditional genres, he intends to compose a piece of music which owes nothing to tradition. Mann, who was aware of twelve-tone serialism, has Leverkühn attempt to compose a piece of music which is totally mathematically planned, and free of all convention, but which can nevertheless express emotion. In the novel the piece is described as having succeeded in conveying an extreme kind of emotion, but only at the cost of the devil's help. This conclusion can be interpreted as meaning that the cost of the creation of a non-traditional, and, the novel suggests, inhumane, art, is the collapse of humanistic civilisation. Significantly, the novel shows Leverkühn, just before he sinks into madness, proclaiming his regret over the path he has taken, and stating that he could have tried to establish a 'Lebensgrund' ('ground for living') for the beautiful work of art, rather than embarking on the intoxicating but destructive course he did. Before and after *Doktor Faustus*, Mann wrote works which can be understood as his attempts both to reflect on and to attempt to put into practice his alternative project of a humanistic continuation of cultural and artistic traditions after the crisis of modernity Zeder (1995:51-4).

Before writing *Doktor Faustus* Mann wrote a series of four novels based on the biblical Joseph story. Mann rewrites the story in intricate detail, full of explorations of the psychology of the characters, of a kind which the original does not contain, and which are not characteristic of pre-modern works of literature. So Mann adds layers to the traditional story which would have been characteristic of no century earlier than the twentieth, but does this while accommodating the traditional story. His version neither denies nor affirms the transcendental dimension of the original story, so a dose of twentieth-century scepticism coexists with the recognised religious context of the original story. The novels also contain a reflexive element: they comment on their own method. So, for example, in first of the novels, *Die Geschichten Jaakobs* (*The Tales of Jacob*), the way that the listeners understand Isaac's retelling of the story of his coming close to being sacrificed, is described in this way: "...they [the listeners] had heard it [the story] as if with a double ear but in fact simply – just as we really hear a speech with two ears or see a thing with two eyes but grasp it with one sense" (1991: 185). This quotation affirms the principle that there can be different layers of meaning in a story, which do not cancel each other out, but are understood together. Nevertheless Mann's retelling adds a different kind of element to the multilayeredness which Isaac's pre-modern audience has taken in, Mann suggests, spontaneously as a unity, since it thematises this process of understanding a multilayered story, and so for Mann's readers the understanding does not happen without reflectivity.

After *Doktor Faustus* Mann wrote a short novel, *Der Erwählte*, which may also give an indication of how Mann thought art in and after modernity could incorporate the civilisational tradition in a way which is affirming but also leaves enough distance for new perspectives to be included and cast their colour on the overall picture. The story is a kind of exaggerated medieval hagiography, in which the hero commits incest by accident, but later becomes a holy man, and then pope. The

tone is one of affectionate irony: while it is not clear that Mann fully shares the kind of Catholic beliefs that the writers of a real medieval hagiography would subscribe to, and the reader is likely to conclude that he does not, he nevertheless celebrates the spirit of forgiveness, which he presents as the core value of the type of medieval story he is ironising, and of the story he is writing (Baumgart 1964:163,180). While some critics have interpreted Mann's ironic tone in this novel as expressing a rejection of medieval values, his irony in this novel can be, and I argue, should be, interpreted as an affectionate irony, which affirms what it sees as the central humane values of the tradition, while abstaining from a final judgement on other dimensions, such as what the metaphysical foundations of those values might be.

In his early novels, written during the interwar period, Evelyn Waugh engaged in satire and parody, a stage which Mann's fictional composer Leverkühn goes through before making the 'breakthrough' to serialism with demonic help. Waugh's breakthrough is to a more balanced and empathetic voice, and his short novel *Helena* can be seen as an experiment in many ways similar to Mann's *Der Erwählte*, although Waugh's base position is even more traditional than Mann's. Like Mann Waugh goes back in history and retells, and, to a large extent invents, a story with elements of an old legend. Waugh invests the story with a psychological depth which earlier versions lacked, like Mann, but, unlike Mann, uses the technique of deliberate anachronism to emphasise the present relevance of the tale, including modern (twentieth-century) slang to help emphasise the parallel he wants to make between the late Roman Empire, and the late British Empire of his time (Patey 1998:294-5). Waugh is careful to point out, in the preface, the extent to which his story is not based on fact (see Waugh 1963: 9-10) – in contrast to the way a pre-modern legend might be presented – but, like Mann, he wants his modern version of an older legend to celebrate a value which he shares with writers of pre-modern legends. In his case, unlike Mann's celebration of the value of forgiveness, he is celebrating the belief that the world has material and spiritual elements, both true and both good. As can be seen from the value, shared with the pre-modern writers, which Waugh emphasises, as opposed to that chosen by Mann, an important difference between Waugh and Mann is that Waugh is a theist, and, in fact, a Catholic, like the writers of legends about Helena, and so shares a large field of metaphysical assumptions with them, whereas Mann's shared ground with his pre-modern predecessors is less extensive, since he is only sure that he shares a belief in the importance of humanistic values with them, not that he shares their understanding of what the metaphysical foundations of those values is.

David Jones was a poet and essayist (and painter), and so discussed in his essays the same artistic strategies he tried to put into practice in his poetry, as well as in his painting. Jones valued both the Western cultural tradition, a tradition in which he saw the role of the Catholic Church as central, and the traditions of more narrowly defined locations, which he believed it was the poet's vocation to embody in his or her art. In his short essay 'James Joyce's Dublin' Jones praises Joyce for basing his artistic

practice on the specificities of a local culture, as well as for putting this local culture (that of the Dublin of Joyce's youth) in the spatially and temporally wider framework of Western culture, respecting its physical details and recognising the multiple layers of influence which have contributed to making it. He suggests that English was the right language for Joyce's project, as it is the lingua franca of the day (Jones 1959a:304). So Jones sees Joyce's literary project as capturing the Western tradition, in its development up to his time, using the language of his time, but capturing the whole tradition, and capturing it by meticulously recording physical details. Interestingly, in Joyce's technique, widely seen as characteristic of high modernism, Jones discerns a Celtic delight in intricacy, as well as a traditional Catholic, philosophically Thomist, commitment to the idea that knowledge starts from the particular and moves to the general (Jones 1978: 58; 1959a:306).

David Jones has an unusual perspective on British tradition for an English-language writer, because he is immersed in the Welsh view of British history, which contains a continuous historical consciousness of the history of Britain reaching back to Roman times. He presents this longer Welsh historical memory as not of exclusively Welsh interest, but as relevant to all inhabitants of the Island of Britain, and he stresses that the Welsh historical tradition has always understood the Island to be a single realm, a point he makes in his essay 'Wales and the Crown' (1959b:45). So his understanding of the tradition of the Island of Britain, which he intends to celebrate artistically, is inclusive, including the Welsh and English strands (and the Scottish, though his knowledge in this case is more limited, and he believes in writing about what he knows), and he is inclusive also in terms of the wider Western context, Christian and pre-Christian, inside which he constantly situates the British tradition.

The second of Jones' major poetic works, *The Anathemata*, is both an embodiment of his artistic principles in a work of art, and also a theoretical statement of those principles, just as the long Preface is an important statement of what he is trying to achieve in the poem. In *The Anathemata* he is attempting a kind of epic presentation and embodiment of the tradition of the Island of Britain in the context of Western civilisation. The Preface describes the 'bardic' role which he believes the poet should play in his or her society, a role which involves discovering the society's 'mythus' and embodying it in poetry – and this role adheres to the poet whether the role is explicitly recognised in the poet's society, or not, as Jones fears it is not in a modern culture (Jones 1972:20-1). As to the society's 'mythus', which it is the poet's role to embody in poetry, Jones frequently uses the word 'deposit' (e.g. Jones 1972:20, 21, 35, 40) to describe it (see Piggott 1996:333), a term which suggests the alluvial building up of land at, for example, an estuary, and which relates to geology and archaeology, both fields which play important parts in the poem.

The idea of accumulation is connected with Jones' theory of what the art work is for. As he explains right at the beginning of the Preface, he has aimed to collect everything he has found, quoting the early medieval author of *Historia Brittonum*,

Nennius (see Jones 1972:9), who asserted this aim at the beginning of his work. Jones believes that the poet must gather together all materials with which he is familiar (but not those he does not know: 'There must be no mugging-up, no 'ought to know', or 'try to feel'; for only what is actually loved and known can be seen *sub specie aeternitatis*' Jones 1972:24) and also that every sign collected must be allowed to signify in every way it can: "The arts abhors any loppings off of meanings or any emptying out, any lessening of the totality of connotation, any loss of recession and thickness through" (Jones 1972:24). So he is aiming at an inclusive representation of the tradition he knows, with a self-conscious awareness of the multiplicity of meanings that he is accumulating, and of how his accumulation of poetic signs represents the complex accumulation of signifying material which forms his culture.

Having shown, in the Preface, his careful consideration and detailed theorisation of what a cultural tradition is, and how an artist can approach representing it, Jones gives the reader in the poem itself a demonstration of how his theories can be put into practice. When examining the shape of *The Anathemata* it has to be borne in mind that Jones described it as a set of fragments in its subtitle, 'Fragment of an Attempted Writing', so that it cannot be regarded as constituting his complete vision; however, it is arguable that, given his ambition to represent everything he knows from the Western tradition pertaining to the Island of Britain, any attempt of his was bound to be fragmentary, since not only was he unlikely to be able to include everything he knew, but even if he could, his would only be one poet's perspective on the whole. The poem is made up of eight sections, each of which relates to some aspect of Britain's cultural history. There is an emphasis on earlier periods, especially on the early Middle Ages, on the Welsh contribution to British cultural history, and on London, reflecting Jones' own areas of familiarity and interest. The connections of British cultural history to that of the European mainland are constantly stressed, and the whole poem is interwoven with allusions to the Catholic Church's Roman Liturgy, as well as with biblical allusions, a result of Jones' conviction that the framework which makes history intelligible is the religious framework, which he sees in Catholic terms.

The first section, 'Rite and Fore-time', introduces the prehistory of the Island of Britain, as well as of Continental Europe, reminding the reader of the time when Britain was not yet an island (Corcoran 1982:44-73). This section concentrates on geology and archaeology (as well as having a liturgical strand), talking of the formation of the land, and of various archaeological finds which have been recovered from its folds. From the second section onwards he moves forward to human history, and sets up, in second section ('Middle-Sea and Lear-Sea') the motif, which runs through much of the poem, of a ship which sails from the Mediterranean to the Port of London and back. This motif emphasises the Mediterranean origins of the civilisation which took hold in Britain. The journey out is presented as taking place in Classical times, but when the ship approaches Britain in the third section ('Angle-land'), Britain is presented during its post-Roman, early medieval phase, at the time when the Celtic

Britons and the Angles and Saxons were fighting for control over the country. Another jump in time happens when in the short fourth section, 'Refriff', ship-building and repairs on the Thames are the subject, as if the same ship from the previous sections had stopped for repairs, except that some of the allusions, including one to Jones' own grandfather (Jones 1972:118), make the period the nineteenth century (while others suggest an earlier period). The culmination of the story of a ship journeying to London is the meeting of the ship's captain with a London woman, Elen Monica, in the Port of London, a section called 'The Lady of the Pool'. This section is actually a monologue by Elen Monica, though addressed to the ship's captain, or at least a ship's captain. This section is full of references to the late medieval City, although with an emphasis on underlying foundations, such as on the Celtic legends about London's founding, and pre-Christian associations with the sites of two of the many churches mentioned. The sections portraying the ship approaching Britain and the arrival in London, through their inclusion of a wide range of historical periods, give a vivid sense of the continuity of history, as a ship could have sailed from the Mediterranean, caught sight of the South Coast of Britain, and been repaired on the Thames, while the Captain visited the Port of London, at perhaps any time from Roman times until modern times, although Jones may have wanted to alert the reader to this possibility having waned during the twentieth century, with London losing its role as a port.

There are three more sections, in the first of which, 'Keel, Ram, Stauros', the ship sails back to the Mediterranean and to the classical period, while the other two are complex explorations of early British and European culture in connection with the Christmas Liturgy, and with the events of the Nativity ('Mabinog's Liturgy'), and with the Liturgies of Holy Week, and the events of the Passion ('Sherthursdaye and Venus Day'). To illustrate the self-conscious inclusiveness of the whole poem, it is worth returning to the first section, 'Rite and Fore-time', where, in connection with the archaeological finds of early cult statuettes, Jones thinks of their makers, and prays that they may be saved on a supernatural level: "Whoever he was / *Dona ei requiem / sempiternam* / (He would not lose him / *non perdidit ex eis quemquam.*)" (Jones 1972: 66, see 65-6). These makers of cult objects of however basic a kind are, for Jones, contributors to the cultural tradition, and, representing a stage in its development, are thus necessary for the later stages to have come about. Jones, in a sense, 'saves' them artistically by making them part of his celebration of the cultural tradition, but he also imagines them saved supernaturally as part of the Christian salvation story, to which, he believes, they have also contributed, playing their part in the development of humans' receptivity to the divine plan.

### **3. Conclusion**

A comparison of the works discussed above shows that there is a partial sharing of aims between Thomas Mann, Evelyn Waugh, and David Jones, although their



foundational positions are different. All show a concern to save, or even re-found, the civilising tradition of Western Culture, but aim to do this without disregarding insights characteristic of the modern period. They intend, self-consciously, to view the tradition from the perspective of their time and place, and to emphasise their perspective, putting it into relation with the preceding perspectives which have contributed to forming the tradition. This view is not meant to undermine the tradition, but to develop it and to take it further, making it more capable of defending itself, through understanding its mode of growth. Where they differ is that Mann seeks to build the tradition on a foundation of humanism, possibly secular humanism, although he does not commit himself to a position on the supernatural. On the other hand, Waugh and Jones share a religious, Christian foundation, with each other, and with large parts of the tradition. Jones develops his vision of the relationship between a Christian conceptual foundation and the development of the cultural tradition further than does Waugh, by presenting the entire Western cultural tradition (and anything in world culture he does not mention he omits only because of lack of familiarity) as part of the divine plan – not only the Christian parts of the tradition, but the whole tradition. He presents this vision in *The Anathemata* through a complex weaving of cultural and liturgical elements. Thus an attention to the techniques of modernist literature can nevertheless be used for what might be described as an un-modernist goal, for the continuing of the ancient cultural tradition in a living, but stronger, form, one which understands, and states, the relativity of a given stage in the tradition's development, at the same time as the entire tradition's developing relationship with absolute values.

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# JAMES JOYCE'S DUBLIN AND LARS SAABYE CHRISTENSEN'S OSLO. GEOCRITICAL READINGS

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***Abstract:** This paper analyzes the literary representations of Dublin and Oslo in the novels of James Joyce, respectively Lars Saabye Christensen. The methodology derives from concepts introduced by Bertrand Westphal in his books on geocriticism, with a special emphasis on the performative nature of literature in relation to space production.*

***Keywords:** Dublin, geocriticism, Oslo, space and place, space production writing the city.*

## 1. Introduction

“Writing the city” is an endeavor many authors have engaged with and it has thus become a fascinating research topic, especially since the spatial turn has been announced and established by theoreticians such as Michel Foucault, Edward Soja or Bertrand Westphal. The study of space in literature may be approached by applying different theoretical frameworks, but the present paper will focus on geocriticism and aims at analyzing the role of literature in the perception, representation and production of space. The analysis will revolve around the case of James Joyce’s Dublin and of Lars Saabye Christensen’s Oslo. Ultimately, the question asked in this paper is whether it is really possible to separate the real city from the fictional city. If this separation is not possible, may we pinpoint the place where the two intersect? Referentiality is defined by Bertrand Westphal as “the relation between reality and fiction, between the spaces of the world and the spaces of the text.” (Westphal 2011:6) Similarly to Foucault who draws attention to “the fatal intersection of time with space” (Foucault 1986:22), Westphal does not argue for a study of space which ignores time, however, he does not hesitate to point out that time and history have for too long monopolized the attention of theorists and strongly advocates a necessary reweighing, where space is no longer perceived as an add-on to the dominant approach.

