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LINGUISTICS AND APPLIED LINGUISTICS

[ˈhærəs] or [ˌhəˈræs], [ˈhɒtəl] or [həʊˈtɛl]? – What/ Whose Language Do Our Students Learn (and Why)?

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Abstract: Learners of a foreign language (L2) are to a greater or smaller extent influenced by their native tongue (L1), be it at the level of the structures used or at the lexical and morphological levels (tenses used according to the L1 verbal behavior, to give just one example). The purpose of this paper is twofold: to investigate the deviations from the standard pronunciation in English that are common among Romanian students, trying to explain them, and to analyse the choices they make between British and American pronunciation. Questionnaires have been used with Ist and IInd year students of the English Department of the Faculty of Letters in Craiova.

Keywords: *pronunciation, stress, L1, L2, British English, American English*.

The development of a high level of proficiency in the use of a foreign language can certainly be a challenging process, as it implies various types of competences that need to be considered. On the one hand, there is the linguistic competence that includes knowledge of pronunciation, morphology and syntax, but also of semantics and pragmatics. On the other, there is a need for the development of interactive skills that enable the language user to perform well in the foreign language. Of equal importance is the cultural knowledge attached to the foreign language and to the environment in which it is used, and very often this is where clashes may occur, especially when L1and L2 have very different cultural backgrounds.

This, however, does not make the learning of a foreign language impossible. Most linguists have agreed upon the fact that learning a foreign language is an innate ability of human beings, while some prefer to consider it merely the result of laborious efforts. Either way, it has been proven that the earlier this process begins, the more successful it becomes. At an early stage, L2 learning is almost similar to the acquisition of L1: young learners are practically exposed to both languages at the same time and naturally grow bilingual. When the process starts later (as it happens with most L2 learners), the foreign language enters a territory already "settled" by the native tongue, and the latter may influence the degree of L2 proficiency obtained. Pronunciation is the first aspect of the language where one can notice this influence. We do not need Professor Higgins' expertise to

identify a German speaker of English by his/her pronunciation of letter /w/ as [v], a Chinese speaker, barely able to differentiate between [l] and [r], or a Spaniard who will struggle with [v] and [b]. The phonetic characteristics of the native tongue represent one of the several factors that may influence L2 learning and especially its pronunciation, as explained by several linguists.

Two of them, Kenworthy (1987: 126) and Brown (1994: 284), as quoted by Dihllon (125-6), identify six factors that may engender difficulties when learning foreign language pronunciation.

1. the native language – similarities between L1 and L2 will help, while a completely different phonetic system of L1 will have an impact on Ls pronunciation, as in the examples mentioned above.

1. age – as previously stated, some specialists believe that younger learners will become more proficient in L2 and will have a better pronunciation. Other studies contradict this idea, however, stating that age is an irrelevant factor, and that application, motivation and a certain ability are more important.

2. experience, or exposure – L2 immersion is viewed by some linguists as mandatory for better pronunciation.

3. the learner's skill, or phonetic ability – also called 'aptitude for oral mimicry', 'phonetic coding ability' or 'auditory discrimination ability': some learners seem to have a higher aptitude for foreign-language learning, being able to better discriminate between foreign sounds.

4. attitude and identity – the more a learner wishes to be identified as part of the aimed linguistic group, the more accurate the pronunciation acquired, it seems.

5. motivation and concern for accurate pronunciation – connected to the above-listed factor. In this line, in theory, at least, we would expect future teachers of L2 to be more concerned about their accurate pronunciation than someone who learns a foreign language in order to travel more easily.

Starting from this theoretical framework, this paper analyses the pronunciation patterns favoured by Romanian students of English, in an

attempt to explain whether they are the result of L1 influences, as presumed. Moreover, it will analyse and explain the students' choices between British and American standard pronunciations and stress patterns.

Methodology

A survey was conducted among 102 Ist year students of our faculty (56 have English as first specialty and 46 study it as a second language). On average, most of them have been studying English for 8 years, while 3 declared to be at a beginner's level.

The students were asked to translate 34 Romanian words into English (see Annex, Table 1). The list included terms belonging to the common vocabulary that have different equivalents in British and American English, the purpose of this translation exercise being to record which variant the students are more inclined to use. Words with corresponding spelling variants were included on the list (*apologis/ze, theatre/er, program/me*). Moreover, we wanted to see whether the students' choice would be influenced in some cases by the existence of identical words in Romanian (*lift, apartament, pulovăr, metrou, poștă, vacanță*, most of them terms of French origin in both languages).

Another aim of the survey was to assess the students' stress pattern and pronunciation choices between the two varieties of English. To this purpose, they were asked to read a list of words which included terms with a double pronunciation pattern (see Annex, Table 1). Their choices were marked while they read the list of words and then they were analysed and interpreted.

We started from the hypothesis that students would be mostly inclined to use the American spelling and pronunciation, as a result of the fact that they are more exposed to the American culture (music, TV programmes and cinema). Another assumption was that the stress pattern of some disyllabic words might cause problems, especially in the case of three words deliberately included on the list (*Japan, police, hotel*), which over the years have proven to be confusing for some of our students. More specifically, what has been observed during the phonetics classes is some students' tendency to stress the initial syllable in the case of these three words, probably in keeping with the rule stating that disyllabic nouns and adjectives usually have this stress pattern (*`summer, `magic, `happy, `funny*, etc).[1] The first factor in the above-mentioned list by Kenworthy and Brown

[1] For a more elaborate survey on stress pattern in English, especially on stress differentiation in noun-verb, noun-adjective and adjective-verb pairs, see Charles W.

should have helped our Romanian students, since in both Romanian and English the stress pattern is identical (first syllable non-stressed).

Data interpretation
Translation

In the case of 21 of the 34 words that were to be translated into English, there was clear preference for the American versions, both in what concerns the term chosen and the spelling. Most of the terms refer to food, articles of clothing and urban planning components. In nine cases, the British terms were preferred. An explanation might be their similarity with the Romanian terms, either in spelling or in logical thinking (*bloc/ block, parter/ groundfloor, teatru/ theatre, specialitate/ speciality, mobil/ mobile phone*). *Autumn* and *holiday* do not come as surprise choices (to the detriment of their American counterparts *fall* and *vacation*, the latter very similar to the Romanian *vacanță*, therefore a contender), as they are words that are very common and learned at early stages. The overwhelming preference for *moustache* over *mustache* (68 to 9) is explained by its French origin and therefore the choice of the original spelling over the simplified American version. There are three almost perfect ties, the first concerning spelling, the other two being about variants (*apologise/ apologize, sweets/ candy and full stop/ period*). In the case of the last example, the majority of the students (60 out of 102) chose to use other terms (*dot, point*), making a confusion between the punctuation marks and other symbols. There were many cases in which quite a few students suggested other variants, which were somewhat connected with the source term (*snacks, frispies* for *chipsuri*, *shoes/ converse* for *tenișI*, *pumpkins*/ *squash* for *dovlecei*, *chewing gum* for *gumă de șters*, *excuse me/ say sorry* for *a-și cere scuze*). A certain knowledge of French was also evident in some other cases (**pomes frites* for *chipsuri*, *ascensor* for *lift*, *vacance* for vacanță, **chamion* for *camion*).

Reading

As far as the pronunciation is concerned, the hypothesis was confirmed, although the number of examples is too small and therefore cannot be considered too relevant. More precisely, out of the six examples marked by a difference between the American and the British variants (*schedule, harass, harassment, can't, vase, half*), there was an obvious

Kreidler (1987) Stress differentiation in sets of English words, Word, 38:2, 99-125, DOI: 10.1080/00437956.1987.11435883, https://doi.org/10.1080/00437956.1987.11435883

preference for the American pronunciation in the case of the first five words. *Half* showed an equal preference for the standard BE [ha:f] and the RO phonetic reading [half], which can be read as a poor assimilation of the English pronunciation rules.

One explanation for the off-standard pronunciation choices might be the transfer of a pronunciation rule to words with similar, if not identical spelling. This is the case for *diner*, pronounced like *dinner* by two thirds of the students (69 to 33) and for *cushion* and *bushes*, pronounced like *much* by most of the students (64 to 20 and a more balanced 40 to 36, respectively). It is interesting that the same rule did not apply to a more familiar word (*pushing*), in the case of which the majority of the students (62 to 16) used the standard [u] pronunciation.

Another example worth of analysis is the pair *office* and *suffice*. The same transfer of rule operated here, especially as the latter term is less familiar and therefore was more easily associated with the pronunciation of the former, due to their similar spelling. All the 102 students used the standard pronunciation and initial stress for *office* [`ɒfis], while a majority of 69 also transferred it to *suffice* [`sʌfis] (in the case of which there were only 14 standard uses and 19 off-standard pronunciations). While students may be baffled by this difference, they would certainly remember it when told that in the case of disyllabic words, a simplified rule states that nouns usually have an initial stress, while verbs have the stress on the final syllable.

An interesting difference was registered in the pronunciation of the initial letter /a/ in words like *apple* and *apricot*. Although it is a common word, *apple* tends to be pronounced by Romanian learners with an initial diphthong [ei] on more occasions than other similar words. In this survey, 43 uses of the diphthong were registered for *apple*, (to 58 uses of the standard [ae]), while only 13 were found for *apricot* (to 77 standard pronunciations in this case). Such a tendency could be reduced if learners were explained that a complex sound (like diphthong [ei]) never occurs in front of a double consonant, especially in an unaccented syllable occurring at the beginning of a word.

In regards to the hypothesis concerning the stress pattern of the three words that seem to cause problems to Romanian learners of English, the results of the survey happily contradicted it almost entirely. In the case of *Japan* and *police*, a clear preference was registered for the standard stress pattern (77 to 10 and 96 to 33, respectively). *Hotel* showed a slightly dominant preference for the off-standard first-syllable stress pattern (58 to 44), an unexplainable choice for users whose L1 includes the same term and stress pattern as English.

Conclusions

The analysis of the data partially confirmed the hypotheses regarding pronunciation trends of Romanian students of English. As far as the lexical choices are concerned, there is a clear preference for American terminology, undoubtedly as a result of a more frequent contact with that culture and language variety, especially through music and films. This idea is also confirmed by the fact that in general students preferred American terms to British terms that are closer to their Romanian equivalents (*lift, pullover, metro, post, vacation*). In terms of spelling, on the other hand, when they had a choice, they showed preference for the British variant, which may be explained by a similarity to the French (and adapted Romanian) spelling of the corresponding terms.

As far as pronunciation is concerned, a positive aspect was the use of standard [æ], although it is a sound that does not exist in the Romanian phonetic system. In terms of trends, the survey showed that in some cases students are influenced by the Romanian phonetic spelling, as in the case of *half*. A transfer of pronunciation in the case of similar words (*diner/ dinner, office/ suffice*) was also registered, as well as preference for American stress pattern (end stress in disyllabic words).

The analysis showed a rather inconsistent use of the two varieties, which may betray the students' interest in having a general proficiency in the language rather than a more subtle, native-like accuracy.

This survey was just an attempt to identify some of the characteristics of Romanian students' choices in terms of pronunciation and lexis, in order to have a more accurate image of their proficiency and of the areas in which they need more guidance and practice in the future.