The relations between those theorists who prioritized time or history and those for whom space or geography was the principal coordinate for writing in the world were irregular and sometimes heated. To the chagrin of the geography theorists, history has strongly monopolized attention. (Westphal 2011:23)

Westphal adopts interdisciplinarity in his research and places literature next to disciplines that were not traditionally considered, such as geography, urbanism or architecture. This approach is not a breakthrough, but Westphal's innovation is that he believes that not only literature should borrow from these other disciplines but also that these disciplines can make use of the research performed in literary studies. Therefore, Westphal insists on the performative nature of literature and the production, representation and perception of space in literature which influence our perception of real space.

## **2. Literature and Space. Geocriticism.**

The close connection between the city and literary works is very well analyzed in Richard Lehan's book *The City in Literature: An Intellectual and Cultural History* where the author sets out to give an exhaustive account of the history of the city, focusing on its literary representation. He argues that the history of the Western civilization is actually contained within the history of the city. The postmodern city is conceived as both a physical reality and a state of mind: "The city takes on the meaning of pure text, to be created by each individual and then read." (Lehan 1998:287) Lehan further stresses how closely connected literature and cities are: "The city and the literary text have had inseparable histories, and reading the city is only another kind of textual reading." (Lehan 1998:289)

Richard Lehan embarks on his cultural and intellectual analysis of the city in literature by acknowledging the fact that "The city has determined our cultural fate for the past three hundred years -has become inseparable from our national and personal destiny" (Lehan 1998: 3). According to him the city is also inseparable from various kinds of literary movements, describing the three concentric circles that usually form a city: the history of the city, the way that cities have been represented and a connecting circle that involves literary and urban movements. Lehan further presents the three different ways of conceptualizing the city, out of which, the city as a state of mind is closer to this research.

Questioning the place of literature in the world and its relation to other disciplines which claim space as their object of study, Bertrand Westphal's programmatic work *Geocriticism: Real and Fictional Spaces* was first published in 2007, in French, and it synthesizes the author's view on the study of literature from a geocentric perspective. The study itself is aligned to the postmodernist view of the disruptions and shifts that the concepts of space and time have gone through ever since the World War II. The English translation of this book, published in the USA in April 2011 has been done by Robert T. Tally Jr. who is an Assistant Professor in English at Texas State University. Tally is actually not only a mere translator of this work but he has also practised geocriticism in his own research, publishing in 2011 as editor, *Geocritical Explorations: Space, Place, and Mapping in Literary and Cultural Studies*

(Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), a study in which Bertrand Westphal contributed with an article. Drawing from Westphal's theory of geocriticism, Tally introduced his own concept, that of literary cartography. Mapping and spatial analysis applied to literature have been a long lasting research field for both authors, with Tally conceiving the author as a map-maker and the critic as a map-reader.

Throughout the book, the reader will detect two main influences, Michel Foucault's reassertion of space as central to our understanding of the world and the theory of the "Thirdspace" introduced by the American critical geographer, Edward Soja. Thus, Geocriticism builds on the foundation provided by the influential article, "Of Other Spaces" written by Michel Foucault in 1967 and published in 1984 where he stresses that the present epoch will be above all the epoch of space since the anxiety of our era is fundamentally concerned with space, perhaps more than with time. Foucault pays tribute to Gaston Bachelard and the work of phenomenologists which is fundamental to the study of internal space. Introducing the concept of topoanalysis, Gaston Bachelard sets out to analyze how humans experience intimate spaces and how these spaces become the receptacles of memory, the space that protects. Topoanalysis is defined as "the systematic psychological study of the sites of our intimate lives." (Bachelard 1998:8) The author argues that it is false to believe we know ourselves in time and that we actually need the stability of space to anchor ourselves. According to him, memory is motionless and it needs to securely be fixed in space. "In its countless alveoli space contains compressed time. That is what space is for." (Bachelard 1998:8) Foucault draws the attention to the need of analyzing external space, the space which is undoubtedly heterogeneous: "The space in which we live, which draws us out of ourselves, in which the erosion of our lives, our time and our history occurs, the space that claws and knaws at us (...)" (Foucault 1986:23).

It is this idea, initially ignored in the 1960's, that made it necessary for a study on space, place and literature to be published, a need which Bertrand Westphal has managed to meet through his book on geocriticism, where he is first and foremost concerned with the literary representations of spaces and places. He uses the expression "space strikes back" in order to summarize the various theories that led to the spatial turn in the field of humanities.

The spatialization of time was one of the means of „counterattack“ or „striking back“ of space against time, or of geography against history. In certain cases, at issue was not the balance between the coordinates of time and space, but the assertion of temporal rule without giving space its fair share. (Westphal 2011:23)

Edward Soja's theory of the "Thirdspace" has also greatly influenced the view on spatiality's role in the humanities. While "Firstspace" corresponds to the physical and "Secondspace" to the mental, "Thirdspace" encompasses simultaneously both the real and the imagined space. What Soja proposes is a re-balancing where historicity,

sociality and spatiality stand together on equal grounds. With the introduction of Thirdspace, one might say that geography's privileged role as the master discipline in the study of space is being questioned. The spatial turn is a term introduced by Edward Soja in the 90's and has since then influenced the debate around space and its place in cultural studies. What Soja sees emerging is "a more flexible and balanced critical theory that re-entwines the making of history, with the social production of space, with the construction and configuration of human geographies." (Soja 1989:11)

Bearing the influence of Bertrand Westphal's theory of geocriticism, Robert T. Tally introduces literary cartography as a method of analysis which can generate fresh approaches to the study of spatiality in literature by comparing narrative to a form of mapping:

Narrative is a fundamental way in which humans make sense or, give form, to the world. In that sense narrative operates much as maps do, to organize the data of life into recognizable patterns with it understood that the result is a fiction, a mere representation of space and place, whose function is to help the viewer or mapmaker, like the reader or writer, make sense of the world. Literary cartography as I call it, connects spatial representation and storytelling. (Tally 2009:17)

An important clarification that needs to be made is related to the two concepts of "space" and "place", very often used interchangeably. Yi-Fu Tuan, a humanist geographer, has devoted extensive studies to this topic. He defines the difference between the two as follows: "Enclosed and humanized space is place. Compared to space, place is a calm center of established values." (Tuan 2001:54). Interested in the way humans perceive spaces and places, Tuan analyzes what he calls the sense of a place, the way in which humans give meaning to places. One way to award meaning to places is undoubtedly through literature, which proves again that literary works have the power to influence reality:

But the "feel" of a place takes longer to acquire. It is made up of experiences, mostly fleeting and undramatic, repeated day after day and over the span of years. It is a unique blend of sights, sounds, and smells, a unique harmony of natural and artificial rhythms such as times of sunrise and sunset, of work and play. The feel of a place is registered in one's muscles and bones. (Tuan 2001:184)

In his introduction to Westphal's book on geocriticism, Robert Tally also stresses the importance of how we make sense of a place, using a personal example. His first encounter with London was shaped by his literary encounters with the city:

After all, a *place* is only a place because of the ways in which we, individually and collectively, organize space in such a way as to mark the topos as special, to set it apart from the spaces surrounding and infusing it. Our understanding of a particular place is

determined by our personal experiences with it, but also by our reading about others' experiences, by our point of view, including our biases and wishful thinking. (For instance, on my first trip to London, I remember being disappointed at landing at Heathrow on a bright and sunny summer morning; steeped as I had been in Dickens and others, I felt it was somehow wrong that London wasn't rainy and foggy- happily the rain and fog soon came. (Westphal 2011:X)

Yi-Fu Tuan also begins his analysis of the identity of spaces and places by giving the example of the Kronberg Castle in Denmark and how its perception is influenced by knowing that this was the place where Hamlet lived.

What is a place? What gives a place its identity, its aura? These questions occurred to the physicists Niels Bohr and Werner Heisenberg when they visited Kronberg Castle in Denmark. Bohr said to Heisenberg: Isn't it strange how this castle changes as soon as one imagines that Hamlet lived here? As scientists we believe that a castle consists only of stones, and admire the way the architect put them together. The stones, the green roof with its patina, the wood carvings in the church, constitute the whole castle. None of this should be changed by the fact that Hamlet lived here, and yet it is changed completely. (Tuan 2001:4)

### **3. Dublin and Oslo. City of Bricks and City of Words**

So why Dublin and Oslo together? Joyce's Dublin has captivated the attention of critics for over a century now and it still has the power to do so in the future. Regarding his connection to *Dear Dirty Dublin*, James Joyce has made a very famous statement: "I want to give a picture of Dublin so complete that if the city suddenly disappeared from the earth it could be reconstructed out of my book." (qtd. in Budgen 1989: 69) This statement has been analyzed by critics and it became of great interest to all those engaged with research on Dublin as represented in Joyce's literary works. Hugh Campbell offers the following interpretation:

Joyce's famous boast, that if Dublin were destroyed it could be rebuilt entirely by reference to the pages of the novel, was really about recognizing that the version he had reconstructed might in fact prove to be more enduring than the real city on which it was based. (Campbell 2009:9)

Mapping Joycean Dublin is a project that many have set to undertake. *Walking Ulysses*, for instance, a project belonging to Boston College (led by Joe Nugent) is a very good example of this endeavour. On June 14, based on *Walking Ulysses*, an iPhone app has been released, *JoyceWays*, the result of three years of work invested by the students of Boston College. Whether one is sitting at home in their armchair or walking the streets of Dublin, this guide works both as a tourist guide and as an

introduction to Joyce's *Ulysses*. Dublin has become a tourist attraction with tours of pubs represented in Joyce's works or tourist brochures advertising "Top ten Joycean things to do in Dublin." The case of Dublin is without doubt one of the best examples which can illustrate Westphal's theory on the performative nature of literature in relation to the representation and production of space. Literature has crossed the border and the city of words mingles with the city of bricks in a fascinating manner. The fact that such places as David Byrne's Pub or Glasnevin Cemetery can still be visited today and are easily recognizable in Joyce's *Ulysses*, makes the novel an interesting research topic for all those interested in geocriticism and its concern with referentiality in literature. Westphal reflects on this topic arguing for the power of fictional discourse:

Less clearly on the margins of reality than it was in the prewar era, fictional discourse has gained the power of persuasion. And if credibility in fiction has always been measured in terms of the reference to the "real" world, in the postmodern era one can no longer say the world of cement, concrete, or steel is more real than the world of paper and ink. (Westphal 2011:3)

What about Oslo in literature? The topic is perhaps rather obscure to most, except for maybe, Knut Hamsun's representations of the city in the modernist novel *Hunger*. The research I am conducting is set to analyze the way in which "the city" is "present" and "represented" in the works of the contemporary Norwegian writer Lars Saabye Christensen. The city and the text write each other. The former functions as a space of memory, so that, when it is revisited, it can narrate the histories it witnessed. Memories and feelings are anchored on its streets, which are then accessed in the attempt to recover a time and the people that belonged to it. Lars Saabye Christensen was born in 1953 in Oslo, the city which will become the set for most of his literary works. Being half Danish, he holds only Danish citizenship but writes in Norwegian. He made his debut in 1976 with a collection of poetry and being very prolific as a writer, he tried various genres during his literary career: poetry, novels, short stories, though he is mainly known for his novels. His affection for his hometown, Oslo, is visible all throughout his work and *Beatles* (1984) has become the book of a generation in Norway thanks to the powerful evocation of the city. Yi-Fu Tuan writes about the power of objects to rescue our past and his statement suits very well what Lars Saabye Christensen has managed to do with Oslo in his works:

Objects anchor time. They need not, of course, be personal possessions. We can try to reconstruct our past with brief visits to our old neighborhood and the birthplaces of our parents. We can also recapture our personal history by maintaining contact with people who have known us when we were young. (Tuan 2001:187)



Just like in the case of James Joyce's Dublin, Oslo has become in its turn a literary character and the fictional city extended its fascination to the real city. One will not find the same projects aimed at mapping Oslo based on Christensen's novels, though Cochs Hostel in Oslo is presented on websites as the place where Christensen has set his novel *The Half Brother* after having been fascinated by it as a child. Far from being a metropolis, Oslo is portrayed as a warm place, constructed from feelings and intimate experiences.

The feel of the pavement, the smell of the evening air, and the color of autumn foliage become, through long acquaintance, extensions of ourselves- not just a stage but supporting actors in the human drama. (Tuan 1979:418).

#### 4. Conclusion

This paper tackled Dublin and Oslo as both cities of bricks and cities of words in order to show that the boundary between the real space and the fictional space is always shifting. As Bertrand Westphal pointed out, literature has gained the power of persuasion and it is actively involved in the production of space. James Joyce and Lars Saabye Christensen shape our understanding of Dublin and Oslo through their literary representations of the real city and this works as an argument to support the performative nature of literature.

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# ANTICIPATING APOCALYPSE: POWER STRUCTURES AND THE PERIPHERY IN DORIS LESSING'S *THE FIFTH CHILD AND BEN, IN THE WORLD*

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**Abstract:** *This article argues that unremitting conflicts between the power centres and the individuals from the borderline spaces of the society characterise Doris Lessing's novels *The Fifth Child and Ben, in the World*. The paper seeks to further the argument by applying Michel Foucault's early work on power and Zygmunt Bauman's theory on liquid, thus postmodern, fear to manifest the implosion of the contemporary civilization that lives on global/local disparities and operates through subversive surveillance.*

**Keywords:** *elimination of the unregistered other, fear of the unknown, globalisation, intertextuality, resistance*

## 1. Introduction

As expected, Doris Lessing's *The Fifth Child* and its sequel *Ben, in the World* elicit some quite disparaging and insightful reviews. The unease is evident as Brigitte Weeks admits in her review of *The Fifth Child* that Lessing "is an intimidating figure for readers and reviewers alike" (*The Washington Post*, 1988) Gail Caldwell gripes that this novel sets off messages that "are too garbled" (*Boston Globe*, 1988). Regarding *Ben, in the World*, many critics puzzle over its genre. One debates over the resemblance of it to the plot of a B- movie or 'part horror story, part fable' (*Pittsburgh post – Gazette*, 2000) while another limits it as 'political allegory' appealing 'adolescent readers' (*St. Louis Post – Dispatch*, 2000). Alex Clark comments on Lessing's failing to "explore issues of otherness, of difference and oppression" (*The Guardian*, 2000). It is not intended here to survey such reviews. The mentioning of them here purveys the range and variety of responses that miss or evade talking about what Lessing aims to convey towards the demise of the twentieth century (*The Fifth Child*, first published in 1988) and during the dawn of the twenty first century (*Ben, in the World*, first published in 2000). In her review of *Ben, in the World* Barbara McLean asserts: "Until humanity can encompass and embrace elements of the unexplained in its midst there will be exploitation, pain, sorrow and humiliation" (*The Globe and Mail*, 2000). I am interested in this view and propose to explore how the birth, existence, and self-sacrifice of the fifth child, Ben, the unusual postmodern subject occupying the fictional space of undemonstrative resistance and

inarticulate activism at the borderline of the society, bares the vulnerability of the unknown and marginalised other in the face of pervasive control. The Western patriarchal norms are in symbiotic liaisons with the disciplinary institutions as Foucault would call them. The state is also an oppressive entity that controls through subversive surveillance and faces individualistic and disconcerted resistance. Such contemporary civilization, where the other is suspected, inspected, and if needed, eliminated, feeds on the fear of the apocalypse.

## 2. The Postmodern Subject

Presence of a certain thematic semblance and its elaboration can be seen in 'Subjects', a chapter from Terry Eagleton's *The Illusions of Postmodernism* (1996), and in Doris Lessing's *The Fifth Child* and *Ben, in the World*—the sequel to *The Fifth Child*. This fortuitous finding and the deliberate mentioning of it here do not suggest that this article would use Eagleton's ironical scrutiny of the postmodernist subject, 'whose body is integral to its identity' (1996:69), as a theoretical base to develop the core argument that Lessing's novels can be seen as sites of conflicts between systematic regimentation and the individual's resistance. In the novels, the powerless beleaguered other is manipulated, tortured and abandoned to perish at the peripheral locations of the society. Postmodern subjects inhabit regulatory institutions and the fringes in the novels and can be seen through the critical prism of the revisionist Marxist Eagleton since: "Europeans are no longer embarking on that voyage from the centre of the world either, for centres and peripheries have been redefined" (Bassnett 1998:90-91). Albeit not in the redemptive spirit of postcolonialism as Bassnett here trusts. But centres and peripheries are calculatedly rechristened to serve the unrestrained recrudescence of global capitalist injustice. Lessing, forcibly and candidly, shows her commitment to writing/documenting/fictionally representing issues that always voice the voiceless and embody the forsaken and isolated 'Other'. The semiotic intricacies are different here, however, as Lessing does not summon a racial or cultural Other. This other, Ben, is born near London, the capitalist centre of the world, of English parents inside the Western society—a genuinely legal, white, British male playing the role of the other when migrant, diasporic and cultural Other(s) are in currency in the contemporary literary scene.

Eagleton observes that the body is "the most recurrent preoccupations of postmodern thought. Mangled members, tormented torsos, bodies emblazoned or incarcerated, disciplined or desirous: the bookshops are strewn with such phenomena, and it is worth asking ourselves why" (1996:69). The answer of this *why* is given by Eagleton: "most fashionable fetish" (1996:69), "a concern for physical health" (1996:69) being "escalated into a major neurosis" (1996:69) "the body fits well enough with the postmodern suspicions of grand narratives" (1996:70) and Foucault defined "latest form of repression" (1996:71); "postmodern cult of pleasure" (1996:71)

overlooks “the way in which humans are cused between nature and culture” (1996:74) as objectification of “our own bodies and those of others all the time” (1996:74) happen through a practice of alienation. Eagleton covers, with a brief recapitulation of the ‘self’ as subject from Hume, Kant to Schelling, Hegel, then Marx, Kierkegaard and Sartre through Nietzsche, the postmodern thought (1996:79). Imbricate in such phenomena, except that of Hume and Kant, bodies in Lessing occlude the ironical laughter of American postmodern fiction. In these two novels bodies are anguished, enslaved, and suspended between fixation and anxiety. Ben’s body, undoubtedly, is the materialisation of his identity.

Ben is the postmodern subject/the other in a postcolonial scene. He experiences the tension between attraction to and abhorrence of incomplete self-images, survives from being amputated or being skinned alive. He escapes imprisonment. Ben also ignites freakish sexuality in prostitutes and motherly affection in the Brazilian girlfriend of an American film maker. Ben, the unrecognisable stone-age primitive, chooses self-sacrifice, making us wonder whether we can call it will to power or the colonised subject’s agency. Abdul R. Janmohamed claims:

Colonialist literature is an exploration and a representation of a world at the boundaries of “civilization,” a world that has not ‘yet’ being domesticated by European signification or codified in detail by its ideology. That world is therefore perceived as uncontrollable, chaotic, unattainable, and ultimately evil. (2007:19)

Lessing’s novels, opposed to the type Janmohamed explains, are a re-working/re-fashioning of the post-sanitised criteria listed above. Most characters consider Ben an evil and are shocked at his emergence among them. Stuart Hall exemplifies the issue of the other by contextualising it in the framework of postcolonialism:

Not only, in Said’s ‘Orientalist’ sense, were we constructed as different and other within the categories of knowledge of the West by those regimes. They had the power to make us see and experience *ourselves* as ‘Other’. Every regime of representation is a regime of power formed, as Foucault reminds us, by the fatal couplet, ‘power/knowledge’. But this kind of knowledge is internal, not external. It is one thing to position a subject or set of peoples as the Other of a dominant discourse. It is quite another thing to subject them to that ‘knowledge’, not only as a matter of imposed will and domination, by the power of inner compulsion and subjective confirmation to the norm. That is the lesson—the sombre majesty—of Fanon’s insight into the colonising experience in *Black Skin, White Masks*. (2007:436)

Lessing dismantles the myth of the superiority of the Western culture in *The Grass is Singing* (2007). Lessing’s attack on the Western discourse and her deliberate re-writing of the binaries signal that she is prophesying, through fictional register, the necessity of a new mode of poscolonialism that represents a movement focused on activism and

resistance in opposition to that of ambivalent complicity and hybrid existences. The politics that controls individuals inside and outside their home is considered by the author—a human being, Ben, unusual/different in his looks and behaviour, tries to execute his birth rights—the right to live, breathe, love and be loved. This classic case has been seen through the lenses of the politics of binary before: black/white, rich/poor, coloniser/colonised. Here, the powerful representatives of the Western society position themselves against a single human being—who looks, acts, and behaves in a fashion that living memory fails to categorise.

Lessing has closely observed the ugly workings of the Empire of the near unforgettable past, neo-colonisation in the name of globalisation, and the emergence of re-colonising missions. The *horror* of the contemporary is lithely represented in her fiction. In *The Fifth Child* James comments, as if, on the universally accepted phenomenon: “You’re quite wrong, Harriet. The opposite is true. People are brainwashed into believing family life is the best. But that’s the past” (1988: 28). In *Ben, in the World*, Lessing focuses on the finances. Johnston, a petty drug peddler and pimp, recounts his experience in the treacherous modes of the free market economy: “He had been persuaded by a man on the fringes of respectability to try his luck on the stock exchange—futures. You couldn’t lose, this friend said. There was money, if you kept your head. Well, they had kept their heads but not their money” (2000: 53). Such sentiments and situations find apt voice in Bauman:

The ‘openness’ of our open society has acquired a new gloss these days, one undreamt of by Karl Popper, who coined that phrase. No longer a precious yet frail product of brave, those stressful, self-assertive efforts, it has become instead an irresistible fate brought about by the pressures of formidable extraneous forces; a side-effect of ‘negative globalization’ – that is, the highly selective globalization of trade and capital, surveillance and information, coercion and weapons, crime and terrorism, all now disdaining territorial sovereignty and respecting no state boundary. (2006: 96)

Lessing’s indictment of globalisation can be seen in her portrayal of the helplessness of a British citizen, Ben, who faces mental and physical colonisation in his own country, in neighbouring France and in Brazil. The author seems to have predicted the dire consequences of the postmodern subject in the hands of the *global* long before. Cornelius Collins discusses how Lessing becomes engaged with the gamut of future crises in her novels published in the heyday of Cold War:

This is the prophetic vision she would explore in the sequence of novels following *The Four-Gated City*. Beginning at the level of politics—where in her view derelict leaders failed to respond to their communities’ needs and, as under neoliberalism, consign the future to “the responsibility of individuals”—she also suggest that the crisis has roots in such treasured modern notions as guaranteed progress and technological utopianism. (2010: 227)

These ideas are explored to the extreme in Lessing's *The Fifth Child* and *Ben, in the World*—about and around a deluding backdrop: the crisis and euphoria following the Soviet economic defeat in the Cold War, the absolute control of American-style global capitalism over other economies, late twentieth century wars, and Europe's continued loss of influence. Lessing's approach to the consequences of such a time flabbergasts—an untimely, prehistoric baby is born into an English family and gropes through an uncertain, risky nurturing and dies at the dawning of youth; escapes Oedipus-fate being cast away to an institution by his father.

Lessing's creation of a theatre screen like transparent liquidity throughout the narrative in effect helps repeated recreations of the menace. In *The Fifth Child*, the headmistress of the school watches Ben's mother: “. . . with that long, troubled inspection that held unacknowledged unease, even horror, . . .” (1988:100). The reader is seduced to inspect Ben along with other characters as *the alien*. Clearly, Ben falls far beyond the boundary of the Western knowledge. David, Ben's father spells out: “He's probably just dropped in from Mars” (Lessing 1988:74). Harriet declares: “*He's our child*” (1988:74). David comes up with what many men would do to avoid responsibility. “No, he's not,” said David, finally. “Well, he certainly isn't mine” (1988:74). As Ben is the other from within the civilisation—he is a new phenomenon and therefore should be destroyed, at least caged: “But everywhere over the world is flung a kind of grid or net of hospitals, chemists, laboratories, research institutes, observation stations, and their functions blur and blend” (Lessing 2000:130).

Ben is parcelled to France without his knowledge. The word ‘country’ probably does not make much sense to him since he lived in his own country like an outsider. To him England is:

part of park benches and doorways and railway stations, a person might huddle by you all night so close you could feel the warmth coming out and warming you—and then in the morning, gone, and you would never see them again. He was feeling so loose and weightless and unbelonging he could drop through the floor or float about the room. (Lessing 2000:76)

Ben's feeling about his belonging(less)ness, the fact that homeless people like Ben move from bench to bench, is taken further as Ben goes across border; not once, thrice.

### **3. Power Structures, Subversive Surveillance and Institutions**

One of the preoccupations of Foucault is with the seventeenth-century society which wanted to keep the plague and leprosy stricken people at bay. Foucault explains:

By means of such surveillance, disciplinary power became an ‘integrated’ system, linked from the inside to the economy and to the aims of the mechanism in which it was practised. It was also organized as a multiple, automatic and anonymous power; for although surveillance rests on individuals, its functioning is that of a network of relations from top to bottom, but also to a certain extent from bottom to top and laterally; this network ‘holds’ the whole together and traverses it in its entirety with effects of power that derive from one another: supervisors, perpetually supervised. (1995: 176 and 177)

From the beginning of *The Fifth Child*, David and Harriet are closely watched by other characters—the eyes of the society. As the novel progresses they, previously victims of their surroundings, start gazing at other people—as if they are objects. David and Harriet are at a party when the novel starts—love at first sight being the awkwardly and too sentimental a thing those days, they decide to get married. From the first paragraph the narrator tells us how Harriet and David have earned “the unaffectionate adjectives”: “conservative, old-fashioned,” (Lessing 1988:3) and also that “they defended a stubbornly held view of themselves” (Lessing 1988:5).

The narrator further explains why other people consider Harriet and David so unfashionable. “So what was it about these two that made them freaks and oddballs? It was their attitude to sex! This was the sixties!” (Lessing 1988:4). Curiously, a number of characters in *Ben, in the World* consider the fifth child of Harriet and David a freak. Though it was the post-war Britain, Harriet and David seem not to be enjoying the dispersal of the apocalyptic fear that reigned with the rise of Nazi-Germany just a decade ago. Sexual life is openly discussed. People know, belonging to organisations like the office that regulated their lives, that David had a long-drawn out affair with a girl who probably slept with “everyone in Sissons Blend & Co” (Lessing 1988:5). They break up. Harriet also makes her friends “shriek” (Lessing 1988:5). She is a virgin and kept it “like a present wrapped up in layers of deliciously pretty paper, to be given, with discretion, to the right person” (Lessing 1988:5). Intrusion into the sexuality of individuals like David and Harriet seems to be a part of the process of the society-inflicted surveillance.

Doctors, professors and scientists intrude into the lives of people like Ben and Harriet. The victims do not trust scientists and doctors. In *The Fifth Child*, Ben’s grandparents, David’s mother and his stepfather, both Oxford professors, decide to send Ben to an institution from where the two-year-old had to be rescued by his mother. Ben was in straightjackets and was smeared in shit in freezing cold. Interestingly, the authority figures in hospitals, universities and scientific labs are suspicious about, fascinated with and horrified by Ben, who does not seem to be a threat to people who live on the periphery and are not considered important by the society—for example, Rita, the prostitute, in *The Fifth Child* or Teresa, in *Ben, in the World*. The outcast of Lessing’s novels loosely conforms to the category of madman—



a category used by the disciplinary societies of the 17<sup>th</sup> century to silence and oppress non-conformists; as Foucault implies. According to Simon During, Foucault utilises the works of writers like Shakespeare and Cervantes to formulate his argument that: “In them madness lies ‘beyond appeal’; for their characters it leads straight to death, being connected still to a realm which, though social, transcends the human” (1993:34)/ During also suggests that, “*Madness and Civilization* is not interested in providing totalizing explanations of the phenomena it deals with.” (1993:36) Totalising power structures like scientific labs, hospitals, and most significantly the society, in Lessing, alienate individuals who are considered different/other/mad/mutant/alien.

The reader almost calls Ben an alien being influenced by the cruelty of other characters: “They treated him roughly, it seemed to Harriet, even unkindly, calling him *Dopey, Dwarfey, Alien Tow, Hobbit, and Gremlin.*” (Italics added. 1988:94) These interpellations seem to be the products of the cultural myth created by age-old fairytales and contemporary Hollywood blockbusters. The torture of interpellation is clear and succinct. Ben’s father cries out: “‘It’s either him or us’, said David to Harriet.” It is indeed interesting to see how Lessing summoned the catch phrases of 9/11, *either with us or against us*, so long before—back in 1988. The novels permeate with the fear of the other. Lessing, who has dealt with the self/other dyad in *The Grass is Singing* (2007), invokes the rise of the other from within the Western society and shows how this *different* person is accused of being a non-human and is dehumanised. The fate of Foucault’s lunatic/anti-foundationalist/different was incarceration—a form of witch-hunting.

The power at work and the resistance towards its manifestations come together in these two novels as Lessing applies intertextuality to make the reader feel the political undercurrents—the grim premonitions relating to the future. Intertextuality being the helm of the narrative exploits, Lessing aims at the cultural conditions—utilising them to attain stylistical edge and criticising them in the postcolonial seam simultaneously. Hoffmann’s dissections of intertextuality in the postmodern American fiction will be of use here as he lists the implications that are brought to bear by the use of such a variant of pluralism/intertextuality in the texts:

The social context and its discourses as the “other”, the outside, the uncontrollable, are objectified as a powerful, intrusive, all-controlling Institution within the text. This method “borrows” material from the social environment, and, for instance, makes the allegedly all-determining, corrupting and exploitative Capitalist System, the great topic of the “crisis theorists”, into a crucial issue of the text, albeit in an abstracted and demonized, dramatized and psychologized form which includes the effect of the power system on people and their response and creates the dialectic matrix of (the System’s) power and (the character’s) resistance (cf. Pynchon, Coover, Hawkes, Sorrentino, Vonnegut, and others). This interaction has its own ineluctable logic and creates therefore a very strong design for a revival of plot (as something “plotted”), and for the constitution of character as both alienated and resistant, since, to refer to

Foucault again, power by inner necessity calls up resistance, in fact would not exist without resistance, which is its other side or alter ego. This dialectic of power and resistance can be radicalized in global terms as anticipation of apocalypse or entropy, and in psychological terms as paranoia — paralleled in the lifeworld by the experience of the Cold War, the Vietnam War, the threat of the atomic bomb, and the vision of the impending end of the world, all basic, determining components of the postwar period's zeitgeist. (2005: 74 and 75)

It seems that Lessing conforms to the thematic exploits of the American postmodernist novels. Instead of the nonchalance of their blasting humour she employs the rawness of the real—characteristic of Lessing's novels. She incorporates scathing disapproval of corruption and exploitation of the capitalist system, the dehumanising influence of an unforgiving time—“the greedy and selfish sixties” (Lessing 1988:21). *The Fifth Child* illustrates the early seventies “crimes, . . . shocking everyone” (Lessing 1988:22) as “a telephone box that had been vandalised so often the authorities had given up” (Lessing 1988:22) and there was an ugly edge on events: more and more it seemed that two peoples lived in England, not one—enemies, hating each other, who could not hear what the other said. The young Lovatts made themselves read the papers, and watch the news on television though their instinct was to do neither” (Lessing 1988:22)

On the first page of *The Fifth Child*, the post-war zeitgeist is summed up. The “end-of-year party” (Lessing 1988:3) of three “associated firms” (Lessing 1988:3) got couples dying to flaunt themselves as more of sexual than social animals as Harriet and David watch along, shy but sociable. The couple is being watched too and being judged as “freaks and oddballs” (Lessing 1988:4) as this “was the sixties!” (Lessing 1988:4)—to generalise, it was a time when sexual exhibitionism marked freedom and progress in the capitalist West.