Annex

Table 1 Translation

102 1st year students EN and RO major

Romanian	BE	AE	Other	No answer
Cartofi prăjiţi	Chips 3	French fries 75	Fried potatos, fripsy, *Pomes frites 9	11
Chipsuri	Crisps 1	Chips 89	Snacks, fries, chipsuri 8	4
Pulovăr	Pullover (jumper) 15	Sweater 42	(sweet)shirt 10	35
Tenişi	Trainers 3	Sneakers 36	Shoes, converse, tenis, snickers 34	26

Dovelcei	Courgette 1	Zucchini 6	Pumpkins, squash 43	52
Vânată	Aubergine 4	Eggplant 30		68
Bloc	Block (of flats) 34	Apart. building 11	Unit, building, flat 20	55
Apartament	Flat 18	Apartment 75	Suit, condo, loft 6	3
Lift	Lift 14	Elevator 52	Ascensor, escalator 9	18
Parter	Ground floor 15	First floor 6	Downstairs, ground, *flor, lobby 16	63
Metrou	Underground 3	Subway 41	Metro, train, railway 17	41
Farmacie	Chemist's 2	Pharmacy/ drugstore 80		20
A sta la coadă	.... queue 12	....line 28	Wait at the back/ for your turn, be the last one, stay in file 8	54
Gumă de şters	Rubber 18	Eraser 36	Chewing gum, razor 4	44
Poştă (*corespondenţă*)	Post 15	mail 24	Correspondence, post mail/ office 12	51
Vacanţţ	Holiday 73	Vacation 23	break, summer vacance, 5	1
Toamna	Autumn 91	Fall 8		3
Camion	lorry *loreyn* 1	Truck 60	van, car, *chamion 19	22
Program	Programme 14 Timetable 1	program 51 schedule 16	Timer, working hours [*skegiual] 7	13
Culoare	Colour 52	Color 45	*Coulor 1	4
A-şi cere scuze	Apologise 34	Apologize 35	Excuse me, say sorry 18	15
Teatru	Theatre 76	Theater 16		10
Dulciuri	Sweets 49	Candy 41		12
Lanternă	Torch	Flashlight	Lantern, light(er)	

	2	43	25	
Telefon mobil	Mobile phone 62	Cell phone 12	Handy, hand phone 28	
Gunoi	Litter/ rubbish 4	Garbage, trash 68	*Trush, dust 4	26
Coş de gunoi	.... bin 11	... can 32	Rude, trash 13	46
Mustaţă	Moustache 68	Mustache 9	*Mustac 1	24
Specialitate	Speciality 74	Specialty 14		14
Trotuar	Pavement 2	Sidewalk 24	Sideway, border 4	72
Trecere de pietoni	(Zebra) crossing 10	Crosswalk 7	Crossover, crossing line 3	82
Punct (*ca semn de punctuaţie*)	Full stop 4	Period 5	Dot, point 60	33
Parcare	Car park -	Parking lot/ zone/ place 61	Station 10	31
Benzina	Petrol 2	Gas(oline) 56	Benzine, fuel, oil 10	34

Table 2 reading

	Standard EN	**RO tendencies**	**other**
fashion	[æ] 92	ei 10	
national	[æ] 75	ei 24	3
diner	[ai] 33	[i] 69	
apple	[æ] 58	ei 43	1
apricot	[æ] 77	[ei] 13	12
fashionable	[æ] 70	ei 26	6
nationality	[æ] 83	ei 11	8
schedule	BE [ʃ] 24	AE [sk] 63	15
harass	BE ‘ _ _ 38	AE _ ’ _ 54	10
harassment	BE ‘ _ _ 32	AE _ ’ _ 41	7
office	102		
suffice	[sə’fais] 14	[‘sʌfis] 69	19
can’t	BE [a:] 29	AE [æ] 73	
half	BE [a:] 46	AE [æ] 11	[al] 46
vase	BE [a:] 9	AE [ei] 93	
cushion	[u] 20	[ʌ] 64	[ju] 18
bushes	[u] 36	[ʌ] 40	2
pushing	[u] 62	[ʌ] 16	-
Japan	_ ’ _ 77	‘ _ _ 10	5

hotel	_’ _ 44	‘ _ _ 58	
police	_’ _ 69	‘ _ _ 33	

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Thematic Structure of the Clause. Recognising Themes and their Metafunctions in Systemic Functional Framework

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Abstract: An extremely important aspect of functional grammar is the way information is structured in communication. This structure is built with the help of grammar and it generally happens at the level of the clause. In Systemic Functional Grammar there are two parallel and interrelated systems of analysis that concern the structure of the clause regarding the organization of the message. The first one is called *information structure*, and the second one is called *thematic structure* and it involves constituents that are labelled *Theme* and *Rheme*.

The first part of this paper is concerned with the most common difficulties encountered in identifying the Themes and the second part discusses the metafunctions of these Thematic structures.

We are going to analyse some of the most common cases: the *yes/ no* words, the adjuncts, the time expressions, the question words, the relative pronouns, the reference items, the temporal expressions. An important case is represented by the Subject *it* as unmarked topical Theme. Another problem is represented by the longer Theme units. In the last part of this paper we draw up the tests which should be made in order to identify longer Themes.

Keywords: *Theme, metafunction, topical, Rheme, units.*

An extremely important aspect of functional grammar is the way information is structured in communication. This structure is built with the help of grammar and it generally happens at the level of the clause. All clauses have information structure and we make this in both written and spoken language. In Systemic Functional Grammar there are two parallel and interrelated systems of analysis that concern the structure of the clause regarding the organization of the message. The first one is called *information structure* and involves constituents that are labeled *Given* and *New*, and the second one is called *thematic structure* and it involves constituents that are labeled *Theme* and *Rheme*.

The system of THEME belongs to the textual metafunction of the language. It is concerned with the organization of information within individual clauses and, through this, with the organization of the larger text. This means that the same sentence can embody several alternative Theme

choices:

e.g *He repeatedly threw the ball on the basket.*
The ball was repeatedly thrown on the basket.
Repeatedly, he threw the ball on the basket.

"Every clause is organized as a message related to an unfolding text" (Martin, Matthienssen, Painter, 1994:21). The system of Theme organizes the clause to show in what local context the text serves; the system is concerned with the point of departure in relation to what has come before. Halliday considers this local text or point of departure the Theme. The rest of the message which represents the background of the message is called Rheme. In most languages Theme is placed in initial position before Rheme.

e.g. ***Then perhaps he*** *will say the truth.*
But darling you *should have known.*

Another informal way of explaining this idea is to say that the Theme tells the listener or the reader what the clause is about, but this explanation can be sometimes misleading. In order to avoid mistakes, the systemic-functional grammar distinguishes between the idea of *topic* (or what the user is speaking or writing about, a non-linguistic approach) and the *Theme*, (the starting point of the message, realized in the clause, which is a linguistic category).

All clauses in English will incorporate what is known as a topical Theme and, sometimes other types as well. For pointing out the type of Theme, we should bear in mind that the clause can be contextualized in terms of all three of its metafunctional perspectives: textually, interpersonally, and ideationally. The Theme of a clause can thus have textual, interpersonal and ideational stages:

(i). *Ideational (Topical) Theme.* This stage can be recognized as the first element in the clause that expresses some kind of 'representational' meaning. More technically, it is a function from the transitivity structure of the clause and can be expressed by a participant, a circumstance and sometimes, a process.

e.g. ***The man*** *was fat.*
In 1980 *the actor moved to Bucharest.*
Says *Mr. Jones: "I will be late for dinner".*

Topical Theme can be unmarked (when the Theme represents the Subject of the clause) and marked (the Theme is not the Subject). Marked Themes are often important in structuring larger discourse.

e.g. ***Washington*** *is the capital of the U.S.A.* unmarked
Someday*, you'll forgive me.* Marked

(ii). *Interpersonal Theme.* The interpersonal part of the Theme includes one or more of the following: a Finite, a Wh- element, an Adjunct, a Vocative.

e.g. ***Should*** *they be doing that?*
How *did you get here?*
Perhaps *he will succeed.*
Sir John*, may we come in?*

(iii). *Textual Theme.* Textual Themes almost always constitute the first part of the Theme, coming before any interpersonal Themes. They give thematic prominence to textual elements with a linking function: structural conjunctions, relatives, conjunctives, continuatives.

e.g. *The president said* ***that*** *he would participate in the conference.*
The financial news alarmed the investors ***who*** *decided to sell their shares.*
Furthermore*, we found out that they didn't say the truth.*

As we mention previously, Theme is a system of the clause, so the first step in undertaking a Theme analysis is to identify the clause boundaries. To divide a text into clauses you need to look for verbs or group of verbs which are the elements that express processes of doing, saying, perceiving, thinking, being or having. For example,

e.g. *I****'ll be waiting*** *for you.*
You ***will tell*** *him, won't you?*
I ***want to be*** *alone.*
*I****'ll*** *always* ***have*** *time for her.*

Practically, we have to make a decision about where Theme begins and stops. The principle to remember is that everything up to and including the first 'topical' element will be part of Theme. There are some cases in which the boundary between Theme and Rheme is difficult to draw. In this paper we present some of the most common difficulties in identifying the Themes and their type.

a. **Elliptical clauses**

When two sentences are linked by coordination in a paratactic construction, the Subject of the second clause may not be present.

e.g. *He went to the kitchen and drank a glass of water.*

In such a case the ellipsed Subject of the second clause counts as the (ellipsed) topical Theme. Consequently, the Process (*drank*) is not the Theme.

b. **Type of Themes.** A very common issue is represented by the difficulty in identifying the metafunction of the Theme, namely the type of Theme.

b.1. Textual or Interpersonal?

One problem is represented by *yes* and *no* which can function as interpersonal or textual Themes. When we use *yes* and *no* as responses to questions, they function as interpersonal Themes.

e.g. *Did you drink your coffee this morning?*
***No**, I didn't.*
No is interpersonal Theme.

However, *yes* and *no* can function as continuatives, signaling a new move during the dialogue. In these cases, *yes* and *no* are textual Themes, linking the new move to what went before. (Halliday, 1985:92)

e.g. *A: I won't go to the park today.*
*B: **No**, it is too cold.*
A: Bad news about John's accident.
*B: **Yes**, it is.*
In these cases, *yes* and *no* are Textual Themes.

Another problem is represented by the Adjuncts because it is easy to confuse initial Adjuncts which have a textual, linking function and those which have an interpersonal, modal function. For example, textual Adjuncts such as *in fact, anyway, at least, in conclusion* can be confused with interpersonal Adjuncts such as *evidently, broadly speaking, obviously.*

b.2. Interpersonal or Topical?

Expressions of frequency ('usuality Adjuncts' (Halliday: 49)) such as *sometimes* or *often* are rather interpersonal than experiential. Other examples of interpersonal Adjuncts are: *often, usually, occasionally, rarely.* Topical Themes are expressions such as *in the mornings, on Sundays, twice a year.*

In order to separate these two types of Themes, the predication test is a very useful test. In the following examples the second version has the element which can be considered predicated Theme. We have to bear in mind that only a topical element can function as a predicated Theme.

e.g. *On Saturdays we go to the cinema.*
It was on Saturdays we used to go to the cinema.

On Saturdays is a topical Theme in these examples.

Usually Mike plays tennis with his friend.
** It is usually that Mike plays tennis with his friends.*
Usually is not topical Theme in these examples.

Aside expressions of frequency, question words (Wh- words) are both interpersonal and topical (Haliday, 1994: 54). This is because they play a role both in the interpersonal structure of the clause – as a Wh- function – and in the transitivity structure of the clause, as participant or circumstance.

e.g. ***What*** *is the matter, John?*
Why *did you go there?*
How *old are you?*

b.3. Textual or Topical?

One problem is represented by relative pronouns (such as *who, which, whose)* because they play a role in the transitivity structure of a clause, but at the same time they have a linking function. As a result, they are both textual and topical Themes.

e.g. *She looked to the man* ***who*** *was sitting next to her.*

Some reference pronouns, such as **this** is sometimes wrongly considered to be textual Theme in the following example:

e.g. *For many years the girl has studied music.* ***This*** *had as a result a successful career.*

Although *this* is certainly textual in its function as a cohesive item, it counts as a topical Theme because it is a participant in the clause structure.
Temporal expressions can also be easily confused because they sometimes can function as a linker combining two clauses or as sentences in a temporal relation.

e.g. ***Firstly*** *I opened the door,* ***then*** *I walked into the room,* ***then*** *I looked around me.*
In this case the words in bold are textual Theme.

e.g. ***In 1980*** *he became the manager of the company.* ***After two years*** *he decided to leave.*
In this example the circumstances function as topical Themes.

c. **Subject as an unmarked topical Theme**

As we know *it* is common as Subject and, as a result, an unmarked

topical Theme. We will enumerate three major cases in which *it* is analyzed as topical Theme. In all these cases *it* represents the subject of the clause. Due to the principle of Theme selection the unmarked Theme is part of the mood of the clause, the Subject *it* will be an unmarked topical Theme in declarative and yes/no interrogative clauses.

e.g.	*It*	*is*	*cold.*	*Is*	*it*	*cold?*
	Topical Theme				Interpersonal Theme	

It will always be able to serve as unmarked Theme and when this happens it will give the thematic status to the choice of mood, exactly as any other unmarked topical Themes.

When *it* serves as Subject, *it* can be: *ambient it, non-representational it, anticipatory it* (Martin, Matthienssen, Painter, 1997: 33).

(i). The ambient *it* serves as a participant in the transitivity structure of the clause, in sentences like: *It's sunny.* This type of *it* can be considered representational because it represents a condition. We can check this fact by asking a wh- question with *what.* For example, *What is sunny?* The answer uses a fully lexical group in answers like *The room is sunny.*

In conclusion, ambient *it* is a perfect unmarked topical Theme: it serves as Subject and has a role in the transitivity structure of the clause.