Harriet and David fail to conform to such a trend and are being ostracized as they chose family over sex. Lessing portrays a society which has become hollow from within and is about to implode. The zeitgeist of the post-war Britain brings in the sexual freedom. People who fail to go wild are considered abnormal (both Harriet and David). The bubble bursts—families start falling apart. The Lovatt's, however, face the change and buy a home far away from London—a big house where they host guests of all sorts, even the fashionable divorcee. The couple nurtures four children successfully somehow coping with the economic pressures that Britain faces in the bipolar world where it plays the second fiddle to America. Everything changes with the appearance of the fifth child. Crime rises and hell emerges in the heaven of the Lovatt's. Harriet resists the oppression of institutions like hospitals, like the one “in the North of England” (Lessing 1988:78) where Ben, a child, is almost left to die—this episode straddles over 8 pages, from 78 to 85. (Lessing 1988) Alone Harriet fails to have any noticeable effect on the power structures.

The society seems to be trying to erase the World War II and the loss of overseas colonies from its memory. Queuing behind America, Britain, seeks to salvage what remained of the age of Empire. In such a context, intertextuality being the stylistic trait, Lessing's *The Fifth Child* shows the effect of outside pressure on people—the pressure of claiming the joys of what life failed to offer during the first half of the twentieth century. Perhaps, unaware of the orientalist discourses, Harriet claims that “having six children, in another part of the world, . . . would be normal” (Lessing 1988: 16) and is chastised back by her mother, Dorothy, who represents the strict regimentation of the society and its utter disgust of the satellite colonies: “. . . ‘Harriet, I know you, don’t I?’—and if you were in another part of the world, like Egypt or India or somewhere, then half of them would die and they wouldn’t be educated, either” (Lessing 1988: 16). Irrational fatalism accompanies such blunt stereotypical articulation. Harriet is not immune to the mistrust towards the east. She connects the birth of a baby, “Genghis Khan with her squashed little face and her slitty eyes?” (Lessing 1988:22), to ill luck brought about by the quarrelling of the couple: Sarah and William. As a Genghis Khan like child proclaims ill luck, impending apocalyptic doom is confirmed through the arrival of Ben. Harriet “fantasised that she took the big kitchen knife, cut open her own stomach, lifted out the child . . .” (Lessing 1988:48) and when the child, Ben, is born “there was strain in everyone, apprehension.” (Lessing 1988:48) It seems: “That twenty centuries of stony sleep/Were vexed to nightmare by a rocking cradle” (W. B. Yeats: 2000).

*Ben, in the World* narrates the eighteen-year-old Ben's struggles against a world controlled by the global capitalist system. In the author's note of this sequel to *The Fifth Child*, Lessing describes a harrowing reality that would even leave the horror film fans aghast: “‘The cages’ were described to me in miserable detail ten years ago by someone who had seen them in a research institute in London. Here they are set in Brazil, because of the exigencies of the plot, but I am sure no such unpleasant phenomenon exists in Brazil” (2000: *page number is not given to the author's note in this edition*). Lessing adds: “The authorities have cleared the gangs of criminal children from the streets of the centre of Rio. They are no longer permitted to annoy tourists” (2000: *page number is not given to the author's note in this edition*). The fate of these children of favelas is succinctly shown in the movie *The City of Gods* (2002).

An American film maker takes interest in Ben who arrives in France with pricy smuggle of drugs and a counterfeit passport—ignorant of such *business*. Through perforated borders Ben is also smuggled to a new market. His journey does not end here. He is smuggled again—this time to Brazil by the film maker who considers him an alien, an exotic creature, not a person:

Alex, who had not for months been able to look at anything or anybody without his mind feeling with bright seductive scenes, saw a sombre hillside under a low louring sky, with black rocks clambering and piling up it, ancient vigorous trees; he heard

water splashing and from beside a little waterfall emerged a creature, squat, hairy, with powerful shoulders and a deep chest, which lifted gleaming hostile eyes to see this alien, . . . to see what threat this unknown might mean. (2000:78)

Lessing, deliberately, plays with the politics of signification here—it is Alex who is the unknown danger to the powerless Ben. Lessing focuses on the contemporary world of free-market driven economy and emotionally void functionality where the movie goers expect to watch confrontation between an alien and a super beast. Brazil has sun-bathed-shores and the rain forest. Alex travels through Brazil in search of a perfect location for such a fight. Brazil—a South American economic giant where poor Brazilians live and kill each other in the favelas and tourists enjoy the best money can buy. Hoffmann is relevant again as he shows how in the aftermath of the zeitgeist people live expectant of doomsday—for another war which will end everything. An apocalypse is expected. Such cultural conditions are considered by postmodern American writers:

Though these feelings may again be played with and ironized, they bring into the texts the issues of anxiety and pain, loss and death, the existential underside of postmodern fiction, its open depth dimension under the surface of inventions. Mailer writes in “The White Negro”, “our collective condition is to live with instant death by atomic war”(243); and Alfred Kazin (in his *The Bright Book of Life*) maintains that what Heller, Pynchon, Vonnegut, and others of the postwar period are really writing about, even though their locale is Germany, World War II, New York, or California, is the hidden history of the time, the threatening apocalypse, the “Next War”, “a war that will be without limits and without meaning, a war that will end when no one is alive to fight it”(qtd. in Howard 265). (Hoffmann 2005: 75)

Ben seems to forewarn such an end through war. His fleeing from country to country fails to save him as he is someone, a creature, who is unknown, different, and thus deprived of the rights of fellow humans and is susceptible to brutality.

#### **4. Elimination of the Unknown, the Unknowable**

An American scientist traps and cages Ben in Rio de Janeiro. Professor Gaumlach, the American scientist, should not be meddled with since he “was a member of the most powerful nation in the world”. (Lessing 2000: 154) In the scientific laboratory of this professor, people and animals are mutilated and then slowly and painfully submitted to death. The logic is simple—the professor tells Teresa, “This . . . specimen could answer questions, important questions, important for science—world science. He could change what we know of the human story” (Lessing 2000:153). Here, objectification of the subject is done in the name of *world science*—a discourse. Barbara (*The Globe and Mail*, 2000) mentions concisely how the

exploitation of the unexplained points to the core problematic in the contemporary civilization—suspicion and fear of the unknown.

Based in the western culture, Lessing's novels show that the state and its regulatory institutions and the society would rather opt to terminate than try to understand the yet to be explained/understood. This is the message that Lessing offers. Bauman explains that the moral stories of the past would end signalling 'rewards awaiting the virtuous and the punishments prepared for the sinners'. (2006:28) However, cotemporary moral stories, like Lessing's, do not offer such reassurance. He explains:

All moral tales act through sowing fear. If, however, the fear sown by the moral tales of yore was redeeming (that fear came complete with an antidote: with a recipe for averting the fear-begetting threat, and so for a life free from fear), the 'moral tales' of our time tend to be unmerciful; they promise no redemption. (2006: 28/29)

Unforgiving to the core, both novels proclaim Ben's punishment in the form of casting away, caging and elimination through state-run/backed institutions. The American director recruits Ben for his next project—a movie on cave men where Ben is the leader. In Rio he leaves Ben in the charge of his girlfriend Teresa. Teresa's friend, the educated, posh looking one, Inez, works with scientists at an institution. One of them is:

Luiz Machado, a handsome urbane man of forty or so, . . . He ran a department in the institute which investigated rain forest plants, one of many similar departments, and while somethings like Ben is not in his line, there was another department, 'the bad place' in fact, run by someone who would find Ben, a prize." (Lessing 2000:122)

This *someone* is an American scientist who is feared by the moment Teresa sees him. She decides not to give Ben away. Ben is kidnapped. Teresa, with the help of Alfredo, "not a superior person but someone like Teresa, a large, brown man, with the same dark eyes and black hair," (Lessing 2000:125), rescues him from a cage as disembowelled, mutilated and deformed animals suffer.

These cages remind of repressive systems Foucault dismantles. The terms of diagnosis and the objectification of the individuals in and by the upcoming human sciences of the nineteenth century like medicine, biology and psychiatry are profoundly repressive according to Foucault. The systems of general categorisation, used by these complex formations of knowledge, fail to acknowledge the differences among individuals or groups of individuals. It is to be noted the system of disciplinary and repressive organisms have survived and seem to have become stronger than ever before since in Doris Lessing's world they claim lives of both humans and animals.

Against such structural and formal menace marginal figures resist. Alfredo and Teresa, insignificant people in comparison to the American scientist, in their effort to save Ben run away from Rio—a city too dangerous to live in. On an expedition up mountains Alfredo discovers cave paintings at a time of the day when light falls on them making the figures almost spring to life. These paintings have people in them who are like Ben. Ben has become too restless to meet people like him. Up mountains where Teresa and Alfredo suffer from the lack of oxygen and numbing cold, Ben is comfortable. He is elated to see those paintings, and talks to them and sings to them and at the height of his excitement falls. As the society fails to understand Ben, puzzles over his origin, mulls hard to explain Ben's reality and is unsuccessful, elimination of the different and unknown seems the only legitimate solution.

## 5. Fear of the Apocalypse

The construct of the other in the west, often as popular anti-Christ figures, and the fear of the emergence of such creature(s)/individual(s) nearing the time of the apocalypse are in work here. *The Fifth Child* anticipates the emergence, witnesses the birth and coming to adolescence of the other, Ben. In *Ben, in the World*, Ben dies at the advent of a new millennium. Lessing potently recaptures here again another classic case: the tensed, anxious, and almost sickening *wait*—a dark desire for an ending—the awaiting of the apocalypse.

The list of Hollywood movies that pseudo-predict, pseudo-portray and pseudo-fight the apocalypse is long and seems unending. Bauman mentions and quotes Jacques Attali who “pondered the phenomenal financial triumph of the film *Titanic*, which outstripped all previous box-office records of apparently similar disaster movies” (2006: 12). Bauman cogently explains, while referring to Attali, how the West keeps awaiting disaster ‘icebergs’ (2006:12). As the tip of the disaster could only be seen—the unseen chaos being unpredictable. To Bauman the list of such ‘icebergs’ is too many to count. He mentions a few such as: “terrorist iceberg” (2006:12), “religious fundamentalism iceberg” (2006:12), and “implosion of civilization” (2006:12) iceberg. In Lessing's novels other characters wonder how Ben grew up inside Harriet's womb. The fact that she gave birth to four other normal children remains unconsidered. The popular theme of apocalyptic implosion would remain bereft of plot and characters if the lives of Ben and his mother, British citizens having considerable connections and from middle class backgrounds, are not manipulated to the end of the popularly consumed story of apocalypse. Bauman further adds:

*Implosion*, not *explosion*, so different in shape from the one in which the fears of the ‘collapse of the civilised order’—fears that had accompanied our ancestors at least from the time that Hobbes proclaimed *bellum omnium contra omnes*, war of all against

all, to be the 'natural state' of humanity—tended to be articulated during the 'solid' phase of the modern era. (2006: 12 and 13)

Ben and Harriet are pushed against the wall. They have to fight this war of one against all. Other characters think that there is something sinister; beyond understanding that resides in them that could be harmful to the Western *modernity*. This process of *othering* can be seen in parallel to the treatment of Grendel, “a monster descended from ‘Cain’s clan’,” (*Beowulf* 1999:6), and his mother. In general and quite popularly indeed, readers and critics consider, along with the other characters of the Old English epic *Beowulf* (1999), Grendel and his mother evil. Seamus Heaney in the introduction of his translation of *Beowulf* (1999) explains:

Grendel comes alive in the reader’s imagination as a kind of dog-breath in the dark, a fear of collision with some hard-boned and immensely strong android frame, a mixture of Caliban and hoplite. And while his mother too has a definite brute-bearing about her, a creature of slouch and lunge on land if seal-swift in the water, she nevertheless retains a certain non-strangeness. (1999: xviii)

Interestingly, it is *the reader’s imagination* that circulates the mythic visitations of the monster like figure. This re-visitation of the monster has not been ended but became more powerful and strong with the big-budget futuristic Hollywood productions where time and again the other somehow makes into this prosperous and technologically advanced civilization, creates a huge chaos and then is defeated by *humanity*.

Ben seems to be a miniscule version of the protagonist of *King Kong* (2005) who wins the love of a woman, a struggling actress, and hate of the powerful. However, at the end of the movie this lord of the jungle, the creature who protects the white female in the face of death, is defeated by the supreme US air power. Rod Mengham, while discussing the essay of Kiernan Ryan on novelists Martin Amis and Ian McEwan, explains how contemporary fiction writers react to “the real catastrophe” of “the irreversible social and psychological damage occasioned by the mere existence of nuclear weapons” (1999:2). Heaney’s description of Grendel’s mother can interestingly be read in parallel to the portrayal of Harriet who is huge and frantic when pregnant with Ben. The way she gobbles up food. The way she waits at night for everyone to go to bed and then her frantic pacing up and pacing down. Harriet’s screams also remind us of Bertha Mason of *Jane Eyre* (1999). The nighttime prowling of both characters and the anguish they go through is almost demonic. The visitations of the demon/alien other is so much present in the contemporary novels and films that Mengham tries to explain the postmodern logic of these cultural productions that endlessly reproduce Grendel(s) in the shape of Ben(s):

Given this contraction of the time available for significant action, and the sense of meaninglessness it produces, we should not be surprised that the last thirty years have seen a remarkable surge in the growth of millenarian and apocalyptic religious sects, since these provide a framework for the disaster which turns it into the most significant event in history, rather than a means of ensuring the failure of history altogether. (1999:2)

Doris Lessing's novels question the history of human progress as Ben's birth challenges the idea of evolution—the fact that Ben could be/is a product of latent gin perplex institutions which create/concoct their own version of the progress of human history.

## 5. Conclusion

Lessing challenges such myth that procreates the glory of the progress of *modern* human history since *modern* people act barbarically. Ben, a different-looking/acting human, is denied life in such a civilisation. Individuals in *The Fifth Child* and *Ben, in the World* confront power centres and are controlled by them simultaneously. Powerless and marginalised, these characters could either compromise or die. The problem faced by the Lovatt's is difference rather than sameness. The repressive mechanisms of the society demand unquestioning conformity—breach of which is annihilation.

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# MIRROR-IMAGES, OR LOVE AS RELIGION IN PHILIP PULLMAN'S TRILOGY, *HIS DARK MATERIALS*

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*Abstract:* Philip Pullman retells mankind's archetypal memories of the Fall in his fantasy trilogy, *His Dark Materials*. I aim to prove that the age-old religious desire for the oneness of the sacred and the profane, as well as of spirit and matter is manifested in Pullman's fictional mythology in a way that religion and love also turn out to be one.

*Keywords:* fantasy literature, myth-criticism, Philip Pullman, religious symbolism

## 1. Introduction

Philip Pullman (1946- ), a British author of children's and juvenile fiction, reinterprets the Judeo-Christian myth of the Fall of Man with God, Adam, Eve and the Serpent in his post-modern fantasy book trilogy, entitled *His Dark Materials* (1995-2000), written for young adults. Accordingly, throughout the three novels, titled *Northern Lights/The Golden Compass* (abbreviated as *GC*) (1995), *The Subtle Knife* (abbreviated as *SK*) (1997) and *The Amber Spyglass* (abbreviated as *AS*) (2000), the two twelve-year old protagonists called Lyra and William, as the second Eve and the second Adam, respectively, wander through several parallel universes so as to save intellectual and sensual consciousness threatened by the restrictions of religious organizations. The mission of these two protagonists culminates in the fulfilment of the second, virtually redeeming Fall, which Pullman sees as a *Felix culpa* (happy sin), a turning point in human evolution, "when human beings decided to become fully themselves instead of being the pets or creatures of another power" (Fried).

Pullman consciously integrated Greco-Roman and Judeo-Christian mythological themes and traditional archetypes into the creation of his own fictional mythology, called mythopoesis, in his trilogy. The focus of my study is the presence of humankind's age-old experiences of the disintegration and restoration of ancient oneness with the divine and all living beings – it is the core of all belief-systems – in Pullman's *His Dark Materials* trilogy. In general, one is the symbol of ancient unity, completeness, the deity; it is the *Prima Causa* (the first cause) that includes continuity and totality (Pál and Újvári 1997:114). My aim is to argue that, on the one hand, Pullman offers three manifestations of the oneness of the sacred and the profane, as well as of spirit and matter in the mythopoesis of *His Dark Materials*: a mysterious

deity called Dust, the Republic of Heaven, and the happy annihilation of the self after death. On the other hand, I also aim to prove that all three of them rely on the bond of love so strongly that the religion depicted in Pullman's story and Love become one.

My analysis on the way the author decomposes and rewrites distinctive religious motif systems in his literary work relies on myth criticism, a kind of literary interpretation that regards literary works as expressions or embodiments of recurrent mythic patterns and structures, or of 'timeless' archetypes. The reason is the most influential modern myth critic, Northrop Frye (1973:134-135), who finds that "[t]he structural principles of literature are as closely related to mythology and comparative religion as those of painting are to geometry."

## **2. Dust, the Divine Embodiment of All "[H]appiness, [L]ife and [H]ope"**

The anonymity of any creator and the failure of the tyrannical angel called the Authority gradually unveil the central role of a mysterious cosmic particle, called Rusakov particles or Dust or shadow particles or *straf*, which is virtually the true deity in Pullman's mythopoesis. Most main characters are engaged in a quest either to destroy it or to preserve it.

The structure and nature of Dust implies that this mysterious cosmic particle can be an embodiment of the ancient human desire for unity. First, Dust consists of special particles, which "from what [they] are, spirit; from what [they] do, matter," because "mater and spirit are one" (AS 220-221). Anne-Marie Bird (2005:191) states that the concept of Dust rejects "the desire to describe, categorize, and finally to segregate all that is ordered and rational from all that is chaotic or 'other'." Second, Dust is always found close to human beings because, and this is the reason why it is the core of Pullman's mythopoesis, Dust is both the condition of and the product of consciousness, curiosity and knowledge, both intellectual and sensual. Taking into account that light has been the symbol of knowledge, life and truth (Pál and Újvári 1997:141) and the golden colour has been the expression of transcendence (Pál and Újvári 1997:53), Dust does not surprisingly appear to be "a strange faint golden glimmer, like a luminous misty rain" (AS 318).

Dust's mode of existence can be associated with pantheism or panentheism, the beliefs in oneness with all living things. Pantheism is, basically, a doctrine according to which God and the universe are identical. John Ferguson (1976:142) considers the Jewish-Dutch Baruch Spinoza and the German G. W. Friedrich Hegel the leading Western philosophers of pantheism. In contrast, the doctrine of panentheism professes that "God is immanent in all things but also transcendent, so that every part of the universe has its existence in God; but He is more than the sum total of those parts" (Ferguson 1976:142). Pat Pinsent (2005:207) argues that this "sense of feeling connected to other living beings, and indeed to nature itself, sometimes involving a degree of awe and a recognition of some form of presence" is often expressed by

people who feel alienated from religious bodies. Anne-Marie Bird (2005:192) finds Dust and the universe interchangeable because “there is no distinction between the ‘source’ and the ‘product’.”

The ontology of Dust is the manifestation of Love itself, the fundamental attractive force pervading and binding the universe. “Dust is only a name for what happens when matter begins to understand itself. Matter loves matter. It seeks to know more about itself, and Dust is formed.” (AS 28) Furthermore, “matter loved Dust. It didn’t want to see it go.” (AS 404) Here the keyword is *love* or *Eros*, which in Greco-Roman mythology was the cosmic basic principle operating the world, also the personification of sexual desire (Pál and Újvári 1997:124). In the era of the Renaissance, although Marsilio Ficino, an Italian humanist philosopher, was responsible for the Renaissance revival of Plato in Western culture, the Jewish Portuguese philosopher Judah Leon Abravanel, better known as Leone Ebreo’s work, entitled *Dialoghi d’amore [Dialogues of Love]*, was one of the most important philosophical works of his time. The author seeks to define love in philosophical terms by structuring his dialogue as a conversation between two abstract characters, Philo as love or appetite, and Sophia as science or wisdom. Ebreo echoes the world view of antiquity, according to which love is responsible for the unity of the universe, also the source of the existence of all things in the world (Klaniczay 1976:324). In light of this, it is not surprising that Donna Freitas (2007:25) believes Dust to hold everything together because it is “the ultimate, unifying and animating principle of the universe.” What is more, Dust is part and parcel of the world and human beings so intimately that “it is as if the universe and God [Dust] are *lovers*, and the erotic love enjoyed between creatures [is] a tangible expression of this divine intimacy” (Freitas and King 2007:135).

Not only Freitas but also Pullman himself seems to be deeply fascinated by Dust. He explained the origin of the idea of Dust in an interview:

This notion of dark matter – something all-pervasive and absolutely necessary but totally mysterious in the universe – was one of the starting points. [...] the idea that Dust should be in some sense emblematic of consciousness and original sin – what the churches traditionally used to understand by sin, namely disobedience, the thing that made us human in the first place – seemed too tempting to ignore, so I put them together.” (Fried 2012)

He even plans to write a companion novel to *His Dark Materials* trilogy with the title *The Book of Dust*.

### 3. Consciousness, Above All: The Republic of Heaven

Although Dust is definitely treated as a divinity in Pullman's mythopoesis, it is far from being omnipotent, omnipresent and immortal. Dust needs all conscious beings for its own survival. The reason is:

Dust came into being when living things became conscious themselves; but it needed some feedback system to reinforce it and make it safe, [...]. Without something like that, it would all vanish. Thought, imagination, feeling, would all wither and blow away, leaving nothing but a brutish automatism. (AS 403)

In other words, the existence of Dust depends on all human beings, just as their happiness depends on Dust. According to Freitas (2007), the fact that this divinity "yearns to be loved through our respect for the body, the earth, and through our lives in the here and now" is the proof of Pullman's definite rejection of the classical notion of a distant, detached and transcendent God. By the way, the most obvious enemy of Dust in Pullman's mythopoesis is the Church itself that tried to "suppress and control every natural impulse" (SK 44), and, in accordance with this, it decided that "Dust was the physical evidence for original sin" (GC 325). Margarita Bertilsson (1991:301) declares that the central task for the Christian religion has always been "to control sexual love and to make it subservient to religion."

Nevertheless, as the Kingdom of Heaven (the confidence in the afterlife and in the otherworldly compensation for abjuring worldly pleasures) is doubtful, people *must* be enlightened about the importance of intellectual and sensual curiosity, pleasure and wisdom, to preserve and make more and more Dust, the condition of consciousness. For the British author, the key value of the Republic of Heaven is the sense that "this world where we live is our true home. [...] This is a physical universe and we are physical beings made of material stuff" (Roberts 2002). The mission of saving Dust is associated with building the Republic of Heaven, which has to be primarily preached by the protagonists of Pullman's story, Lyra and Will as the second Eve and Adam:

Conscious beings make Dust – they renew it all the time, by thinking and feeling and reflecting, by gaining wisdom and passing it on.

And if you [Lyra and Will] help everyone else in your worlds to do that, by helping them to learn and understand about themselves and each other and the way everything works, and by showing them how to be kind instead of cruel, and patient instead of hasty, and cheerful instead of surly, and above all how to keep their minds open and free and curious... Then they will renew enough [Dust] to replace what is lost. (AS 440-441)

The oneness of the sacred and the profane is realized by the Republic of Heaven because the fact that humans are responsible for themselves and, in this way, for Dust, elevates and equals man with the divine. By the realization of the Republic of Heaven, each human being can become the *middle* of his own world, the microcosm inside the macrocosm, the point around which the universe revolves, and the point containing all options (Pál and Újvári 1997:287). What is more, the significance of this institution is best captured by the theories of Leone Ebreo in his book, *Dialoghi d'amore*. By resembling the human and the cosmic forms of love, he advertised the comprehension of the central role of man as the reduced replica of the universe, imagined as a living organism always making love (Klaniczay 1976:324). In this way, the Jewish philosopher created the theory of the perfect harmony of the microcosm and macrocosm, according to which man can become part of the true harmony – only with the help of love (Klaniczay 1976:324). In Pullman's story, the most prominent examples for man as the centre emanating and receiving love in the universe are the second Eve and Adam. Due to their cosmic role, when Lyra and Will fall in love with each other, the (rather contradictory) fulfilment of their true love – a *Felix culpa*, the second Fall – partly stops Dust leaking from the universe, or dying.

The Republic of Heaven also achieves the togetherness of past, present and future generations. Pullman defines this institution as “a sense of being connected to other people, to people who are not here any more, to those who have gone before us. And [it is also] a sense of being connected to the universe itself.” (Roberts 2002) Therefore, the Republic of Heaven reveals Pullman's yearning for oneness, even for the advent of a Golden Age which, in the author's understanding, is not back to childhood but going forward, through the travails and difficulties of life with the hope of approaching paradise again.

Despite of these resemblances to oneness, however, the establishment of the Republic of Heaven also commits to the number two. Instead of one, the number of divine omniscience in general, the Republic of Heaven also resembles the dualism of the two, giving birth to dialectics, the basis of all efforts, movements, struggles and development (Pál and Újvári 1997:255). Besides, Pullman's explanation on his guiding principle also points to the number two:

[I]f you look at the book carefully you will see a lot of little patterns throughout [...], all of which have to do with two things or two people or a person and a place that were very close to each other are split apart. [...] I had to be true to that pattern because that is the basic pattern of the whole story. (Pullman 2002)

Similarly, the number of two as an archetype is, on the one hand, connected to the perception of humankind's primordial experience of separation from perfect oneness (Me and You, the One and another One), and on the other, the two produces dissociation, contrast, distortion and confusion (Pál and Újvári 1997:255). The cosmic

need for Dust created by the everyday joys and wonders of human life, thus, under the great enterprise of the Republic of Heaven requires the oneness of Eve and Adam becoming two, in other words the sacrifice of Lyra and Will's love.

Nevertheless, Love for and from Dust, as the intellectual and sensual consciousness, is above everything – not by obligation but by *free will*. As one of the main manifestations of religious cults, devotion is the symbol of self-sacrifice, with the function of implying *dependence on and love for* the deity (Pál and Újvári 1997:29). In a deeper sense, sacrifice can renew the world, the relationship of human and gods (Pál and Újvári 1997:29). This is exactly what happens to Pullman's protagonists, whose sacrifice of their own happiness of growing up together saves, restores, even renews the relationship between Dust and all conscious beings within the framework of the Republic of Heaven. According to Freitas (2007:156),

Lyra and Will choose to love in a way that sacrifices their own desire to be together on behalf of their larger love for all worlds. They sacrifice their own erotic love to save Erotic Love, to allow Love to flourish among others for all the future. This is, Pullman implies, the right choice, but it is no less difficult because it is right.

In light of this, Pullman's story implies that “grand meanings in life are made, not by the imposition of external forces but through an individual's daily choices to help others” (Freitas and King 2007:165). Without Dust there is no life. Obligation and altruism are necessary because “no one could [be able to build the Republic of Heaven] if they put themselves first (AS 464). Lyra and Will accept this, understanding that “there are fates that even the most powerful have to submit to” (AS 440), because of the responsibility-taking for ourselves and for the others. Pullman believes that everyone has the responsibility to “make this place into a Republic of Heaven for everyone” (Roberts 2002). In this way, the quest to preserve Dust becomes the noblest and deepest part of humanity.

#### **4. “The most sweet and desirable end”: The Happy Annihilation of the Self after Death**

Taking Dust and the Republic of Heaven into account, oneness in Pullman's mythopoesis seems to be obviously connected to life; however, death, more precisely the total annihilation of the self, also provides a sense of completeness with the universe. In Pullman's story when people de cease, they get into the Land of the Dead, which is neither a place of reward, nor a place of punishment, but “a place of nothing” (AS 286), where every ghost is tormented by harpies. In the tradition of the Orphic Journey or Christ's Harrowing of Hell, Lyra and Will descend to the underworld and lead the ghosts out through an opening into the wide open space, where the ghosts can merge with the cosmos, without preserving identity. As Lyra informs the ghosts:



“When you go out of here, all the particles that make you up will loosen and float apart, [...]. You’ll drift apart, it’s true, but you’ll be out in the open, part of everything alive again.” (AS 286) This obliteration borrowed from atomist philosophers like Epicurus is portrayed as a sort of ecstasy and pleasure, on entering a true Heaven:

They [the ghosts] took a few steps in the world of grass and air and silver light, and looked around, their faces transformed with joy [...] and held out their arms as if they were embracing the whole universe; and then, as if they were made of mist or smoke, they simply drifted away, becoming part of the earth and the dew and the night breeze. (AS 385-386)

The soul made of Dust returns to Dust. In this way, the atoms of the disintegrated individual go on in “the death-rebirth cycle of nature” over and over again (Hunt and Lenz 2001:160).

This artistic imagination on dissolving in the divine recalls two religious traditions. On the one hand, the personal experience of a supreme being is called mysticism, the soul’s direct union with God (*unio mistica*) – in Pullman’s story with Dust. Mysticism functions to redirect the libido into religious sentiments (Ferguson 1976:151); accordingly, Ferguson (1976:127) informs us that “the true great strands of *agape* and *eros* come together.” This affectionate union of the two turns out to be the true Paradise, the perfect harmony between God and man, or all living things (Pál and Újvári 1997:372). Of course, it must be deserved by contributing to the establishment of the Republic of Heaven.

On the other hand, the souls’ joyful mergence with the cosmos depicted in Pullman’s mythopoesis is associated with a desire for continuity, either spiritual or material, after death. This desire has a long tradition in Western culture from the earliest times. Jonathan Dollimore (1998:xx) states that “[r]eligiously, the desire for eternity would be expressed in life as a conflict between the need to struggle forward and the yearning to return, both path leading to a divine death – that peace that passes all understanding.” In *His Dark Materials* trilogy the struggle forward and the leaving of valuable things behind when building the Republic of Heaven evokes the personification of Eros as a desire for immortality in Plato’s *Symposium*, in which eternal existence on the material level means procreation, while on the spiritual level the creation of intellectual and artistic works. Nevertheless, the more seductive option for continuity in Pullman’s mythopoesis seems to be rather living on in Dust, through Dust and new living things after the annihilation of the soul. The reason is death has been considered to be the only solution for the universal experience of the growing alienation in the evolution of the self by both antique and modern philosophers, such as Plato and Georges Bataille. As Dollimore (1998:xxi) argues, “death has held out the promise of a release from [...] the pain of being individuated (separate, differentiated, alone).” After all, I venture to state that the desired goal of a long and busy life as part

of Pullman's propagation of *biophilia* (the love of life) is the sweet, peaceful death so as to become an integral part of the living cosmos animated with love.