(ii). Non-representational *it*. Unlike the ambient *it*, the non-representational *it* does not represent an experience and does not have a participant role. Halliday identifies two situations in which this type of *it* can be used: the so-called 'meteorological' clauses and the impersonal use of *it.*

e.g. *It is raining.*

In 'meteorological' clauses' *it* is not ambient, differing from this in that it does not represent some aspect of the environment (like in *It is windy*) and it does not serve a participant role. We cannot ask * *What is raining?* and we cannot use fully lexical items: *The sky is raining.*

We have the exact same situation when *it* is used impersonally, in examples such as:

e.g. *It is said that John will come back.*

(iii). Anticipatory *it*. This can be used only in mental and relational clauses, and it serves to anticipate an embedded clause occurring late in the structure. Unlike the impersonal projections, these structures have an alternative where the embedded clause represents the Theme (functioning as Subject):

e.g. It scares me that he will not come.
That he will not come scares me.

d. Longer Theme units. It is not difficult to recognize an unmarked Theme when the Theme is expressed by a noun, pronoun or a short nominal group. However, the Theme can be expressed by a longer unit, represented by:

(i). Long nominal groups

e.g. ***The man who was looking out of the window*** *is my brother.*

We have to notice that the nominal group extends beyond the main noun.

(ii). Group and Phrase complexes. Sometimes, more than one nominal group can function as the Theme:

e.g. ***Mary and John*** *are getting married.*

G. W. Bush, the president of the United States of America, *was invited to the conference.*

It is also possible for two prepositional phrases to function as Theme:

e.g. ***In Italy, during the Easter holiday****, there are a lot of tourists visiting the Vatican.*

(iii). Embedded (subordinate) Wh- clauses

Another kind of long theme occurs when a Wh- clause appears in initial position, functioning as Theme.

e.g. ***What they told us*** *was a lie.*

What the constructors hope to do *is the longest bridge in the world.*

(iv). Embedded (subordinate) non-finite clauses

Another kind of long Theme occurs when non-finite clauses are embedded into Theme position. Non-finite clauses function especially as topical Themes.

e.g. ***Studying 5 hours a day*** *will help you to choose a good university.*

To err *is human,* ***to forgive*** *is divine.*

We can also have a complex of non-finite clauses:

e.g. ***Making physical exercises and eating healthy food*** *will help you to loose weight.*

(v). Embedded (subordinate) that- clauses:

e.g. ***That he will tell her secret*** *scares her.*

In order to recognize the longer Themes that function as single elements we can try one of the following tests:

(i). replace the expression with a pronoun. If we can replace the expression with a pronoun this means it serves as a single element in the clause.

e.g. ***Mary and John*** *are getting married.*
They *are getting married.*
Studying 5 hours a day *will help you to choose a good university.*
It *will help you to choose a good university.*

(ii). move the expression in a non-Thematic position, consider the same expression with a different structure.

e.g. ***From house to house*** *I tried to find her.*
I tried to find the child ***from house to house****.*

This alternation proves us that *from house to house* functions as a single element:

e.g. ***From house to house*** *I tried to find the child.*

We have to mention that there are some cases in which the expression can be split into two parts:

e.g. ***From London to Bucharest*** we flew with the British airways.
From London we flew ***to Bucharest*** with the British airways.

Conclusions

As we have seen in this paper, it is possible to analyze a clause for both their Given-New structure or for their Theme- Rheme structure. The fact that we have both Thematic structure and Information structure makes it possible for a writer or speaker to choose to put New information in Theme position instead of Rheme position which is more normal. We discussed how Theme and Rheme combine to make up the Thematic structure of the clause and examined several ways in which the Theme of the clause is realized. We then examined the most common problems we encounter in analyzing Themes.

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Odd Entries in Legal Dictionaries

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Abstract: The present paper focuses on bilingual legal dictionaries published in Romania over a period of 15 years (1999–2014). While trying to create a bilingual term base (Romanian-English) for computer assisted translation tools, we encountered different types of entries, which – in our opinion – are difficult to explain why they are included in legal dictionaries. While presenting examples belonging to various fields (e.g. biology, geography, politics, religion or economy), we will also discuss politically incorrect translations, for which there may be various explanations. As the paper stems from a larger POSDRU project, we also deal with current issues regarding the importance of published dictionaries compared to (online) term bases from various points of view, such as relevance, quality, number of entries, reliability, efficiency, or search options. We think that our results are at least surprising, as they re-shape even one of the most basic dictionary requirements, namely alphabetical order for the Romanian language when diacritical marks are involved.

Keywords: *dictionary, English, legal terms, Romanian, term base*.

1. Introduction

The age of globalization and localization brought about revolutionary changes in technology, resulting in the ®evolution of translation industry (cf. Gouadec, 2007; Imre, 2013). The technological changes in translation have led to the appearance of machine translation (MT), term bases (TB), translation memories (TM) and computer assisted translation tools (CAT), which are all-in-one translation environments, providing MT, TB and TM combined.

A further important thing to mention is that English has turned into the *lingua franca* of our times (Graddol, 2003), and the interest between language combinations, including English, has grown steadily over the past decades. A direct consequence is the appearance of bilingual and multilingual dictionaries of all types from general to very specific ones, primarily focusing on areas of larger interest, such as law, economics, technology, medicine, not disregarding the financial aspect connected to the linguistic mediation in these fields.

Our concern is the appearance of bilingual (English–Romanian and/or Romanian–English) legal dictionaries published in Romania over a

period of fifteen years (from 1999 to 2014). Within the framework of a POSDRU project we have collected more than a dozen dictionaries and the present article focuses on certain issues while checking their content.

Our presupposition was that printed dictionaries should be the most reliable sources regarding language, spelling and terminology, as we have an identifiable author or collective of authors who are experts in the particular field, and the content is checked by one or more readers before publishing.

Being an expert also means that certain rules concerning dictionary compilation are respected, such reliable and relevant parallel corpora before extracting terms, followed by term extraction and multiple check by experts in that domain as well as linguistic readers (Dróth, 2003: 159). Naturally, previous data may be used (dictionaries are hardly ever created from scratch, cf. Burada and Sinu, 2016: 279), especially from relevant dictionaries published before, completed with new data, by which we mean deleting obsolete entries and adding new terms and expressions.

Although the alphabetical arrangement of multiple word expressions may cause a real headache, the compiler may choose to apply the 'established' entry style (when the entry is placed under the grammatical head of the expression) or based on the alphabetical order of the first term, occasionally enabling a faster search. Even if sometimes either rule is difficult to follow, the author must strive for the best option, leading directly to the quality of dictionary.

The issue of quality will inevitably bring into picture the recent appearance of electronic dictionaries, online databases and machine translation. After all, why bother with costly publication of a dictionary, as terms change, new terms constantly appear and many of them (if not all) are available online, either via *Google Translate* or other online TBs and TMs, such as *Glosbe*.[2] The answer seems to be simple: reliability, covering (at least) the majority of relevant entries without spelling mistakes, and quality equivalents or translations, even if sometimes it is difficult to offer a translated version / phonetic transcript of an established equivalent (cf. the English *mouse* as a computer peripheral, and its non-established Romanian equivalents: *mouse, maus, dispozitiv periferic care poate deplasa cursorul pe ecranul unui calculator*[3]). And indeed, until recent past printed dictionaries were much more reliable than unknown online sources, which were either less detailed or equivalents hardly to be found in the desired

[2] Available at https://glosbe.com/, 09.05.2016.
[3] Source: http://hallo.ro/search.do?l=ro&d=en&query=mouse, 09.05.2016.

language combination. Now let us take a look at "official" definitions of dictionaries:

> A book or electronic resource that lists the words of a language (typically in alphabetical order) and gives their meaning, or gives the equivalent words in a different language, often also providing information about pronunciation, origin, and usage. (Oxford English Dictionary[4])

> A lexicographic work containing the words of a language, a dialect, a field of activity, a writer, etc., organized in a particular order (typically alphabetical) and explained in the same language or translated into a foreign language (Romanian Explanatory Dictionary – DEX[5])

It is easy to observe that both definitions have many common elements, and seemingly there is a great consensus regarding the contents of a dictionary. However, the following excerpt from the *New York Times* will signal some problems:

> Having recently spent a large amount of time researching how a particularly well-known American dictionary was made, I have a very different notion of what a word's presence, or even its absence, in a dictionary implies. One is that no dictionary contains every word in the language. Even an unabridged dictionary is, well, abridged. The sciences, medicine and technology generate gobs of words that never make it into a dictionary; numerous foreign words that appear in English-language contexts are left out. A great many words are invented all the time, whether for commercial reasons or to amuse one's friends or to insult one's enemies, and then they simply vanish from the record. (Skinner, 2013)[6]

Although it is acknowledged that nothing is perfect, we should strive for the ideal in everything, including dictionaries. Thus, a specialized bilingual dictionary should respect certain characteristics of terms (cf. Heltai, 2004: 28–29; Kis, 2005: 107; Imre, 2013: 232), listed below:

1. Terms have only one meaning and have no synonyms;
2. Terms have a clearly defined meaning;

[4] http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/dictionary, 30.11.2014.
[5] In Romanian: *Operă lexicografică cuprinzând cuvintele unei limbi, ale unui dialect, ale unui domeniu de activitate, ale unui scriitor etc., organizate într-o anumită ordine (de obicei alfabetică) și explicate în aceeași limbă sau traduse într-o limbă străină.* (DEX)
[6] http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/05/17/the-role-of-a-dictionary/, 30.11.2014.

3. Terms are always used in the same sense;
4. Terms are used only by a certain group of speakers belonging to a specialty;
5. The majority of terms are a compound word or a combination of words;
6. Meaning of terms cannot be extended or reduced - independent from context;
7. Terms are not characterized by connotation;
8. Terms are not characterized by emotional meaning.

We are also well aware of the fact that lexicography goes hand in hand with translation, namely that they both often raise the question whether they belong to science, art or craft (Burada and Sinu, 2016: 1; Imre, 2013: 44), to which there is a rather simplistic answer, at least in the case when translation is involved (cf. bilingual dictionaries). Since Holmes' article (1972) we know that it is not very fortunate to associate it with *science*, a fact proved by various books published later (Bassnett, 2002; Snell-Hornby, 2006; Baker and Saldanha, 2009), and due to the number of people involved in both lexicography and translation, it is hard to truly associate them with *art*. Then we have *craft* left, which is supported by the "impressive diversity of dictionary types, the different backgrounds of their compilers, the various sources of theoretical and methodological support" that appeared in the past decades, a fact highlighted by a very thorough book published on the topic (Burada and Sinu, 2016: 6).

2. The Project

In a POSDRU project of eighteen months (2014-15) we collected more than a dozen English–Romanian and Romanian–English bilingual legal dictionaries published in Romania over a period of fifteen years (1999–2014). After having analyzed them, regarding both form (e.g. layout of entries) and content (relevant entries), we have come to the conclusion that the majority of them leaves much to be desired in terms of quality (spell-check, proper terms, suitable translations, etc.), and the present article will offer a few examples in this respect.

The dictionaries we have checked are the following: Bantaș and Năstăsescu, 2000*; Botezat, 2011; Butiurcă et al., 2013*; Dumitrescu, 2009a; Dumitrescu 2009b; Hanga and Calciu, 2009; Imre et al., 2014*; Ionescu-Cruțan, 2006*; Jidovu et al., 2010; Levițchi, 2004*; Lister and Veth, 2010; Lozinschi 2008; Năstăsescu, 2009*; Pucheanu, 1999; Voiculescu, 2008; Voroniuc, 1999; and Voroniuc, 2011. The majority of

them are legal dictionaries, while others (marked with an asterisk) are either general ones or dictionaries of economics, which we thought to be containing legal entries, as sometimes the same term may belong to more than one field.

In this respect we also have to mention that the legal field of vocabulary may be perceived in its core sense (strictly legal terms), but a more lenient approach may result in devastating effects, as any term may appear in a legal context (for instance, a *contractor* may be *sued* if the *wall* the *company erected* was not *thick* enough). Hence when we think of a legal dictionary, we have in mind "prototypical" entries of laws, regulations, penal and civil codes, or terms connected to economics or finances. All other terms may seem odd in a legal dictionary, and the following section will offer some of these.

3. Odd Entries in Legal Dictionaries

Due to the constraints of space, in this article we would like to exemplify some odd entries found in Romanian–English legal dictionaries under letter *Ş* (compare the Romanian S-cedilla and S-comma[7]). The above-mentioned dictionaries contain some 600 entries starting with *Ş*, a rather insignificant number compared to thousands of entries for other letters, such as *C, P, R* or *S*. Nevertheless, a number of odd entries could be identified, detailed below.

The first type of odd entries stems from typographical errors. As the Romanian letter Ș (S-comma) was not present in Unicode standard, Ş (S-cedilla) was used instead. Even when keyboard layouts were selected for Romanian, S-cedilla was specified, although now there are *Standard* or *Programmer* options. The S-comma was already introduced in Unicode 3.0, but until then the Romanian *ş* and *ţ* caused a lot of typographical troubles, for instance certain fonts were replaced by others, or instead of the proper character a box (□) or a string of unidentifiable characters were printed. This may be the reason for the following error:

(1) *şis – sheath knife*

Example (1) is a non-word in Romanian. The correct word is *şiş*, which is indeed *sheath knife*, a synonym of *dagger*, or *pumnal, spadă* in

[7] The Romanian letter S̲ (S-comma) was not present in Unicode standard, and Ş (S-cedilla) was used instead, as even keyboard layouts referred to it. However, the S-comma was already introduced in Unicode 3.0.