As Pullman definitely closed the possibility of continuing the relationship between Lyra and Will, who wanted to live their lives together, the only thing that can console the desperate lovers is the hope of their final union after death. This solution faithfully follows the Christian narrative of the Fall which, according to Dollimore (1998:52), is characterized by the transition from unity to division, the experience of desire as loss and absence, and finally the *compulsion to reunite*. It is in accordance with this that Pullman's Adam and Eve comfort each other:

I [Lyra]'ll be looking for you, Will, every moment, every single moment. And when we do find each other again, we'll cling together so tight that nothing and no one'll ever tear us apart. Every atom of me and every atom of you... We'll live in birds and flowers and dragonflies and pine trees and in clouds and in those little specks of light you see floating in sunbeams... And when they use our atoms to make new lives, they won't just be able to take one, they'll have to take two, one of you and one of me, we'll be joined so tight... (AS 445)

However, Pinsent (2005:204) observes that this romantic hope Lyra expresses to Will about their future union may be seen as her own "creation of a kind of myth of faithful love enduring forever, contrary to the harsh impersonal reality of indiscriminate final oblivion." This is how Pullman immortalizes William and Lyra's love.

## 5. Conclusion

In the mythopoesis of *His Dark Materials* trilogy, yearning for the completeness with the cosmos as the divine is manifested in the perfect unity of the sacred and the profane, spirit and matter. In light of this, Pullman offers three particular notions of togetherness: Dust, the Republic of Heaven, and the happy annihilation of the self. Although the author's decomposition and rewriting of distinctive religious motif systems into these fictional manifestations of oneness are not always entirely free from contradiction, my myth-critical analysis proves that the individual dynamics formed among Dust, the Republic of Heaven and the happy annihilation of the self basically corresponds to the archetypal experiences with ancient unity. By the cohesive power of love, every one and every thing become the reflection of each other, in other words the *mirror-images* of each other, "the true image of what human beings always could be, once they had come into their inheritance" (AS 421). In this way, mutual Love turns out to be Pullman's religion.

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# THE READER'S MIND BEYOND THE TEXT – THE SCIENCE OF COGNITIVE NARRATOLOGY

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***Abstract:** The paper argues that narrative functions as a valuable resource for thought and also for developing human cognition and mental work. More specifically, the paper outlines an approach to studying narratives as basic cognitive tools for thinking, and thus my contribution will continue to explore several cognitive processes that allow readers to comprehend narrative texts.*

***Keywords:** cognitive narratology, cognitive processes, mental representation, post-classical narratology, possible world theory*

## 1. What the Mind Has to Do with the Text

Cognitive sciences have taken an interest in the active mental processing that makes behavior understandable. The fact that most of our mental work is largely unconscious and extremely intricate requires an interdisciplinary framework and a wide range of methodologies so that more light will be shed onto our mental behavior. In the end, knowledge between sciences and across disciplines will reveal more about human cognition and mental processing. The convergence of linguistics, psychology, computer science, philosophy of mind, neuroscience, and anthropology all contributed to the cognitive revolution in the 20<sup>th</sup> century with far-reaching transformations for the world in which we are presently living.

In recent years, literary scholars have shown real interest in these challenging disciplinary boundaries for the study of cognition. Together with the other cognitive sciences and also the findings in neuroscience, literature has much to offer in the dialogue between sciences and humanities. It can make an essential contribution to understanding how our mind functions when we produce and comprehend stories. In actual fact, the study of narrative can give us an insight into human cognition and mental work. From this perspective, the study of literature can answer one crucial question: how are language users able to recognize and produce stories of any narrative mode? Indeed, when we produce and comprehend stories, we actually perform crucial cognitive processes; narrative texts can allow access to these cognitive operations that are extremely complex, rapid, and largely unconscious. In conclusion, the study of the literary mind has revived the interest in the narrative thinking toward “the rehabilitation of imagination as a fundamental scientific topic, since it is the central

engine of meaning behind the most ordinary mental events.” (Fauconnier and Turner 2002:15)

Everyday thinking and the literary capacity have much to share; for both, we use roughly the same mental instruments: “If we want to study the everyday mind, we can begin by turning to the literary mind exactly because the everyday mind is essentially literary,” claims cognitive scientist Mark Turner (1996:7). Truly, story production and comprehension can become basic mental activities, essential to human thought, and, as nicely put by Mark Turner, stories will thus make life possible. Yet, stories are always present in our life and so absorbing that we tend not to notice them. As a result, stories are of a paradoxical nature: they are a constant presence, but still they generally go unnoticed and are largely unconscious. For this reason, it is probably worth analyzing the basic mental mechanisms that are relatively similar both in the everyday and the literary.

## **2. The Science of Cognitive Narratology**

Cognitive narratology seeks in different ways to rethink literary interpretation in the sense that narrative should be regarded as a tool of understanding and a way of helping individuals to structure and make sense of their experiences. If we see narrative as an instrument of mind, then the interpretative processes we make use of in narrativizing processes will reveal much about how our brain functions. One main statement assumed in cognitive narratology would be that the human brain functions primarily in terms of narrative. Therefore, a dialogue between researchers in cognitive sciences and those interested in the study of stories will open new lines of communication, essential for cognition and narratology alike.

However, the implications of recent cognitive studies for narratology are not sufficiently acknowledged. For instance, MIT Encyclopedia of the Cognitive Sciences (= MITECS, 1999) lacks entries for *narrative* or *story* and does not discuss relevant narrative concepts that would answer key research questions of cognition. In this respect, cognitive narratologist David Herman (2000) makes the strong claim that narratology should be considered a sub-domain of the cognitive sciences, and therefore stories should be treated as resourceful tools for cognition: “both language generally and narrative specifically can be viewed as tool-systems for building mental models of the world” (Herman 2000:1).

The broader point of cognitive narratology would be to define narrative understanding as a process of building mental models as a result of text interpretation. In fact, this is a process of reconstruction, in the sense that interpreters rebuild roughly the same mental models that appear in story production. When dealing with a story, interpreters try to understand the intentions and goals of characters, the circumstances that surround specific acts in the story, or actions and events in the story; and all this entire process of interpretation is aimed to suit the design of the story. Admittedly, text

understanding and interpretation, even in the case of long and complex literary pieces, is viewed as a natural process. However, cognitive narratologists are trying to prove that below apparently simple work of interpretation, interpreters use complex cognitive operations for meaning making. Another point made by cognitive narratologist David Herman is that text interpreters do not simply put together parts of the story by rearranging the plot, but rather they immerse into the world of the story in which they live out imaginary events; they respond emotionally to actions and characters, draw inferences, and also imagine alternatives for events in the story:

Interpreters of narrative do not merely reconstruct a sequence of events and a set of existents but imaginatively (emotionally, viscerally) inhabit a world in which, besides happening and existing, things matter, agitate, exalt, repulse, provide grounds for laughter and grief, and so on- both for narrative participants and for interpreters of the story. More than reconstructed timelines and inventories of existents, storyworlds are mentally and emotionally projected environments in which interpreters are called upon to live out complex blends of cognitive and imaginative response, encompassing sympathy, the drawing of causal inferences, identification, evaluation, suspense, and so on. (Herman 2002:16-17)

As they try to comprehend stories, interpreters take the 'deictic shift', i.e. the power of stories to transport the interpreter to the time and space of the storyworld. So, the act of comprehension is not simply limited to the reconstruction of the timeline and the existents within the story, but it takes cognitive abilities and emotional response to construct actual storyworlds or imaginary projections of potential stories that are embedded into the ongoing story. In effect, the work of comprehension undergone by interpreters necessitates complex cognitive operations for bringing together all the elements, essential for recovering the overall meaning of a story. Given the wide variety of story types, cognitive narratologists have tried to identify exactly that set of cognitive tools that interpreters use in order to recognize stories and learn how to distinguish them from non-stories; more specifically, how to identify stories, for instance, of short fiction and then differentiate them from the ones in more complex novels. However, the universality of stories in our world appears to complicate matters even more; critics in the field of narrative studies have often been puzzled by such large inventory. Indeed, the effort to control and understand narrative has required the design of a unitary model for common reference.

In this sense, cognitive narratology aims at redefining narrative interpretation as a process of "reconstructing the mental representations that have in turn guided their production [the production of stories]" (Herman 2002:1). Consequently, the main research question would be the one of discovering and assessing those complex cognitive operations required in interpreting characters, actions, events, circumstances,

and, broadly speaking, the whole design of the story. This new approach to text processing and understanding makes the leap to a new 'logic of narrative'.

### **3. Post-classical Narratology**

Indeed, recent studies in narratology have meant a rebirth for what was initially thought to be the death of narratological research after the fall of the structuralist paradigm. In fact, it seems that new methodologies, perspectives, or voices (feminist, deconstructive, rhetorical, discourse-analytical, etc.) show that narratology has undergone a transformation into a host of narratologies or a plurality of narrative analyses. *Post-classical narratology*, in short, reassesses the possibilities of earlier structuralist models of the 1960s, but it reveals "a more sustained reflection on its scope and aims, a fuller awareness of surrounding critico-theoretical developments, a less programmatic and more exploratory posture, a greater willingness to admit that, when it comes to the study of narratives (or anything else!), no one can or should hope to get everything right once and for all," as suggested by Herman (1999:3).

Especially important in this respect is the rethinking of the scope and role of narrative analysis: postclassical approaches to narrative attempt at asking basic question about stories, story production, and comprehension – what stories are and how they can be read, described or analyzed, and ultimately, lived. Narrative can thus help us comprehend how we build storyworlds and how we represent the world in our mind and imagination. This long and painstaking process of storyworld representation is encoded in the narrative process and is ready to be discovered by readers. To underscore this large narrative repertoire that shows human mind in action in countless forms and modes would mean denying the benefit that literary studies can bring to other sciences preoccupied with the study of the mind and brain. So, it is essential to reshape the understanding of literature so that it can benefit from the contact with other disciplines, and also to cast more light on the complicated research into how we think and how our mind functions.

This new interdisciplinary approach can now offer literature in general, but narratology specifically, emergent functions that have not been considered before. As a cross disciplinary science, narratology can become a valuable and reliable research method used to attend innovations in the field of artificial intelligence or medical neurosciences. Cognitive narratologists are now suggesting that if we are able to understand how the human mind makes and processes stories, then there are greater chances for delving further into the unknown terrain of the human brain.

Grown out of a "spreading dissatisfaction with the more bleakly relativistic and antihumanist stands of poststructuralism" (Richardson and Steen 2002:1), the new interdisciplinary narrative theory has forged links between literary theories and cognitive science; more specifically, the goal for the new science of literary cognitive theory has been set in relation to one or more fields within the broad cognitive science:



artificial intelligence, cognitive psychology, philosophy of mind, cognitive linguistics, or neurosciences – narratology as a cognitive science.

In spite of the fact that cognitive researchers all share the interest in mind, they follow different research lines and have different theoretical objectives. Nevertheless, the project of integrating narrative theory and cognitive sciences should be viewed from two main perspectives: firstly, it is the contribution made by the cognitive sciences to narratology, and secondly, scholars have looked into what narrative theories can do for cognition. Furthermore, what is important for this cognitive approach is that it addresses stories as an essential part of our basic mental equipment – “the power of language lies not in words, but in the mind”, suggests Turner (1991:209) – and our narrative competence seems to be of utmost importance even for the most ordinary events in our life. It is a fact that we tend to understand and remember our world better when we process it in terms of stories that will be mentally stored and available for us when needed. Admittedly, people use stories as an everyday activity, so they must reveal something crucial about how we cope with the world around and how we manage our complex experiences. In truth, the recognition of the vital role of stories in our everyday life has set a new agenda for narrative analysis. This ‘narrative turn’ seeks to explain more complex reading processes rather than focus on short and artificially constructed texts that were used in early cognitive attempts in literature. Researchers in the field since the 1980s have developed programs of study that consider thinking organized in narrative terms and have viewed stories as basic units for our human thought: “Analysts have studied narrative as itself an instrument for sense-making, a semiotic and communicative resource that enables humans to make their way in a sometimes confusing, often difficult world.” (Herman 2003:12)

#### **4. Cognitive Narratology and the Theory of Possible Worlds**

Overall, cognitive narratology is a narrative theory used as a new possibility for a cognitive approach to narrative analysis and a new research method for the cognitive processing of literature. From this standpoint, stories as ‘instruments of mind’ or ‘tools for thinking’ can increase our cognitive capacities related to memory, change, spatial perception, temporal reasoning, or problem solving – “reading involves the interaction of the mind with the text” (Emmott 1999:XI). In keeping with the principle that this intricate work of cognition happens across both literary and everyday thinking, literary exploration can illuminate many parts of human understanding and thought.

This new cognitive approach to stories focus on the process of building mental models of the narrative world and also looks into the source of these mental representations. More specifically, *possible-world theory* has been used to define the world-creating properties of narrative discourse. The theory of possible worlds was

initially developed by logicians and philosophers of language in order to deal with logical problems, such as necessity or possibility:

Necessity can be defined in terms of propositions that are true in all possible worlds; possibility in terms of propositions that are true in at least one possible world; and impossibility in terms of propositions that are not true in any possible world. (Palmer 2004:33)

Later, the theory was adopted by narratologists to explain the possible worlds emerging during the course of a narrative text and to deepen the understanding of how fictional worlds are built. Researchers interested in possible worlds claim that in the actual domain of the text statements receive a truth-value, which may not be true outside the text. Further research was carried out by such narrative theorists as Lumobir Doležel (1998), Thomas Pavel (1986) and Marie-Laure Ryan (1991) so as to better analyze the origin of the worlds created by fiction (known as *narrative worlds*, *fictional worlds*, *storyworlds*, or *text worlds*). In light of this theory, narratology transfers its basic working concept – ‘story’ – to the newer concept of ‘narrative world’ (one of the many possible worlds of the text). In truth, the theory of possible worlds has set new lines of inquiry for the science of narratology: one central question refers to the reader’s access to the storyworld. Researchers look into the channels that facilitate the transportation of the reader to the new fictional world; how are fictional worlds accessed and comprehended? The reconstruction of the narrative world may be done, as maintained by Doležel (1998:20), “by crossing somehow the world boundary between the realms of the actual and the possible”.

In sum, texts are fully comprehended when the worlds of the text are represented on a cognitive level. For one thing, readers create imaginary worlds in order to keep track of events, agents, or actions in the story. During the course of a narrative, several possible worlds unfold, each at differing degrees of completion at a given moment in the story. Apart from what ‘happens’ in the world of the text, readers may need to make sense of other alternate worlds that are dreamed of, imagined, wished for, or secretly planned; indeed, the world of the text involves complex relationships between the character’s virtual worlds and the explicit ‘reality’ of the text. In effect, the theory of possible worlds distinguishes between two separate narrative domains unfolding in the fictional world: one central actual domain and a host of other non-actual alternative worlds or *counterparts* of “the text actual world” (term used by cognitive poetician Peter Stockwell in his *Cognitive Poetics: An Introduction*, 2002). Put differently, the set of events in the textual world always relate to alternative sequences that the characters constantly contemplate but never realize:

A possible-world approach is particularly useful in describing the internal structure of the textual universe, and in accounting for the development of the plot. This results

from seeing the textual universe as a dynamic combination of a text actual world on the one hand, and different *types* of alternate possible worlds formulated by characters on the other. (Semino 2003:86-87)

As indicated above, the plot advances and develops through continuous changes in the text actual world, but equally important are the changes in the network of unrealized potential worlds. In this sense, Ryan (1991) formulates her “Principle of Diversification” – ‘*seek the diversification of possible worlds in the narrative universe*’; the diversification of the narrative universe confers real aesthetical value to narrative worlds; therefore, the interest raised by plots of great narrative resides in a ‘system of purely virtual embedded narratives’ – “story-like constructs contained in the private worlds of characters” (dreams, fictions, and fantasies and any kind of representations about potential states or events – plans, beliefs, desires, passive projections) (Ryan 1991:156). The possibility for these embedded narratives to enter in complex relationships with each other produces textual richness and variety: “the aesthetic appeal of a plot is a function of the richness and variety of the domain of the virtual, as it is surveyed and made accessible by those private embedded narratives.” (Ryan 1991:156)

Generally speaking, fictional worlds display rich alternativity that is mostly character-centered; to exemplify, Stockwell (2002) speaks of several types of alternative discourses created by characters in narrative; to start with, the epistemic world shows the fictional beliefs of characters or their speculations regarding what might happen in their world (‘speculative worlds’). Another alternative world may be generated by the intentions of the characters (‘intention worlds’), or by their wish to change something in their world (‘wish worlds’). In other cases, characters construct ‘obligation worlds’ filtered through their sense of morality. Alternatively, ‘fantasy worlds’ comprise a large inventory of hopes, wishes, dreams, or pure fictions (Stockwell 2002:94-95).

## **5. Cognitive Processes and the Indeterminacy of Fictional Worlds**

In line with the theory of possible worlds, Lubomír Doležel (1995; 1998) maintains the theoretical assumption that fictional worlds should be treated as autonomous objects, and not as representations of the actual world. The fictional world differs from the real world in two essential instances: first, the limits in fiction are constantly expanded by the immense power of fictional language, and second, all fictional worlds are ontologically incomplete. The ontological incompleteness of the fictional world stands in opposition to the fullness of the real world:

the incompleteness of fictional worlds results from the very act of their creation. Fictional worlds are brought into existence by means of fictional texts, and it would

take a text of infinite length to construct a complete fictional world. Finite texts, the only texts that humans are capable of producing, necessarily create incomplete worlds. (Doležel 1995:201)

As already stated, Doležel views textual worlds as ontologically incomplete and structurally determined by blanks or gaps. Gaps may be differently located: either in the difference between story and discourse, or alternatively, in the texture of the storyworld itself. Even more interesting is the nature of the gaps; as shown by Doležel (1995), some gaps are temporary (missing information in the story is later presented in the discourse, as in the 'whodunit' story type), while other gaps are permanent (present in the representation of the storyworld). Furthermore, Doležel sees the opposition gaps-facts as representations in the fictional world of the presence or absence of texture. So, the overall meaning of a text is a composite of explicit, implicit, or non-existent information.

Interpreters 'read' the gaps in the text and the challenge increases as the incompleteness of the world increases. So, to a great extent, the process of reconstructing the fictional world is done implicitly, which leads us to the conclusion that the production of the text itself depends on the implied meanings posed by the fictional world. Information about particular fictional texts can be communicated in an implicit manner, rather than being overtly or explicitly expressed. This problematic issue of 'gaps' in storyworlds and of implicit meaning in text production and comprehension has long been debated in literary critical studies, and not without a reason: it seems that the literary function depends significantly on the recovery of implicit meaning. The interplay between presence and absence in literary texts relates to Wolfgang Iser's concept of 'indeterminacy'. The 'information gaps' in a literary construct, writes Iser, which are deliberately left unmentioned or are withheld on purpose can provide the stimulus for the reader's imagination:

With a literary text, we can only picture things which are not there; the written part of the text gives us the knowledge, but it is the unwritten part that gives us the opportunity to picture things; indeed without the elements of indeterminacy, the gaps in the text, we should not be able to use our imagination. (Iser 1974:283)

However, interpreters need to find markers of implicitness grounded in the explicit structure of the text; these markers are of two different natures, as stated by Doležel (1995). Implied meaning can be communicated by intentional absences in the text ('negative markers') or by 'positive signals' dropped in the fictional world (allusions, hints, insinuations, etc.).

According to Lubomír Doležel, interpreters recover implicit meanings by using particular procedures: logical inferences and presuppositions based on our encyclopedia of stored knowledge. It seems that a great deal of text implicitness comes

from cognitive presuppositions made in the construction and reconstruction of fictional worlds. For instance, interpreters enter the fictional world with a set of existential presuppositions or with knowledge regarding human action; that is, they use the cognitive mechanism of 'minimal departure' from the real world:

unless the text tells us otherwise, we assume an identity with the actual world. Gravity still works, China exists, there was a Norman Conquest of England in 1066, and unless we are directed otherwise, these and all our other actual world assumptions are put into operation by default. (Stockwell 2002:96).

It is worth mentioning that the inferences or presuppositions necessary for recovering implicit meanings may differ according to the encyclopedic knowledge of the interpreter. Different readers share particular knowledge relative to their culture, social or historical context, and in this way they may recover different meaning from the text. Nevertheless, Doležel (1995) draws attention to another aspect, namely the fact that the knowledge generated by our actual world should not interfere much with the formation of the fictional world. What he means is that the fictional encyclopedias created by the possible worlds of the text should be viewed as autonomous from the real world:

What I would like to add is that encyclopedia is also relative to possible worlds. The actual-world encyclopedia is just one among numerous encyclopedias of possible worlds. In this paper I am interested in fictional encyclopedias, the stores of knowledge about possible worlds constructed by fictional texts. Fictional encyclopedias are many and diverse, but all of them to a greater or lesser degree digress from the actual-world encyclopedia. (Doležel 1995:206)

## **6. Final Remarks**

In sum, the theory of possible worlds looks at literary texts for traces of cognitive processes and mental representations. It should be also mentioned that thought processes analyzed by cognitive narratology are at large emotional, metaphorical, and rather 'illogical'. That said, cognitive narratologists seek to pay closer attention to the attempts of writers and readers to imagine, understand, and represent images perceived at a cognitive level. Critics in the field of cognitive narratology thus reopen new research topics that will help us better understand the boundaries between body, language, culture, and texts. Eventually, this new narrative science links narrative theory and the cognitive sciences in a double game that proves relevant for both cognitive narratology and the science of the brain and mind: better understanding of the workings of the mind and of complex neuronal processes is instrumental to our ability to make sense of stories. Conversely, the thinking organized

in narrative texts can be used as a semiotic resource for comprehending our intricate mental activity.

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# THE MADNESS NARRATIVE, BETWEEN THE LITERARY, THE THERAPEUTIC AND THE POLITICAL

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**Abstract:** *The present paper discusses the types, functions and limitations of the madness narrative, a particular type of text dealing with a popular research topic: mental instability, within the larger contexts of women’s autobiographical writing and illness-based writing. The overview aims to provide the theoretical framework necessary for the further analysis of specific madness narratives.*

**Keywords:** *autobiographical fiction, madness, madness narrative, pathography, scriptotherapy.*

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Why Madness?

Canadian psychologist Leonard George opens his Foreword to Richard Noll’s third edition of the *Encyclopedia of Schizophrenia and Other Psychotic Disorders* as follows:

Our species is haunted by madness. One in every 100 of us will fall prey to it at some time in our lives, and of those, one in 10 will be driven by misery or confusion to take their own lives. Not only the afflicted suffer, of course. As Aristotle famously noted, we are social animals, profoundly linked with each other, and derangements of the psyche ... strain the social web, burdening family, friends, communities, and economies. Directly or indirectly, madness touches us all. (2007:IV)

Moreover, as Neil Pickering (2006:3) points out in *The Metaphor of Mental Illness*, madness is “deeply entrenched in the day-to-day fabric of ordinary lives, and in the medical, legal and constitutional arrangements of developed ... societies.” It is true: madness is nowadays as much an indisputable social phenomenon as it is a disputed medical condition (or plethora of conditions), and, once desacralized, the former has also become a cultural, political and ethical issue. As a result, irrespective of whether one believes that madness is “a victim of fads and fashions if not also political ambition” (Roy Porter, qtd. in Barker 2011:61), “a symptom of the degeneracy of modern society” (Wing 2010:10), an illness in its own right, or one of fate’s many forms of cruel arbitrariness; whether one regards it as the result of “perennial human problems [being] translated from moral dilemmas into manifestations of some form of



‘mental illness,’ ‘psychiatric disorder’ or ‘psychological dysfunction’” (Roy Porter, qtd. in Barker 2011:61), or of a chemical imbalance or neurological abnormality, favored by a certain genetic disposition, madness is, in the end, relevant for each and every one of us.

What makes it particularly relevant is the fact that the history of madness, “the perpetual amorphous threat within and the extreme of the unknown in fellow human beings” (Feder 1980:4) parallels, in a sense, the history of humanity. Thus, accounts of madness date back to the earliest religious and philosophical texts, from Mesopotamia to Ancient Greece. Literary depictions of madness are also age-old, and the motivation behind them lies in our species’ simultaneous fear of and fascination with the mysterious workings of the mind.

Such unsettling texts became, inadvertently at first, cultural chronicles (which does not mean that literary texts should ever be trusted as historical documents), for, as much as society has historically tried to shun the mad as deviant, erecting literal and symbolical walls “to keep apart the other against whose apartness [it] asserts its sameness and redefines itself as sane” (Felman 2003:5), the mentally unstable individual does not exist in isolation and, thus, he or she “embodies and symbolically transforms the values and aspirations of his family, his tribe, and his society, even if he [or she] renounces them, as well as their delusions, cruelty, and violence, even in his [or her] inner flight” (Feder 1980:4).

Literature and insanity have always shared a symbiotic relationship, with the former acting as a mediator between the latter and medicine. However, it was only fairly recently (after the treatment of mental illness started being revised) that sustained academic interest began to be awarded to a particular type of text dealing with madness, the so-called *madness narrative*. Indeed, due to the great scientific advances under way, with brain imaging technology, neurochemistry and neuropathology all trying to fight against the ultimate enemy of the human brain, its sophistication, and to prove the organic nature of mental disorders, ultimately absolving sufferers of all cultural blame, “the story of the extraordinary human mind – in brilliance and in sickness – begins to be legible, and [it] is a remarkable one” (Nettle 2001:11).

As a result, madness has become a popular research topic across various disciplines (sociology, philosophy, psychology, psychiatry, anthropology, literature, linguistics, etc.), having occasioned one of the most fertile cross-disciplinary dialogues ever recorded. Yet, as Shoshana Felman (2003:12) suggests, “while madness has today been recognized as the most subversive of all cultural questions, certain writers deplore that it has been sensationalized to the point of banality.” In other words, writing about madness has become so commonplace, that it borders on meaninglessness. Faced with this “inflation of discourses on madness” (Feder 1980:13), we, as philological researchers, have thus two options: either “to deplore this phenomenon and take our distance from it” (Feder 1980:13), or to “join our voices to the general chorus, promoting our own ‘madness’ goods as the latest thing in order to publicize our avant-

gardism, or, as Mallarmé would say, ‘proclaim ourselves to be our own contemporaries’” (Feder 1980:13).

Yet, is writing critically about madness merely a question of embracing a trend set out by the academic community? For me, it is not. I do believe that madness is “a sort of mirror held up to society, in which, if we read the blurred images aright, we can discover the truth about ourselves and our future” (Wing 2010:2), and that “in the very solitude of madmen there is something at stake for all of us” (Feder 1980:13). Indeed, Andrew Scull (1989:1) was right in stating that “intellectual choices ... are not made in a vacuum, flowing in substantial measure from a complex interaction between biography and circumstances of which we are seldom fully aware.” In my case, apart from this complex interaction, what motivated the decision to choose madness narratives as the topic for my doctoral research (and, consequently, for the present paper) stems from a feminism that I understand as the struggle for the empowerment of all people whose rights are infringed upon, irrespective of gender, race, sexual orientation, degree of mental health, or any other of the numerous aspects that shape our identity as individuals, but do not essentially define (or restrict) us as human beings.

An openly stated feminist perspective can, however, be misleading. (After all, it is a known fact that, despite scholars’ strive for objectivity, the results of a research depend largely on the methodology (and ideology) used – or, as philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein phrased it, “show me *how* you are searching and I will tell you *what* you are looking for” (qtd. in Pickering 2006:6)). Indeed, both in the present paper and in my doctoral research at large, I do focus exclusively on madness narratives belonging to female authors. However, instead of seeking to portray women as the exclusive victims of dangerous mental health policies, of a discipline that, for a long time, regarded itself as mandated by society to label and regulate deviation, as it may be inferred, my work actually aims at highlighting the fact that women’s madness, more likely born out of socio-cultural inequities (legal powerlessness, economic marginality, imposed submission, etc.), in other words of a pathological context, rather than the much-invoked proneness to emotion or unstable sexuality, has, compared to men’s madness, historically born heavier connotations. This does not mean, of course, that male insanity is not symbolically and politically charged – there were, however, greater stakes associated to female madness as far as the reproduction (literal and cultural) of patriarchal society was concerned.

### **1.2. Why Madness Narratives?**

The answer to the question “Why madness narratives?” is quite simple: the only means of tracing a true, all-encompassing history of mental instability is by valuing the subjectivity of the perspectives of those individuals whose lives have been touched by it, and by including their stories into this history, since a “history of the victors, for the victors, and by the victors is not only indecent, but also bad history and

bad sociology, for it makes us understand less the ways in which human societies operate and change” (Teodor Shanin, qtd. in Scull 1989:1).

What precisely is, in the end, a madness narrative? Firstly, it must be noted that this umbrella phrase is used deliberately, as a strategy to simultaneously “recognize the meaning attached to the perception of illness or dysfunction in the psychological domain” (Jane Ussher, qtd. in Hubert 2002:19), avoid psychological and psychiatric jargon (as in *accounts by schizophrenics*), and “interrogate the discourses that maintain the construction of mental illness and the bifurcation of sanity and insanity” (Hubert 2002:20). A good definition for the phrase was provided in *Questions of Power: The Politics of Women's Madness Narratives*. The author, Susan Hubert, states that any “firsthand account of the experience of ‘mental illness’ and psychiatric treatment, even if the narrative is presented as a fictitious account or case study” (2002:19) qualifies as a madness narrative. She adds:

The term ‘madness narrative’ includes novels, journals, anonymous accounts, and narratives presented by an interlocutor, as well as traditional autobiographies. Also, the designation avoids the boundaries of asylum autobiography and therefore allows for the consideration of madness narratives that are not centered on the experience of hospitalization. (Hubert 2002:19)

Madness narratives are, thus, texts at the border between creative writing, pathography, scriptotherapy and political activism. They are, mainly, either entirely fictional accounts of madness (after all, “conjuring imaginary beings and effecting a cure are not mutually exclusive practices” (Thiher 2004:1)), instances of (auto)biographical fiction dealing with mental instability, or the self-proclaimed *non-fictional* madness memoirs (including borderline texts such as journalist Nelly Bly’s *Ten Days in a Mad-House* (1887), a remarkable account of her stay in the Women’s Lunatic Asylum on Blackwell’s Island as part of an undercover assignment), and, according to certain critics, *relational madness narratives*, texts “whose primary subject is not the writer but a proximate other, such as a blood relative or a partner, or the relationship between the author or that other” (Couser 2009:12), as well.