Romanian. According to the Romanian Explanatory Dictionary (dexonline.ro), this is a dagger with a long and narrow blade hidden in a stick, which serves as its sheath[8]. Foreigners do have problems with diacritical marks in any language, and we consider it a serious mistake that even printed dictionaries commit.

Our next example contains a translation error:

(2) *şleau (*drum de țară natural, neamenajat, bătătorit de căruțe) – *highway* (cart-way)

The Romanian word in example (2) may be translated as *cartway*, so *highway* is definitely not an acceptable translation, let alone an established equivalent. However, the next example is even grievous, as we could detect a combination of typographical and translation error:

(3) *şindrilă – chincilla* (sic!)

The English equivalent for *şindrilă* is *shingle,* illustrated in picture 1 below, which is a thin, flat tile usually made of wood, fixed in rows to make a roof or wall covering[9], and the Romanian synonyms are *şiță* or *şindră*, deriving from the Hungarian *zsindely* and German *Schindel*[10]. Yet, the wrong translation is even misspelled, probably having in mind a small animal with grey fur, *chinchilla*. The Romanian version for this animal would have been *cincilă* or even *şinşilă*, and comparing picture 1 and 2, we can observe that they are like chalk and cheese:

Picture 1. Shingle

Picture 2. Chinchilla

[8] In Romanian: **ȘIȘ,** *șișuri,* s. n. Pumnal cu lamă lungă și îngustă, ascunsă într-un baston care îi servește drept teacă; *p. gener.* orice fel de pumnal.

[9] http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/shingle, 30.11.2014.

[10] http://www.dex.ro/șindrilă, 30.11.2014.

Before turning to discussing further entries, we owe the reader one more explanation: these three examples were highlighted both because they are erroneous, and they look odd in legal dictionaries. Their presence in a legal dictionary should be rejected ('overruled'), as they may constitute precedents for further entries. Of course, one may argue that the above examples may come from authentic legal contexts (e.g. *As the shingles were rotten, the defendant should have replaced them.*), but any word may be used in a legal context without being a legal term or expression, leading us to further examples.

We could identify a bunch of entries belonging to either general or specific vocabulary, which – in our opinion – are odd to be found in legal dictionaries:

(4) Games: *șah – chess*
(5) Numbers: *șaisprezece – sixteen; al șaisprezecelea – the sixteenth; șaizeci – sixty; șapte – seven; șaptesprezece – seventeen; șaptezece*[11] (sic!) *– seventy;*
(6) Food & drinks: *șampanie – champagne; șuncă – ham; șvaițer – Swiss cheese*
(7) Clothes: *șapcă – cap; șosetă – sock, half-hose*
(8) Animals: *șacal – jackal; șalău – pike; șoarece – mouse; șobolan – rat; șoim – falcon, champion, hero; șopârlă – lizard; știucă – pike;*
(9) Plants: *știr – pigweed* (Amaranthus)
(10) History: *șerb – serf, șerbie – serfdom, bondage*

As mentioned before, the possible appearance of the above entries in legal contexts is not a justifiable explanation why they have been included in legal dictionaries. Although they may belong to general or specific dictionaries (e.g. biology or culinary), their presence in legal dictionaries is frown upon.

We accept that it is often difficult to separate legal entries from other specific fields, such as politics or economics, but we tend to think that the examples below should not be present in legal dictionaries:

(11) Politics: *ședință comună a Camerelor Parlamentului – joint sitting of the Chambers of Parliament; ședință parlamentară consacrată întrebărilor adresate guvernului (Marea Britanie) –*

[11] The correct word would be *șaptezeci**i***.

parliamentary question time; ședință plenară a unui partid – caucus;

(12) Information Technology: *șef responsabil cu probleme de informatică și infrastructură – chief information officer, CIO;*

(13) Technical: *șubler – sliding / vernier callipers;*

(14) Economics, finances, business: *ședință comercială – trade session; șef de raion – shop walker, aisleman, floor walker; școala postuniversitară de bancheri (SUA) – stonier graduate school of banking (SGSB)* (http://www.abastonier.com/)

(15) Geography: *șelf continental – continental shelf*

The examples above show that the compilers must have overlooked the importance of proper parallel (bilingual) corpora regarding representative sources on legal issues. Although terms from politics and economics may be valid terms in law as well, the examples above are too embedded in their source fields in order to be listed among legal terms. The presence of examples in (12), (13) and (15) in legal dictionaries are much more difficult to explain.

The last odd set of entries are non-standard (informal, slang or popular terms), and their presence is hardly conceivable in legal contexts, unless in court interpreting:

(16) *șef politic – sachem* (slang: a political party leader)

Our problem with example (16) is that it is not specified that the English translation belongs to slang (to such an extent that it is not included in the Cambridge Online Dictionary), although we could find an explanation for it in the Oxford Dictionary[12] or on Dictionary.com[13]: North American informal word for *boss, leader*; Am. Ind. *chief of a tribe / confederation; a member of the governing body of the League of the Iroquois; one of the high officials in the Tammany Society*).

Further examples are collected in (17) below:

(17) Romanian slang terms: *șparli* (șterpeli, fura) – *angle, cabbage; șpil* (joc necinstit, șmecherie) – *spiel, swindle*; *șperț – illicit commission, bribe, graft, palm oil; ștangă* (bară de fier, rangă) – *rod, bar; șterpeli* (fura) – *prig, annex, filch, nick, pinch; ștecher* (ștecăr) – *plug*

[12] http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/sachem, 30.11.2014.

[13] http://www.dictionary.com/browse/sachem, 30.11.2014.

Although the terms above may belong to legal terminology, we think it vital to be labelled as non-standard ones, while the Romanian standard ones are given in brackets. One may argue that the official versions are less colorful, but legal wording is not about being colorful. Once again, these may prove useful in deciphering the confession of a culprit during court interpreting, but only when a clear distinction is made: they are used in non-standard or sub-standard language.

The last example is a real headache, because we need the Romanian Explanatory Dictionary for clarification: *ştecăr* is the established Romanian equivalent for *plug*.[14]

4. Conclusions

Before trying to draw some possible conclusions, it might be worth thinking about why a (new) dictionary is published. Except for reasons of previous success, new ones should be carefully considered whether they are really needed, including thesauri or encyclopedias.

A recent survey in Romania (Burada and Sinu, 2016: 317) shows that even if paper dictionaries are connected to quality, they are "used least frequently", and online versions are "serious contenders on the translation tools market", (Burada and Sinu, 2016: 319–320).

Although printed dictionaries were considered to be the most reliable sources regarding language and bilingual dictionaries used to be the most authoritative sources for translators, we have to change our attitude for four reasons at least:

1. the globalized world has led to a McWorld (Barber, 1992) in which McLanguage (Snell-Hornby, 2006) is acceptable, and in this rushing world we witness the appearance of McDictionaries and McTranslations – after all, "I translated it because it says in the dictionary."
2. once the quality of printed dictionaries becomes questionable, there is no reason not to switch to online versions, which are nevertheless 'out of control' with unreliable sources. Yet, all signs show that online versions represent the (near) future: "the third edition of the Oxford English Dictionary (OED3) would no longer be issued in print, but in digital format only" (Burada and Sinu, 2016: 320). Smaller dictionaries for particular niche markets are

[14] http://www.proz.com/forum/romanian/153086-Ştecher_sau_Ştecăr.html, 30.11.2014.

highly welcome, and the electronic platform will enhance the appearance of multilingual dictionaries, even blurring the line between term bases and dictionaries (cf. the EU's IATE term base).

3. the electronic format can be easily updated, which means addition (new entries), omission (obsolete terms), or modification of previous entries: partial or complete change.

4. since machine translation and internet were combined, there is a growing demand for freely available content regarding language(s). In this respect, for instance, we can mention the very positive initiative of the online version for the Romanian Explanatory Dictionary (dexonline.ro), containing high quality entries with constantly growing entries. As the printed version was rather pricey, few people used it; the online version is highly popular, with more than 720,000 definitions (as of May 2016), and almost 6,000 entries were added in the past month. In our opinion, it is not science-fiction to have reliable online versions of words, terms and all their possible language combinations; after all, *Google Translate* stems from a similar initiative, although it aspires for more.

Skinner offers a further benefit of online dictionaries: "With the rise of serious online dictionaries, there are some that approach this ideal, including Wordnik and Merriam-Webster's new unabridged version. They provide more raw information about words, enabling users to draw their own conclusions." (Skinner, 2013) Even if we are painfully aware that all sorts of online 'dictionaries' cast a shade on their trustworthiness, we are confident that many users can identify reliable sources, leaving room for personal taste as well:

> … dictionary users and dictionary makers sometimes have very different notions of what a dictionary is for. One may think of it as a legal code for language; the other considers it a very partial report. One wants unambiguous answers about spelling and meaning and grammar and usage; the other aims for neutrality, and the more serious he or she is, the more wary the person is of imposing his or her own notions of good English on the language itself. (Skinner, 2013)

In the long run, both translators and lexicographers should build their own electronic term bases. This means proper selection of relevant legal entries after a thorough cross examination of available authentic source texts and parallel corpora (spanning over a lifetime), as professionals should be able to distinguish general entries from specific ones, filter terms based

on style and register, and spot typographical and translation errors (cross examination again). Typographical errors can be instantly weeded out, especially when the automatic spellchecker is activated for the particular language. Even if not all errors are found this way – atomic typos will hardly be detected (Imre, 2014a) –, spellcheckers contribute directly to quality assurance.

For the time being, improvement is absolutely necessary in the case of Romanian–English and English–Romanian legal dictionaries. As the previous section illustrated, there are a number of issues, and we should not forget that the examples were collected from a corpus of around 600 entries only. Thus, only relevant entries should be included, technical problems should be eliminated (layout, formatting). It goes without saying that (by default) a proper alphabetical order is a must, yet language specific diacritical marks have even led to an improper Romanian alphabetical order in the case of at least two dictionaries (Imre, 2014b), which is unacceptable. The presence of very rare entries is acceptable (e.g. terms connected to history), especially when the compiler is happy to have met them at least once.

It may still happen that dictionaries compiled with a view to "protect themselves against plagiarism or to detect it" introduced terms based on "the *ten-word-rule* … or the *test of the bugword*, i.e. a non-existent word deliberately included in the list of lemmata" (Burada and Sinu, 2016: 279). Nevertheless, our entries either simply do not belong to legal dictionaries (thus it is hard to detect the ten-word-rule), or their spelling or translation is far below the standards of a quality dictionary.

To conclude, two verses from the Bible (NIV, 1 Corinthians 14: 18-19) could be adapted to specialized dictionaries: *I would rather include five intelligible words to instruct others than ten thousand words in a tongue.*

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Do Not Go Gentle into That Digital Night: In-Depth Learning through 3D Multi Modal Texts

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Abstract: This article will take a peek at whether the 3D multimodal text may serve as a personal human approach to deeper learning, while at the same time serving as a text avatar in a posthuman world. The starting point is the author's rich experience developing multimodal texts as a tool in all levels of education, and this article is based on a case study and work with pupils in 6th, 9th, and 11th grade. The author explains the concept of the cyborgtext, and how the present concept of a multimodal text is two dimensional. The next step towards achieving deeper learning is to add a third dimension to the multimodal text, where the author has designed a wooden box for this purpose; a box which is both a mode of presentation *and* an integrated part of process and finished text. By facilitating a variety of learning styles, the box will be a product of the individuals' schemata, preferences, and attitudes. The focus on tactile activities is seen as a counterbalance to an increasingly digital posthuman world.

Keywords: *3D multimodal text, cyborgtext, deeper learning.*

1. Introduction

The 17th International Conference "Language, Literature and Cultural Policies", Craiova 2018, heralded the interesting and potentially challenging topic of "Text Avatars in the Posthuman Age". The conference topic sees the use of the definite article in the posthuman society, thus laying the foundation of an existing posthuman world, rather than an Orwellian prediction of the future (Orwell, 1949). The posthuman age as both term and reality may for many be a challenge to relate to, as it may, to some extent, be regarded as a loss of human control. Posthumanism in the context of the case study forming the backdrop for this article will readily and popularly be seen - for the learners involved - as robots and cyborgs taking over larger parts of human activity, and also the fascination combined with fear of artificial intelligence. Avatars have become an increasingly apparent part of our lives, and not just in the sense of *Avatar* the movie (20th Century Fox, 2009) and the image representation of a desired self in gaming, social media, as well as in a textual form. Furthermore, the term cyborg has an important place in both Posthumanism, and in this article the concept will be presented as having an important role in text production. In

the field of education, teaching and learning does still rely heavily on humanism and human interaction at present, though with a mandate to provide insight into and gaining and competence in using digital tools in the learning process. With a fundamentally humanist approach to education and the reality of an already present and looming posthuman society, this article will take a peek at whether the 3D multimodal text may serve as a personal human approach to deeper learning, while at the same time serving as a text avatar in a posthuman world. This article is a response to the call for papers from the perspective of a teacher trainer.

2. The Multimodal Text

The author's point of departure for compiling this article is one of the author's case studies and work with multimodal texts and their role in deeper or in-depth learning; though a more detailed discussion of deeper learning as a concept is beyond the scope of this article. Multimodal texts go as far back as the first storytelling around the camp fires, passing on stories, legends, and learning from teller to listener, from generation to generation. The multimodal aspect in a (pre-writing) society would be the combination of storytelling techniques and dramatization, music, triggering visualization, moods and sentiments. A fast forward to our own experience with multimodal texts, our maturing and coming to age as adults has been represented in the books and reading material we have been exposed to from early childhood. Sitting on the lap of our parents or grandparents, the first books we would be exposed to would be the pure picture books, where the story telling technique of the teller is essential. As the child gets older and is exposed to text in a pre-/early reading phase, the books of choice will be a combination of pictures and simple text; still with another person as the prime story teller. When being able to read, the child will select books that correspond to age and interest, where there is a general development of an increasing amount and complexity of the text and a diminishing number of pictures or illustrations. At school, working with multimodal texts is an established, integrated, and acknowledged method; typically represented by a text/image combination, dramatizing a text or story, and also working with lyrics and music videos, thus exploring the options of aural, linguistic, spatial, and visual resources or modes. Having worked with multimodal texts for a number of years and implementing new digital tools as they have developed, turning the attention to deeper learning, a next step would be to literally add another dimension, and move from a 2D text to a 3D text. One might argue that an audio or video component may be seen as moving towards another dimension than the written text, but in terms of a learner's

physical product, the links to audio-visual tools stimulating a variety of senses are still two dimensional on the paper or screen they are posted on. Visualizing diving deeper into a 2D text to acquire deeper learning is a paradox to the more visually and bodily-kinesthetically inclined educator and learner. Attempting to dive deeper into a 2D world will quickly see one banging one's head against the at times proverbial wall. Norwegian pop group of world fame *a-ha* experimented with the idea of moving between 2D and 3D worlds in their 1986 music video *Take on Me* (a-ha, 1985). For the learner who wishes to e.g. work with this video as part of a learning session, the video will still be 2D for the *learner*. The concept of 3D is used as in a physical and tangible reality, as opposed to the virtual 3D reality of holograms, 3D films ,and VR (virtual reality) glasses.

2.1. The Multimodal Text and Deeper Learning

Deeper learning is not just a matter of increasing knowledge of or within an area or topic based on addressing and stressing one learning style or one intelligence, but rather using a range of learning styles and intelligences (Gardner, 1983) as pieces of a jigsaw puzzle to be able to create a synergy effect, and thus a deeper understanding. This deeper understanding of a subject or topic is based more on contextualization than on pure factual knowledge of a narrower specified field or area. Deeper learning will thus comprise a range of activities suited to various intelligences and learning styles. For the subject English in the Norwegian National Curriculum (L06) (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2006), one of the three main competence categories is "language learning", with a focus on "knowledge about the language, language usage and insight into one's own language learning. Being able to assess one's own language use, define one's own needs and select strategies and ways of working are requirements for attaining this" (ibid: 2). In order to reach goals within this main category, it is necessary for the teacher to facilitate a range of activities that will ensure that the pupils may respond positively to this. The facilitation of working with a variety of learning styles and triggering the various intelligences is not just *beneficial* to deeper learning, but a necessity. Providing a given topic, knowledge, and competence is contextualized by both promoting and expressing interests, schemata, and personal experiences and learning styles, it is also vital that these qualities may be expressed through a product representing and defining the process.

Cyborgs

Figure 1 Mechanischer Kopf

The term cyborg was first used in 1960 by Manfred Clynes and Nathan S. Kline (Clynes & Kline, 1960), and refers to the restoration and/or improvement of primarily human biological functions. The fascination of a posthuman world is readily seen through the concept of cyborgs, clearly evident in both literature and film. Victor Frankenstein's monster (Shelley, 1818) is arguably not a true cyborg, but does indeed represent the fascination of creating life, and might be seen as a first experimentation in literature with similarities to today's fascination for cyborgs. However, Michael Filas in his PhD thesis (Filas, 2001) goes as far as describing *Frankenstein* as the first cyborg text. Fictional cyborgs are found in a range of literature, where the Tin Man of Baume's *Wizard of Oz* (Baum, 1900), popularized by the 1939 Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer movie starring Judy Garland, is familiar. Samples from comics, magazines and graphic novels, film, TV and video/computer games are numerous. Early examples are *Robotman* (DC Comics), Julius No in 1962 James Bond movie *Dr No*, and in later movies and TV series such as *The Six Million Dollar Man*, Darth Vader of *Star Wars*, the Dalecs of *Dr Who*, *RoboCop*, and children's favourite *Inspector Gadget*. Dadaism, the early 20th century avant-garde art movement, shows a fascination for the man-machine combinations or cyborgs, as exemplified by Rauol Hausman's *Mechanischer Kopf (Der Geist unserer Zeit)* (Hausmann, c 1920). In the last years, tattoos have become increasingly popular as personal statements of art, where artistic quality has become important. The art of tattooing and its customers provide examples of fascination for cyborgs represented by 3D tattoos displaying mechanical parts beneath the skin. Besides arts and entertainment, one may well see the health sector as being a forerunner developing the cyborg concept through pace makers, artificial joints, prothesis etc. The references to fictional and medically inspired cyborgs all have in common the desire for human enhancement, a term used in research among others by J. Hughes (Hughes, 2004). With the concept of the cyborg as a human enhancement, one may transfer this concept to the written text as a mode of communication and presentation.

3.1. The Cyborgtext

The L06 (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2006), states that a number of trans-modal or basic skills are to be carried through in all subjects; digital competence being one of them. Working with subject-related digital competence, the development of the multimodal text has developed into also including the use hyperlinks to external resources, embedding audio and video files in document, QR coding etc. By fulfilling the requirements of the L06 in this way, we also further develop the movement from the traditional single-modal text to a cyborgtext becoming to a posthuman world. The term *cyborgtext* is coined by the author to cover part man-made and part machine made text, thus creating a seamless interface between man and machine; a term that the author cannot, to his knowledge, find to have been used or previously published in this sense. The author has found a reference to the term *cyborg text* (in two words) in the sense of an interface between man and machine (Shortis, 2001), but only loosely explained and as a machine-readable text; which is not the same concept as the cyborgtext used in this article. The concept of hypertext writing as exemplified by Diane Greco, where UCLA professor N. Katherine Hayles in a review (Hayles, 1995) of Greco's *Cyborg: Engineering the Body Electric* (Greco, 1995) does use the term cyber text. However, this is used about Greco's hypertext writing, which is a non-linear text as opposed to traditional linear text. The linear text is still the norm in primary and secondary education, and thus the non-linear hypertext has been ruled out as relevant for the author's work. The term cyborg text, in two words, is more widely used in and about previously published work, such as by Michael Filas (Filas, 2001), in the meaning of texts *about* cyborgs, as opposed to a textual *format*. The earlier man-made texts, laboriously written and copied by monks, later by the general public as literacy became wide spread, are texts where content and style trigger the schemata, imagination and visualization of the reader. Images do indeed support this in a multimodal text, where the image serves as a visual representation, and the written text as an encoding of such. The text may have an inherent form of multimodality as it may be a joint product of personal writing and machine contribution. The machine contribution to the text may be through spell- and grammar checkers, but also through machine translations and an offer of e.g. lists of synonyms and grammar guidance in e.g. Word documents. Digital tools and applications also offer audio representation of text, as well as the mixed human-machine interface of various auto speller applications. True, one may argue the point that spell- and grammar checkers along with various lists of vocabulary and audio presentations of selected written texts are initiated by humans; then again,

but so are the parts manufactured for the creation of cyborgs - be it fictional or real - and beyond the scope of this article. The man-made text and the machine-made components thus combined will form a cyborgtext based on the same criteria as for the more conventional physical presence of a cyborg: a blend of human and machine. The cyborgtext thus lends itself well to the drive for human enhancement; in this case not the human itself, but the process and product of traditional human writing. As a teacher trainer and educator, the author acknowledges the need for competence in using digital tools, and that machine assisted writing is required; but more importantly is the need and desire to ensure the learner is empowered to contextualize available information gathered through a variety of tools, thus triggering a range of intelligences as well as a higher order of thinking (Bloom, 1956) and task-based work triggering and setting the conditions for deeper learning.

4. The Box

The importance of tactile human skills in the posthuman world may appear as a paradox but remain essential for human development and that of the child growing up to be part of the posthuman world. Tactile skills and competence are a focus in primary school, but sadly become neglected as the learners get older and the importance of scoring at theoretically oriented national standardized tests become evident. The 2D presentation arena will be an analogue or a digital document, whereas the author has devised a wooden box for the presentation of the 3D text. *The Box*, as coined by the author, becomes not only a tool of presentation; it becomes an integrated part of the 3D multimodal text.

Whereas the concept of a box or similar item for storage and presentation of work in schools is not new, seeing the box as an integrated part of a 3D multimodal text is a newer concept. The author has queried among numerous colleagues at all levels of the Norwegian school system, and also abroad, and has not come

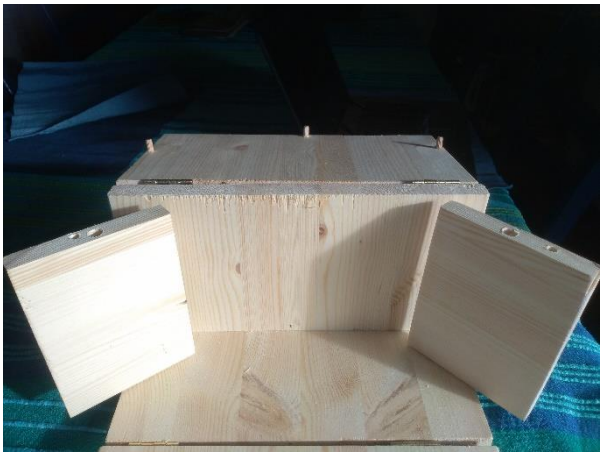

Figure 2. Opening up the Box

across anyone who has yet considered the concept of a 3D text. The idea for the construction and design of what was to develop into the Box has evolved over some time, inspired by numerous in-classroom forms of product presentation, as well as the combination of the traditional peep show theatre and the BBC Scotland TV series *Shoebox Zoo* (Shoebox Zoo, 2004). The Box is designed, constructed and produced by the author to be a box that one on the one hand is a container and a product, but which may also be opened up to unfold a world inside. The front wall hinges forward to create an extended platform, while the side walls pivot, thus giving the option of numerous presentational modes from that of a classical theatre stage to listing pro argumentation on the one side, and contra argumentation on the other. The side walls are interactive by giving the option of being pivoted according to presentation, bias and focus. As with the traditional multimodal text, the Box is an arena for presenting the combination of media used to both construct and to support the text and message. But the Box is more, it is also an *integrated* part of the text. The concept of the Box has the same function as of any (multimodal) text: providing a back bone or platform for passing on a story or presenting a given theme or topic. The idea of the Box is that it is to serve as not merely a platform or tool for presenting a topic, but also as an integrated part of both text and process.

4.1. Working with the Box

Observing the Box in its closed form, it presents the given topic as seen from the world outside or the world that contextualizes the Box, and by opening up the Box, the creator may display finer details and textual- and topic analysis in a wider sense than the traditional literary analysis. Through working with the various age groups of learners, it is interesting to see that despite the differences in age and levels of cognitive thinking, the task of creating 3D multimodal texts was addressed in much the same way. For each age group, the learners were given a specific topic or theme to work with. The topics for the involved learners were *superheroes* (6th grade), *famous British persons* (9th grade), and *English-speaking countries* (11th grade).