Despite great impediments (which will be discussed further in the present paper), starting with the fifteenth-century *Book of Margery Kempe* (a pious woman who regarded what today would be diagnosed as *psychosis* as the result of divine intervention, defying the church, her townsmen and late medieval gender roles in her quest for autonomy), a fair number of madness narratives in English have been authored.

Many of these texts are written by women suffering from depression, “the paradigmatic mental illness of the postmodern period” (Couser 2009:5), since depression is emotionally, rather than mentally debilitating. Another reason for the

considerable number of depression narratives is provided by Suzanne England, Carol Ganzer and Carol Tosone in “Storying Sadness”:

In attempting to explain to herself the causes of the suffering and to find relief, the woman with serious depression grasps desperately for some way to think coherently about the experience – to make sense of it all in order to plan an escape from the pain. (2008:83).

For many such women, the answer is precisely writing – after all, according to life-long diarist Anaïs Nin, “stories are the only enchantment possible, for when we begin to see our suffering as a story, we are saved” (qtd. in Henke 2000:141).

It is the case of native Ghanaian Meri Nana-Ama Danquah, the author of the inspirational memoir *Willow Weep for Me: A Black Woman's Journey through Depression* (1998). Danquah allows readers to discover a condition that “offers layers, textures, noises” (qtd. in Radden 2008:22):

At times depression is as flimsy as a feather. ... Other times ... it present[s] new signals and symptoms until finally I am drowning in it. Most times, in its most superficial and seductive sense, it is rich and enticing. It is loud and dizzying, inviting the tenors and screeching sopranos of thought, unrelenting sadness, and the sense of impending doom. (Qtd. in Radden 2008:22)

Other notable memoirs of madness include *An Unquiet Mind: A Memoir of Moods and Madness* (1995), by Kay Redfield Jamison, a Psychiatry professor at John Hopkins University, and *The Loony-Bin Trip* (1990), by feminist writer, activist and scholar Kate Millett. From this point on, however, the present paper will focus on the functions and limitations of autobiographical fiction dealing with mental instability.

## **2. Writing a Broken Self**

In autobiographical works dealing with mental instability, fiction is often regarded as a defense strategy in the face of either the mental illness itself, or the unbearable memory of its ordeal. Johnnie Gratton defines (genuine) fiction as “making and not just making up; ... as the corollary of imagination, fantasy and desire; ... as the supplement of memory (a supplement probably always ready *in* memory)” (qtd. in Gudmundsdóttir 2003:4). He adds that fiction “affirms the increasingly-highlighted ‘act-value’ of autobiographical writing at the expense of its traditionally supposed ‘truth-value’” (qtd. in Gudmundsdóttir 2003:4). Nevertheless, is writing fiction less courageous than writing a memoir when it comes to madness? Are the “embellishments to carry out the ideal” (Gilman Ch. 1995:331) also intended as a shield against social stigma?

## 2.1. Writing the Self

As human beings, we owe it to ourselves to make sense of our existence, and what better way to do it than through writing, for “time becomes human to the extent that it is articulated through a narrative mode” (Charon 2006:42). Indeed, “plot is ... the product of our refusal to allow temporality to be meaningless, our stubborn insistence on making meaning in the world and in our own lives” (Peter Brooks, qtd. in Gudmundsdóttir 2003:60), yet, authoring autobiographical texts meant for publication is one of the most difficult endeavors. On the one hand, it requires the overcoming of the legitimate hesitation that such an exposure as that derived from turning the intimate into the public (even if in veiled form) occasions, in the context of writing already being a delicate, emotionally-consuming, methodical process (quite removed from the muse-induced, nearly automatic pouring on the page that readers may envisage). Irish author Niall Williams’ description of the writing process is revealing in this respect:

How do I write? One word at a time. The first sentence feels like the tip of a thread. I pull it very gently. Another sentence. And again I try, teasing out phrase after phrase and hoping that the thread will not break. It is as if before me there is an invisible garment of which only one thread can be seen. Each day I draw it out a little further. (Qtd. in Bolton and Mazza 2011:131)

Indeed, as emphasized by Susanne Langer, the author of *Feeling and Form*, “literary composition, however ‘inspired,’ requires invention, judgment, often trial and rejection, and long contemplation” (qtd. in Bonime and Eckardt 1993:204), therefore “an air of unstudied spontaneous utterance is apt to be as painstakingly achieved as any other quality in ... fiction” (qtd. in Bonime and Eckardt 1993:204).

On the other hand, apart from an often painful introspection and the “agonizing questions of identity, self-definition, self-existence, or self-deception” (Sidonie Smith, qtd. in Beilke 2008:29) that it occasions, what the *writing of the self* also entails is the unavoidable need for mediation between the *I* as “both the observing subject and the object of investigation, remembrance and contemplation” (Smith and Watson 2010:1). Furthermore, when writing autobiographically, before the “creative imposition of order, pattern, and meaning on what is remembered of one’s life” (Anne Hunsaker Hawkins, qtd. in Beilke 2008:30) – imposition that is vital for a coherent text – can be achieved, one must struggle with the defense mechanisms of one’s own memory, as well as the latter’s incommensurability, given the fact that “the pen will never be able to move fast enough to write down every word discovered in the space of memory” (Paul Auster, qtd. in Gudmundsdóttir 2003:30).

## 2.2. Writing a Female Self

For women, writing autobiographically (if at all) has always proven particularly challenging. Anaïs Nin stated, for instance, the following in relation to her writing: “To create seemed to me such an assertion of the strongest part of me that I would no longer be able to give all those I love the feeling of their being stronger, and they would love me less.” (qtd. in Henke 2000:27). In other words, Nin perceived writing as a powerful act of self-affirmation whose negative social consequences she would not be able to escape. She managed, in the end, to overcome the psychological impediment that derives from such an implanted view and to become highly prolific, both as a diarist and as a writer, but many other aspiring women writers have not.

Indeed, having been denied access to publishing, women have historically resorted to diaries and letters, remaining in the sphere of the private, “a scene of writing that invites the female, a separate space at the very limits of the generic divide between the autobiographical and other kinds of writing and the gender divide between the masculine and the feminine” (Benstock 1988:1). Yet, even diaries often seem to betray by offering what proves to be the mere illusion of empowerment. Thus, for Kate Millet, the journal turned “friend, solace, obsession”, the notebook which gives her “the ability to record experience which makes [her] more than its victim” and allows the “magical transformation of pain into substance” (qtd. in Felski 1989:90), reveals itself, at times, as what it truly is: “an untidy scribble without meaning, body or direction” (qtd. in Felski 1989:91). What results is the unhealthiest of ambivalences.

For a long time, those autobiographical works that women did publish lacked a genuine female voice, whereas, as Gloria Anzaldúa points out, “for silence to [truly] transform into speech, sounds and words, it must first traverse through our female bodies” (qtd. in Perreault 1995:1). Some female writers still lack this voice. Against the greatest of odds, the authors of most madness narratives do not.

## 2.3. Writing a Broken Female Self

Writing autobiographically becomes an almost insurmountable task in the context of the “communicative breakdown” (Scull 1989:9) and “compromised personhood” (Radden 2008:18) that is, generally, madness. It is true: “in the word ‘autobiography,’ writing mediates the space between self and life” (Benstock 1999:7), yet women’s autobiographies have already been characterized by what Estelle Jelineck calls “a multidimensional, fragmented self-image colored by a sense of inadequacy and alienation” (qtd. in Beilke 2008:30). What mental disorder does is to bring the fragmentation and alienation to an extreme. As a result, since “writing the self” is [already] a process of simultaneous sealing and splitting that can only trace fissures of discontinuity” (Benstock 1988:29), how does one write an already broken self?

Furthermore, how does one discern between multiple, competing selves, for the *genuine* one? Kay Redfield Jamison, for instance, asks herself: “Which of my feelings are real? Which of the me’s is me? The wild, impulsive, chaotic, energetic,

and crazy one? Or the shy, withdrawn, desperate, suicidal, doomed, and tired one?” (qtd. in Beilke 2008:29). Moreover, how does one overcome the anxiety occasioned by the need to express the inexpressible? How does one deal with a text that often appears as “an endless chain of signifiers that can never encapsulate the fullness of meaning which the author seeks and which would put an end to the writing itself” (Felski 1989:91)?

Indeed, as highlighted by Susanne Langer, “there are countless devices for creating the world of [a literary work] and for articulating the elements of its virtual life, and almost every critic discovers some of these means and stands in wondering admiration of their ‘magic’” (qtd. in Bonime and Eckardt 1993:204). Yet, what are the right literary devices for a madness narrative, those devices through which the author can attempt “to resist the grand medical-psychiatric narrative and its attendant theories and practices, and to reclaim the individuality and richness of the experience of suffering” (England, Ganzer and Tosone 2008:83), since “at traumatic extremes experiences can be narrated only through a kind of aesthetic violation” (Clark 2008:4) and “madness is the absolute break with the work of art” (Foucault, qtd. in Wing 2010:3)?

What is the tone of such a piece of writing? Is it accusatory, as in Dadaist poet Hugo Ball’s sonnet “Schizophrenia”?

A victim of dismemberment, completely possessed  
I am – what do you call it – schizophrenic.  
You want me to vanish from the scene,  
In order that you may forget your own appearance.  
I will press your words  
Into the sonnet’s darkest measure [...]. (Qtd. in Gilman S. 1985:288)

Or, on the contrary, apologetic? Or maybe triumphant? Should such texts reveal individuals scarred, but not defeated by their experience, with a thirst for life that can only be encountered in those people who have been deprived even of the simple pleasures one generally takes for granted, or individuals disillusioned with the world, embittered even?

These (and more) are all questions that I will try to answer throughout my PhD thesis, one madness narrative at a time. For now, the conclusion would be that female authors of autobiographical works dealing with mental instability have undoubtedly had to face obstacles coming from three sources: their very status as women, the nature of the writing of the self as “a slippery undertaking that requires investigating past events with meaning they may not have had when originally experienced” (Beilke 2008:30), and, certainly not least, the mental disturbance itself. Many women have, nevertheless, managed to overcome these difficulties and save themselves through writing, even if only temporarily.

#### **2.4. Why Should One Write a Broken Female Self?**

How did this saving through writing occur, in the end? Given their very abundance, the primary function of madness narratives does seem to be therapeutic, since “the whole history of suffering cries out for vengeance and calls for narrative” (Ricoeur 1990:75). In order to understand how the healing effect of these accounts of mental disturbance is achieved, one must first comprehend the economy of illness narratives, in general.

Illness narratives or *pathographies*, “compelling because they describe dramatic human experience of real crisis, ... give shape to our deepest hopes and fears about such crises, and in so doing, ... often draw upon profound archetypal dimensions of human experience” (Hawkins 2003:31), occupy a particular place in the context of life-writing. The latter was rejected by New Criticism as a result of a previous, fundamental rejection of everything outside the text, as well as the ambiguous nature of this type of writing, deriving from the blurred boundaries between biographical fact and literary fiction, between the objective and the subjective, and the fact that much of it (diaries, letters) is generally not intended for publication. Cultural Studies, on the other hand, a multidisciplinary field able to deal with the complexity involved in the reception of life-writing, and, not accidentally, the critical framework within which I, as a philological researcher, operate, embraced it.

Within life-writing, illness narratives generate a shift from the disease itself to the individual. Madness narratives are a particular instance of illness narrative, given the stigma associated with mental instability and the attempts at reclaiming a robbed humanity, of claiming agency over one’s own life that they, in the end, represent. As medical historian Roy Porter suggests in *A Social History of Madness: Stories of the Insane*, “the pontifications of psychiatry have all too often excommunicated the mad from human psychiatry, even when their own cries and complaints have been human, all too human” (qtd. in Barker 2011:24), whereas madness narratives bring the experience of the mad, in all its desolation, hope and, in the end, humanity, back into the foreground. Refusals of isolation and marginality in their essence, such texts allow the expression of repressed emotions, as well as self-scrutiny, for the mind can be its own tormentor, but also its own healer, if a state of awareness regarding its manifestations and their impact is reached.

When not utterly silenced, the words of the mad, a subject presumably “engulfed by his own fiction” (Felman 2003:49), are generally treated as symptoms, not pieces of a trustworthy, legitimate, albeit subjective, testimony. What madness narratives achieve (when their authors manage to overcome the resulting view of themselves as supreme unreliable narrators, as unable, given their insanity, to produce texts that would be read as sane) is to provide a previously-denied voice. As a result, each such text “continues to communicate with madness – with what has been included, decreed abnormal, unacceptable, or senseless – by dramatizing a



dynamically renewed, revitalized relation between sense and nonsense, between reason and unreason, between the readable and the unreadable” (Felman 2003:5).

Yet, there are also great limits to madness narratives. Indeed, it is only through language that experiences can be organized and evaluated, so that understanding and self-understanding can derive from them, yet “each word tastes of the context and contexts in which it has lived its socially charged life” (Mikhail Bakhtin, qtd. in Treichler 1990:113). Consequently, even when setting out to write the most personal of all the narratives of madness, one may find oneself actually writing the overall story of the madness of a particular time and place in history.

Moreover, there are sensitive ethical issues related to the portrayal of mental illness, issues that are valid for madness narratives and their filmic adaptations alike. Indeed, both madness and literature “enable us to believe in and to be moved by what in a sense does not exist, by fictions, imaginations, hallucinations, inner voices” (Thiher 2002:1), yet the greatest similitude between literature and madness does lie in the fact that they could, indeed, both “be defined as that which speaks, precisely, out of what reduces it to silence” (Felman 2003:17). Moreover, apart from this defiance of muting that both literature and insanity stand for, “literature sheds light on madness in a specifically literary way, a way that is not merely a reflection of the theoretical pronouncements of psychoanalysis, sociology, or philosophy”, all “tinged with a shade of the madness they examine” (Felman 2003:17). Yet, despite this (seeming) lack of bias, there are great challenges when it comes to the literary portrayal of individuals forced to live on the outskirts of society, for no representation of madness can escape reflecting (and being influenced by) questions of power.

The ethical dilemmas deriving from writing madness become even more acute when it comes to relational madness narratives, where the risk of misrepresentation is always present. One way to avoid these dilemmas is, thus, writing one’s own story of madness. This comes, of course, as shown above, with dilemmas of its own, but, as Anaïs Nin states, “it is [apparently] easier to excavate on one’s own property” (qtd. in Long 1999:38).

### **3. Conclusions**

In his Preface to *Mental Health Ethics: The Human Context*, editor Phil Barker wonders to what extent we have, despite the apparent progress in the social integration of individuals with mental disturbances, really changed our mentality regarding mental instability: “To what extent are we merely recycling older, outmoded models of human problems: trying to avoid confronting the personal, social and political issues that we obscure with our increasingly technical concepts of ‘psychiatric disorder’?” (Barker 2011:4) In other words, in the era of liberal thinking, have we failed our mad? We may have, but not entirely.

Over the last decades, madness narratives have managed to act as agents of significant inner and outer change. They have denounced the “uneasy alliance” (Barker 2011:24) between psychiatry and medicine and have provided a better understanding of mental instability, which is of outmost importance in a world that still fears its mad(ness), regarding it as a crime, rather than a misfortune.

As Susan Sontag (qtd. in Fink and Tasman 1992:148) points out in *Illness as Metaphor*, “any disease that is treated as a mystery and acutely enough feared will be felt to be morally, if not literally, contagious,” therefore raising awareness regarding the complex issue of mental instability and the enduring need to discuss it, through all means possible, is vital. The present paper has sought to do just that.

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