Figure 3. Brainstorming

The learners were familiar with making posters to present topics, and quickly saw the Box as a tool to do the same in 3D. The common approach was to see the Box as a container of information, and as one 9th grader put it, "the Box is like a book. You look at the book and the title says something about the topic, and often the author and the contents are described on the back when you turn it over". This approach was adopted and implemented by the author for all ages of learners, as this was a visualization they could all relate to. In effect, the learners themselves developed the analogy to the book and seeing how the closed Box may serve as an introduction to the given topic. When first presented with the author's idea for the Box, the learners initially saw a box that was to be a tool or media for presenting their finished product. Involving the Box from the planning stage, and the concept of the closed box as seeing the given topics from an outsider's perspective, the Box became an integrated part of the process of the multimodal text. All the involved learners at the different levels were familiar with the concept of brainstorming in one way or another and used one of the dominant walls of the Box to brainstorm by writing directly on the box; thus, clearly demonstrating their starting point at lower level on Bloom's taxonomy of learning (Bloom, 1956). Clearly displaying the brainstorming session on the prominent location not only serves as a display and confirmation of own schemata, but also an element in cooperative learning, as the boxes were readily available for peers to view. One of the textual components in common for the Boxes was a general text on the applicable topic; a cyborg text printed out and glued to the box.

Opening up the Box will display and provide for an arena of more detailed information and a deeper learning by presenting physical items and textual/visual items that contextualize the given topic of the box. Herein lies not only the option, but also the invitation to a presentation that may be a 3D parallel to the literary device of stream of consciousness as used by e.g. Virginia Woolf in *The Mark on the Wall* (Woolf, 1921). It is this stream of consciousness, or flow of association triggered by the learner's individual experience, schemata, learning style, and personal interests that forges the foundation for deeper learning.

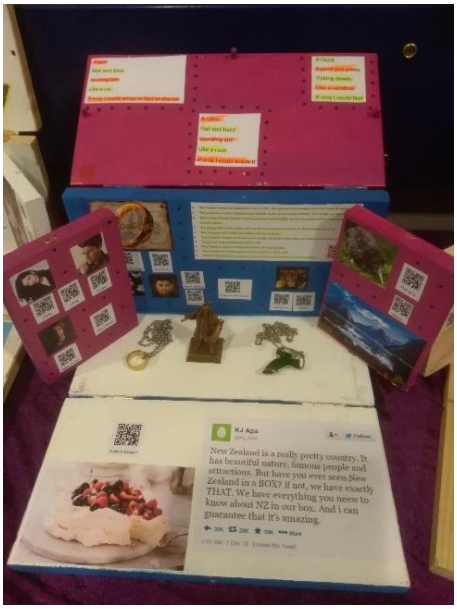

Figure 4. Sample of a 3D text

In 1996 M. Csíkszentmihályi published his work on what he terms the flow theory (Csíkszentmihályi, 1996), where the essence is "flow is an optimal psychological state that people experience when engaged in an activity that is both appropriately challenging to one's skill level, often resulting in immersion and concentrated focus on a task. This can result in deep learning and high levels of personal and work satisfaction" (Learning Theories, 2019). The physical unfolding of the Box is a tactile representation - or avatar - of the unfolding of the learners' previous knowledge combined with personal interests, learning styles and curiosity.

5. Conclusion

Introducing the Box to three different age groups of learners and observing how they implemented it into the process of creating a multimodal text, clearly shows how the process-driven product activates the learners' intelligences and learning styles, providing for personal and group knowledge, experience, and interests. Through cooperative learning the learners develop an understanding of central ideas and how to contextualize them. The learners proudly identify with their own box, and the sensation of ownership to both process and product is a driving force along the road to deeper learning. Given the opportunity to combine text, audio-visual tools, and a 3D integrated display of their own choice, the learners use their existing schemata as a starting point for their process. Through experimentation they expand their understanding through a variety of presentational modes connected to the primary topic, and the learners are thus able to contextualize their knowledge, thoughts and ideas through the Box as a tool and integrated part of the 3D text, rather than seeing the Box as merely a mode of presentation. Through application in three classrooms, the author's idea of a 3D multimodal text has proven to meet expectations of ownership and deeper learning by the learners embracing the concept and on their own accord implementing it as part of their personal learning process from the very start.

If the Box is to serve as a text avatar, it needs to fit the definition and use of the term *avatar*: a representation of something. The term and concept of avatar has its origins in Hinduism, where it is described as "a manifestation of a deity or released soul in bodily form on earth; an incarnate divine teacher", though in daily secular life, "an incarnation, embodiment, or manifestation of a person or idea" (Oxford, 2019) is arguably a more representative definition of an avatar. The posthuman cyborgtext is, as used in schools today as a writing platform and product for two dimensional texts, whereas the Box is three dimensional and demands a

physical presence and human control; the human who in a cyborgtext will at times lose control over the text production. The text avatar should ideally be topic related and, through personal and group development, will represent both a personal and a collective insight into and a contextualized understanding of the given topic. The Box serves as an integrated part of a multimodal text encompassing various text formats, and audio- and visual tools. In addition, it is an integrated part of a 3D text promoting and embodying the more abstract qualities of emotion, personal preferences, and personality, which reflects the desired and relevant qualities of the avatars of e.g. online communication, social media, and gaming - where the avatar is a medium to present contextualized inner qualities and personality.

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Dynamic Research Configurations in CBIS

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Abstract: Following in the footsteps of the research studies carried out within the fields of Corpus Linguistics, Translation Studies, and, later on Corpus-Based Translation Studies, a novel research perspective has opened the doors for what Bendazzoli et al (2018) would describe as *a booming research field*, i.e. Corpus-Based Interpreting Studies (CBIS). The present paper aims at framing some main theoretical and functional approaches with regard to corpus design strategies and analysis models applied to interpreting corpora. To closely investigate the analysis potential provided by interpreting corpora, we set out to design and implement a corpus-based research project, developed within MAXQDA, a virtual environment.

Keywords: *CBIS, corpus design, interpreting corpora, virtual environments.*

1. Introduction

The impact of Corpus Linguistics to the field of translation theory and practice has been highlighted by prominent scholars for many years now, since the shift to translation-oriented research studies via corpus-based investigations has been put on the map for more than 25 years. The innovative research direction recommended by Baker in the 1990s and early 2000s has paved the way to the emergence and the development of the contemporary corpus-based translation studies (CBTS). Acknowledging Baker's influential contribution to the development of a specific research agenda, i.e. the "translation universals agenda", scholars and practitioners alike set out to design and develop tailor-made research methods applied to corpus investigations within the field of Translation Studies.

Several years later, De Sutter and Lefer (2019: 2) would salute the configuration of a novel research direction that has been branching out from the already firmly established CBTS. Labelled by authors such as Zanettin, Saldanha, and Harding (2015: 7) as a co-extensive sub-discipline of descriptive translation studies, we highlight the evolutive potential of corpus-based interpreting studies (CBIS), not only for theorists and researchers, but also for trainers and trainees, "a trend that is clearly here to stay" (De Sutter and Lefer, 2019: 1). In the same climate of opinion, Bernardini and Russo (2018: 344) adhere to the recent approach to

professional interpreting training, claiming that this perspective has been constantly enhanced by means of descriptive strategies generated by "the implementation of new methodologies developed in the field of corpus linguistics". The authors acknowledge the resourceful contribution brought by the investigation of professional performances, mainly based on the observation of interpreters during specific communicative events, in addition to previous approaches to interpreting studies, tackled "through a variety of paradigms: cognitive, psycholinguistic neurolinguistic, sociolinguistic, linguistic, pragmatic." (see Pöchhacker, 2015)

2. CBTS *vs.* CBIS

Pleading for the development of fit for purpose research methods applied to investigate large source language and target language corpora, Baker would explain, back in 1993, that such an approach enables corpora investigators to record and report factual differences between Translation Studies and other academic disciplines, while analysing "the principles that govern translational behaviour and the constraints under which it operates." While authors such as Baker and Saldanha (1998: 15) would define translation as "a communicative event shaped by its own goals, pressures and context of production", interpreting has been approached and explained by authors such as Schlessinger (1998: 487) as "the production of oral output based on other-language input which may be either written (to be read) or unwritten (impromptu)." Although, as highlighted by Schlessinger (*ibidem*), "each of these modes may at times be characterized by features more typical of the other" that may often overlap, the task of an interpreter as compared to the performance carried out by a translator, "consists of rendering either an impromptu piece of discourse or written document being read, without interruption, by a single presenter." Under the circumstances, Baker (1995) and Laviosa (1998) suggested that interpreting can be closer explored by upgrading the main applications of corpus-based translation studies into this area of research.

Scholars such as Beaugrande (1992) and Stubbs (1996) highlight the particular features exhibited by the field of Interpreting Studies that trigger the development of specific research methods applied to corpora investigations. Thus, to successfully implement and report reliable results following close investigations of specific corpora, specialists within the field of Interpreting Studies need to observe "the absence of interlocutors and the length of the discourse to be interpreted", regarded by various scholars as the driving factors in determining specific lexical, syntactic and stylistic features of the corpus under investigation.

With a view to the advance of Corpus-Based Translation Studies *vs*. the recent evolution of Corpus-Based Interpreting Studies, Russo (2019: 89) identifies two main factors. The author mentions the organisation of fewer conferences on interpreting as one of the main factors. However, with the boost of communication tools and dedicated software this obstacle has been overcome. Nowadays we can visualise and investigate numerous live streaming or archived conferences with interpretations. We share the recommendation launched by various contemporary interpreting scholars to resort to reliable sources, such as the European Parliament (EP) website (https://multimedia.europarl.europa.eu/en/home), in order to carry out solid corpus investigations based on authentic materials for interpreting.

Russo (2019: 89) claims that the second major impediment to carry out corpus-based interpreting analyses, previously reported by authors such as Cencini (2002), Hu and Tao (2013), and Niemants (2015) regards the need to transcribe both the source speeches and the interpreters' linguistic performance, hence "the scarcity of large machine-readable interpreting corpora". Under the circumstances, the most profitable solution suggested by many contemporary scholars would recommend corpus designers to preserve the basic features of corpus transcription and annotation as to secure the "best possible balance between user-friendliness in both coding and using corpus data." (Russo et al., 2012).

2.1. Corpora Multidimensional Input to CBTS

The main investigation approach framing the field of CBTS: the hypothesis of translation universals, i.e. what Baker (1993) would define as the invariant features that govern all translated texts, independently of source language and translation direction, has further ramified into two other particular research perspectives. Under the circumstances, Zanettin (2013: 22) mentions the ever increasing trend that "focuses on individual variation rather than on universal properties". Hence, the author highlights the interdisciplinary approach to the translation outcome, a customized product, typically recognizable by means of the choices which distinguish the work of a translator from another, without being "explained as directly reproducing the source text's style or as the inevitable result of linguistic constraints" (Saldanha, 2011: 240).

Zanettin (2013: 22) mentions a third, more general research approach, related to the normative dimension of translation practice. Departing from what Baker (1993: 247) would predict back in the early 1990s that corpus-based investigations would target both "universal and norm-oriented features of translational behaviour", Zanettin (2013: 23)

argues that not only Baker's translation universals are interpersonal, but norms as well. Taking a step further, the same author advocates that although such norms would "refer to variant rather than invariant traits of translation", they zoom in particularities that feature translation outcomes generated within distinct socio-cultural backgrounds.

Aknowledging the current realities and trends that contemporary translators need to manage, prominent scholars such as House (2008) and Kranich et al. (2012) spotlight the dynamics of today's translation strategies and norms that need to be constantly updated, directly proportional to language change(s). Similarly, Zanettin (2013: 23) explains that "translation affects and is in its turn affected by language change", a phenomenon that we can describe as a snowball effect.

2.2. Corpora Multidimensional Input to CBIS

Closely connected to this latter research perspective adopted within the field of CBTS, Zanettin (*ibidem*) reports the multiplication of Corpus-Based Interpreting Studies. Again, the author highlights a twofold approach embraced within this relatively new research field. On the one hand, interpreting studies specialists focused on the universal rule applied to interpreting performances. On the other hand, authors such Setton (2011) and Straniero and Falbo (2012) paid special attention to the more particular features of spoken language. Adopting an integrative perspective, the above mentioned authors carried out applied research studies addressing topics such as hesitations and disfluencies. Special attention was paid to those linguistic markers that indicate social and discursive identity, and, particularly, modality.

One of the leading scholars that played a highly influential role in the development of Corpus-Based Interpreting Studies is Miriam Shlesinger, whose pivotal work "Corpus-based interpreting studies as an offshoot of corpus based translation studies" was first published in 1998 and edited by Sara Laviosa, the well-known promoter of the corpus-based approach as a new paradigm in Translation Studies. Reinforcing the main research aim within Corpus-Based Translation Studies, i.e. "to describe those features which appear to be universal in translated text as a mediated communicative event" (see Baker, 1993: 243), Shlesinger (1998) is in favour of the implementation and development of corpus-based investigation methods applied to identify and record significant quantities of authentic data "in order to move away from the preoccupation with instances in isolation" and advocates that "the same applies to interpreting studies, which has thus far suffered from the unavailability of large, computerized corpora."

Among the first researchers to highlight "the relevance and potential of the corpus-based approach for research into interpreting" (see Russo, 2019: 87), Shlesinger argues that the corpus linguistics (CL) methodology could be extended to interpreting, through:

1) the creation of parallel and comparable corpora comprising discourse which is relevant to interpreting;
2) the use of existing monolingual corpora as sources of materials for testing hypotheses about interpreting

(see Shlesinger, 1998 in Russo *ibid*: 87)

Departing from the key objective set by the research apparatus developed by corpus linguists, i.e. to investigate large quantities of machine-readable running text, Shlesinger (1998: 487) advocates that "interpreting is a mode of interlingual processing in which both the input and the output are oral", hence "a tool which is both viable and revelatory not only for the study of interpreting, per se, but for translation studies as a whole." Applying and adopting the corpus-based methodology to the field of interpreting studies, Shlesinger (1998) opened the doors to extensive research work that led to the design and development of specialised corpora for interpreters to capitalize on.

Aimed at enhancing some key interpreting competences, while fostering the application range of interpreting studies, corpus-based investigations generated, on the one hand, the multiplication of specialised parallel and comparable corpora that compile specific discourse samples relevant to interpreting, and, on the other hand, the intensification of interpreting-oriented investigations applied to monolingual corpora, in an attempt to test various hypotheses about interpreting. Prior to the recommendation put forward by Shlesinger (1998), some other noteworthy scholars such as Cook (1995) and O'Connell et al. (1993) had advocated that the design and investigation of specialised small corpora would be a more appropriate and feasible research strategy to facilitate a closer investigation of some peculiar, rather subtle elements of spoken communication.

Focussing mainly on the development of specific simultaneous interpreting skills and competences, Shlesinger (1998: 488) argues that the design and development of specialised corpora, both bilingual and parallel corpora, applicable to simultaneous interpreting, could bring considerable contributions to feature the interpreted text both on the horizontal, i.e. in relation to other forms of oral discourse, and the vertical, namely in relation to other forms of translation. Resorting to specialised corpora, both spoken

and written (transcriptions), specialists within the field of interpreting studies set out to identify and capitalize on the contribution brought by the advances of modern technology, although the investigation of transcription compliations remains a "labour-intensive and arduous process, which poses a major methodological hurdle". (*ibid*: 492)

To further expand and strengthen the applicability range of Corpus-Based Interpreting Studies, the same author recommends a twofold approach. First, Shlesinger (*ibid*: 491) claims that the design of specialised corpora applied to specific investigations carried out by interpreting specialists and researchers would contribute to the theoretical and normative framing of Interpreting Studies. Conjointly, researchers and trainees within the field of interpreting set out to enhance the performance of students enrolled in tailor-made academic programmes for interpretation.

According to Russo (2019: 88), the investigation of interpreting corpora leads to the development of novel research views that "would overcome anecdotal observations and also provide information typical of CL, i.e. word frequencies, type-token ratios (lexical variety), co-occurrences, lexical density, grammatical constructions, textual operations, discourse patterns, etc."

3. Interpreting Corpora Design and Research Parameters

Russo (2019: 87) defines an interpreting corpus as "a systematized, machine-readable collection of a mass of interpreters' performances, which lends itself to both quantitative and qualitative analyses."

A similar view was put forward by Bernardini et al. (2016), who endorse the wide spectrum of research perspectives generated by the quantitative and qualitative analysis of parallel corpora to build up interpreters' language transfer skills. In this respect, the authors mention the high applicability of the European Parliament Translation and Interpreting Corpus (EPTIC), a multilingual corpus derived from EPIC - also a multilingual corpus, which includes several language combinations and translation/interpreting directions. All language combinations feature English as one of the languages involved. The subcorpora completed so far are: English>French, French>English, English>Italian, Italian>English, Polish>English. (see https://corpora.dipintra.it/eptic/?section=documentation)

To highlight the integrative and functional applicability of interpreting corpora, Russo (*ibidem*) provides a checklist with some key research perspectives facilitated by such corpora. According to the author, interpreting corpora:

- are key resources for the observation and analysis of the surface structure organization of interpreting data of different natures;
- provide an insight into textual operations: many of them, by multiple interpreters, in:
  - multiple settings (conference, institutional assemblies, community, court, and media)
  - modes (sign-language, dialogue, simultaneous, consecutive, remote)
  - levels of proficiency (professional, trainee, ad hoc interpreter)
  - conditions (real-life, simulated, experimental);
  - allow for the observation of interpreters' translational behaviour.

The key parameters that play a central role in the design and development of interpreting corpora regard:

- metadata: mainly information on the speaker; date, speed and mode of delivery; subject; number of words, timing; location;
- linguistic features: information on morphosyntactic and lexical features;
- paralinguistic features: information on disfluencies, prosody, etc.

(see Russo, 2019: 87-88)

As recommended by contemporary researchers such as Sandrelli et al. (2010), Setton (2011) and Bernardini et al. (2018), the most effective electronic interpreting corpora can be designed and developed as:

❏ Parallel corpora: encompass transcripts of source language texts (SLTs) and equivalent target language texts (TLTs) with or without text-to-sound / video alignment. As reported in the specialised literature, parallel corpora enable interpreting researchers establish language-specific features of the interpreted production and identify particular linguistic characteristics, specific to the practice of interpreting. Adopting the model recommended by Baker (1996) and Laviosa (1998) for CBTS, the investigation of parallel interpreting corpora would generate explicit details on the performing interpreters such as gender, level of knowledge, degree of professionalism, socio-linguistic background. Moreover, as advocated by Shlesinger (1998: 490), "a corpus-based analysis of interpreters' outputs may also be expected to reveal interactions between translational patterns and modality."

❏ Comparable corpora: encompass source language texts (SLTs) and target language texts (TLTs) as monolingual outcomes. Thus, regardless of their source language, the interpreted text samples complied in a comparable corpus would enable us to identify specific patterns of the oral discourse, in the same language. Also, we could better feature those interpreted texts as specific outcomes produced in a certain socio-cultural background, and, consequently to establish key "characteristics of interpreting qua interpreting" (see Shlesinger, 1998: 490). We share the perspective put forward by the same author that "it is through studies such as these that one may hope to learn more about features which appear to cut across genres, languages and individuals".

❏ Multimodal corpora: encompass various interpreting modalities or input / output channels (video, audio, transcripts). With respect to multimodal corpora, specialists within the field of CBIS recommend the investigation of smaller-scale compilations in order to carry out valid computer-assisted comparisons between oral and written translations of the same SLTs, hence generating a clearer image to what extent the functional connection between two languages is modality-based.

❏ Intermodal corpora: encompass source language texts (SLTs) and the corresponding interpreted and translated target language texts (TLTs).

As far as the design and investigation of interpreting corpora is concerned, various researchers such as Dillinger (1989) and Gile (1994) claim that any attempt to separate the research approach from the authentic interpreting setting increases the risk to compromise the validity of the information recorded. However, Shlessinger (1998: 492) argues that "the use of a laboratory setting, of prerecorded texts and of linguistically controlled materials has proven necessary for a controlled examination of the large number of variables involved in interpreting." An optimal alternative recommended by the author envisages the use of authentic text samplings rendered by interpreters in laboratory settings. Shlessinger (*ibid*: 493) takes a step forward and argues that a similar approach has been adopted for corpus-based investigations of forensic texts. Just as such a research approach "was found to be lacking so long as no corpora of dictated texts, so too a study of translated texts would seem to warrant the inclusion of (sub)corpora designed expressly for the study of interpreting."

Adhering to this standpoint, we come to understand that the investigation of such corpora can generate "as rich sources of linguistic data

for extrapolating the kinds of strings or utterances or complete pieces of discourse containing whatever parameters are relevant to the hypotheses being explored." (*ibidem*)

On another note, with regard to the most effective tools applied to the design and compilation of interpreting corpora, some more recent research studies carried out by academics such as Setton (2011) or Bendazzoli (2018) highlight the transcription issue as one of the major challenges, despite the use of software or streamline methods. Both researchers used to label the specialised field of interpreting corpora as a "cottage industry" or a "cottage (wired) industry". However, Russo (2019: 89) emphasises the role and the relevance of speech recognition software, frequently used in transcription and often combined with "shadowing (the transcriber repeats aloud what s/he hears)". According to the author, such tools enable corpora designers to optimize both the design and the analysis process.

4. Applying Corpus Investigations to Interpreting Studies

In an attempt to familiarise students enrolled in the Translation and Interpretation Bachelor's programme with investigations applied to interpreting corpora, we have designed and implemented a research project developed within the MAXQDA software package for qualitative data analysis and mixed methods research (https://www.maxqda.com/).

By carrying out this research project we aimed at familiarising the students with the practice of interpreting by means of authentic interpreting samples. At the same time, we sought to increase students' awareness with regard to the current interpreting market requirements and the constant updating of the multifaceted translation and interpretation competence.

The design and implementation of our project is based on the EMT competence framework for 2018-2024 and the guidelines recommended by the EU Interpretation training toolbox:

- https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/emt_competence_fwk_2017
- https://ec.europa.eu/info/education/skills-and-qualifications/develop your-skills/language-skills/interpretation-training-toolbox_en

The main objectives of our project envisaged to increase our students' awareness of the contemporary transcultural and sociolinguistic realities via a hands-on approach, aimed to enhance students communicative and technological skills. Plugging our students in the current EU socio-cultural realities, i.e. *2018 - the European Year of Cultural Heritage*, we challenged them to simultaneously interpret a one-hour topic-related event video. The *European cultural heritage: ties that bind* is an authentic

resource, downloaded from the official site of the EU Parliament, event date:10/01/2018: https://multimedia.europarl.europa.eu/en/search?f=20180101&t=20191231&sn=true&st=EPV_EDITED_VIDEOS-WS_VIDEO&ut=EPV_REPLAY-EPV_VIDEO_FOOTAGE-EPV_PHOTO-EPV_AUDIO&ol=EPV_EDITED_VIDEOS&at=1&p_p_id=advanced_search_portlet_AdvancedSearchPortlet&_advanced_search_portlet_AdvancedSearchPortlet_p=21

At an early stage of the project implementation, the students were required to identify and rank, at language level, three main interpreting difficulties they experienced while trying to interpret the material.

Next, the students were asked to closely analyse the interpreted video, hence to design and investigate an interpreting specialised corpus. To carry out their corpus analysis, they first had to import the corpus sample into the MAXQDA Software. Then, they were asked to code the video in accordance with the three main interpreting difficulties identified previously. Thus, they marked in purple the recording sections containing those neologisms that they found difficult to translate into Romanian, particularly neologisms imported from unfamiliar domains and/or labeling novel concepts. In yellow they marked those sections that contain culture-specific vocabulary elements and/or concepts, which they either misinterpreted or did not interpret at all. In the same vein, idiomatic expressions were marked in green.

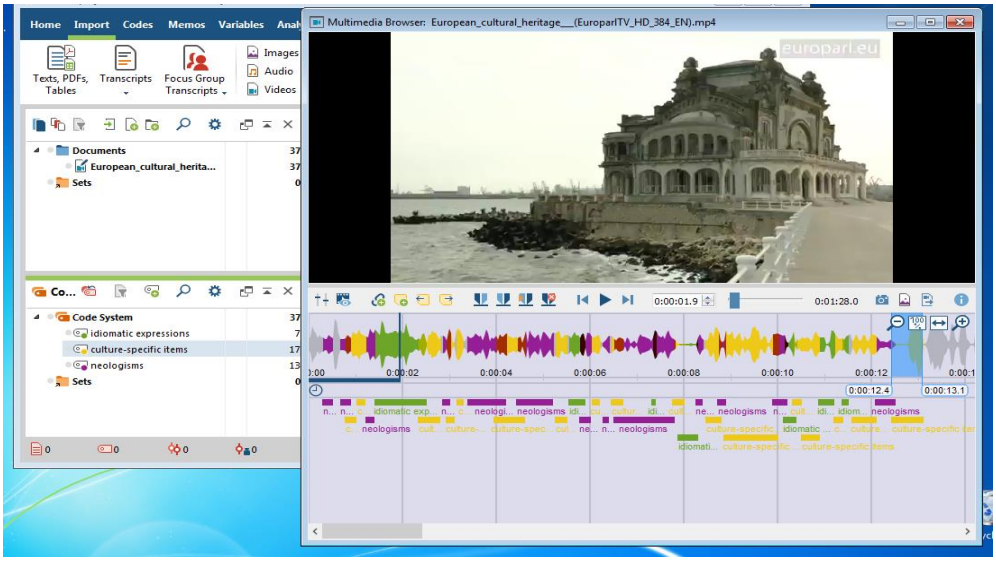

Figure 1. Corpus sample encoding

To have a clearer image of the investigated elements and their frequency, the students were asked to generate a code line diagram. By selecting the *Visual Tools* feature, they obtained a colour-based code line that indicates the frequency of the elements labeled previously and their distribution (per second) in the encoded video.

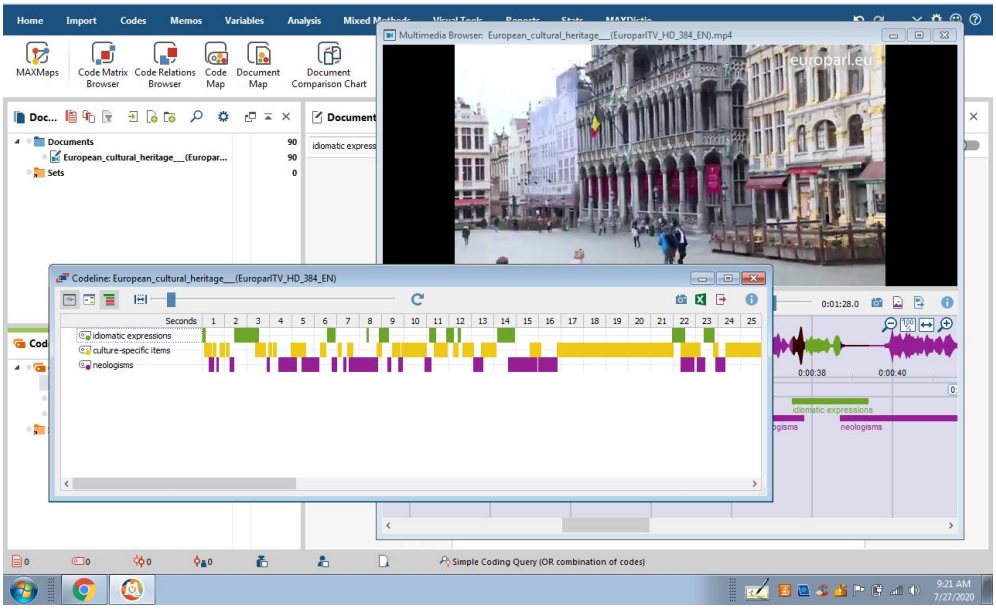

Figure 2. Document Code Line

At the level of vocabulary, the students were asked to select the *Word Cloud* button and to generate a word cloud of the most frequently repeated terms in the investigated video. To focus on the term under investigation, i.e. neologisms, culture-specific terms and idiomatic expressions, the sofware provides the users with a *Stop list* feature, which enables us to eliminate from the word cloud unnecessary words such as prepositions, connectors, articles, etc. After generating the word cloud, the students were able to further export it, as an excel list that can be developed and extended for future interpreting tasks.

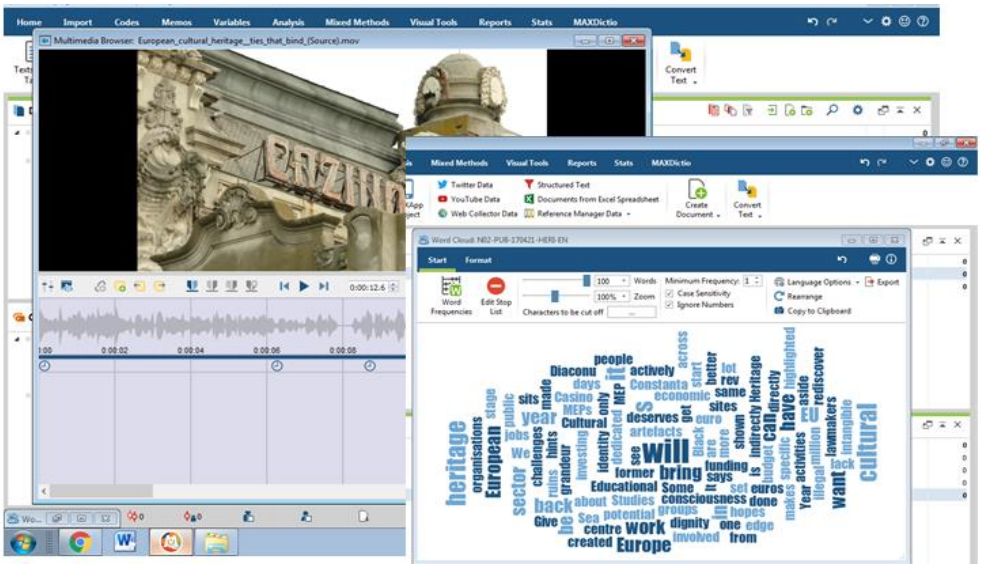

Figure 3. Generating word clouds to develop term lists

Within the last stage of the research project, the students were guided to carry out a qualitative analysis of the encoded structures. Only at the touch of a button, the students were able to generate the transcription of the interpreting corpus by selecting the *Transcribe* feature provided by the software and display the transcription of the sections labeled in purple, yellow and violet.

Resorting to this investigation strategy, they could compare their translated version with the source language wording. Further investigations of the corpus enabled them to establish some socio-cultural connections between the previously encoded source language discourse sections and the target language product. Also, they could better grasp the language and cultural background of the source language discourse that would facilitate a more accurate transfer into the target language, avoiding misinterpreting situations.

Developed with an intuitive, user friendly menu, the MAQDA software enabled students to investigate an interpreting corpora. Resorting to the features provided by the software the students could encode the video sample encompassed in the corpus. They could carry out quantitative and qualitative analyses at the language level in order to establish the frequency rate of the terms under investigation, as well as culture-related features manifested by the labeled terms.

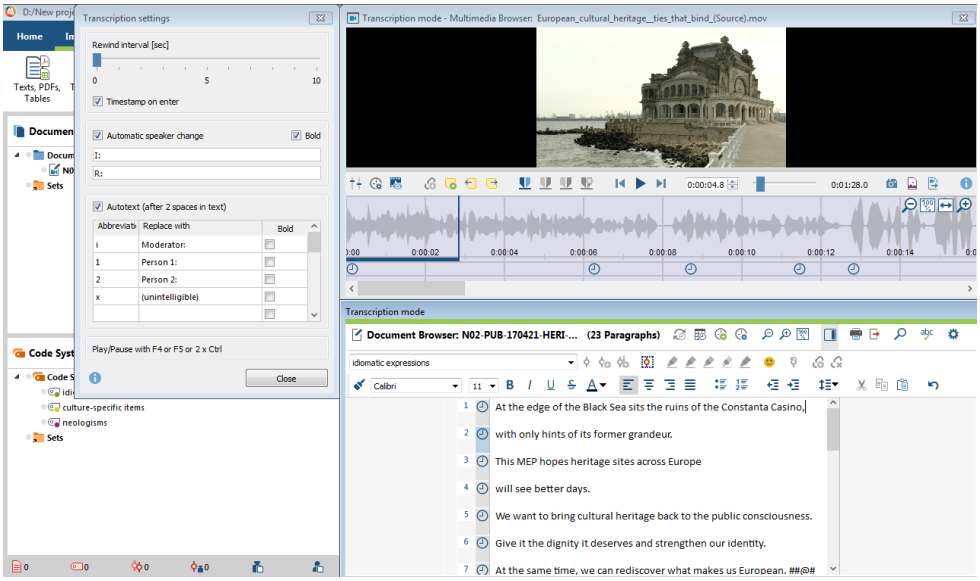

Figure 4. Automatic transcription of the interpreted sample

By the end of the research project the students could generate different visual diagrams to better display the finding of their corpus investigation. Also, they could design and export in an excel format different terms lists that they can further develop and reuse for future interpreting tasks.

5. Conclusion

Resorting to corpora investigations, both interpreting professionals and trainees aim at boosting effectiveness, while decreasing their workload.

It is already a common practice for the contemporary translators to develop and deliver their products within virtual environments assisted by dedicated tools and/or software, which, according to Zanettin (2013: 21), have become a standard tool of the trade, acting as "a specific type of dynamic parallel corpora". In a similar way, aligning to the mainstream trend, interpreting specialists have been designing and developing their own digitized wordbanks following in-depth corpus-based investigations of corpora via corpus-based statistical machine translation techniques.

Within this context, the contemporary translation and interpretation competence has been rounded by current specialised skills that target corpus management and analysis. Similar to Corpus-Based Translation Studies

(CBTS), Corpus Based Interpreting Studies (CBIS) target in-depth investigations of different types of corpora (parallel, comparable, multimodal) as to obtain practical information about the practice of interpreting, with regard to different research objectives, such as frequencies of words, grammatical constructions, discourse patterns, co-occurrences, lexical density, type-token ratios, etc.

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Online resources:

https://multimedia.europarl.europa.eu/en/home
https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/emt_competence_fwk_2017
https://ec.europa.eu/info/education/skills-and-qualifications/develop-your-skills/language-skills/interpretation-training-toolbox_en
https://multimedia.europarl.europa.eu/en/search?f=20180101&t=20191231&sn=true&st=EPV_EDITED_VIDEOS-WS_VIDEO&ut=EPV_REPLAY-EPV_VIDEO_FOOTAGE-EPV_PHOTO-EPV_AUDIO&ol=EPV_EDITED_VIDEOS&at=1&p_p_id=advanced_search_portlet_AdvancedSearchPortlet&_advanced_search_portlet_AdvancedSearchPortlet_p=21

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LITERATURE AND CULTURAL STUDIES

Identity, Time and Space in *The Tale of Sindbad the Sailor*

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Abstract: The present work aims to analyze, from a historical perspective, the more than popular story of Sindbad the Sailor, located in the narrative piece, *The One Thousand and One Nights*. The axes of the analysis will be divided into three theoretical categories: identity/otherness, time, and space. With this kind of magnifying glass, we will try to understand not only the historical background of the work itself but also, the society in which it was created and shaped it.

Keywords: *identity, Muslim faith, otherness, Sindbad, space, time, voyage*.

1. Introduction: The Muslim Background of *The One Thousand and One Nights*

The process of constructing this essay was based on a careful reading of the source – in our case, *The Tale of Sindbad the Sailor* as rendered in Volume II of Powys Mathers's translation from the French of *The Book of the Thousand Nights and One Night* (referred to as *Sindbad* in our text) – and the theoretical critics, while the continuous re-readings of the first allowed ideas to evolve along with the incorporation of new concepts and authors. The axis that particularly caused the most difficulties was that of time, which appears implicit in the work and also intertwined with religious beliefs. We chose to integrate the three categories as much as possible, while showing their peculiarities as well as the networks that connect them, although analyzing them in a fragmented way was very practical and accessible both when reading and writing.

The One Thousand and One Nights is a masterful synthesis of all ideas and of all the "archives" of the Middle East and the Far East, from prehistory to five hundred years ago. They constitute, without any doubt, the most ambitious non-encyclopedic work ever performed. This convergence of stories, myths and legends that was compiled in Arabic, in its final form, between the seventh or eighth and seventeenth centuries is a key piece of universal literature that allows us to elucidate many aspects of the Islamic world. Its stories, coming from a geographical territory of about thirteen thousand kilometers in length and about four thousand in width (covering from Toledo to Borneo and the ends of China) are of Hindu, Egyptian,

Greek and Arabic origin, among others. Some are located in a specific space and time (Baghdad, or Cairo, and the eighth century), and others are myths lost in the immensity of these dimensions. To frame the source in a specific space and time, which at the same time make it coherent and allow it to clarify some questions about the society in which it was born, it is convenient to start talking about Islam and its practitioners; the Muslims, who are thought to be the greatest condensers of the stories of *The One Thousand and One Nights*.

Synthesizing the Islamic universe presents great problems, first of all because it has been installed and integrated with many and very different life forms during its expansion and growth process (westward along North Africa to the Iberian Peninsula and towards the Great Wall of China) is an essentially plural reality, full of variants and conditioned by the particular contexts with which it was found. Secondly, and unlike other religious currents such as Christianity, Islam does not have a single regulatory-normative institution that has been or is able to unify dogma completely (there is no "papacy" or a "Church"), which consequently translates into the existence of an ethnic, linguistic and geographical diversity of its peoples that, according to David Waines (2003), would make it impossible to speak of the Muslim world in the singular and see it as a set of monolithic and invariable dogmas and practices.

Although it is more convenient to talk about Muslim universes to refer to Islam, it is clear that this community is inextricably linked in its main precepts, commonly referred to as the five pillars. The first and foremost, the essence of the whole movement, is the *shahadah* (or double profession of faith), the other four being prayer, alms giving, fasting and the pilgrimage. As Waines explains,

> Each of these four rituals is subsumed under the main 'pillar' or emblem of the faith called the *shahadah*, the witnessing that *There is no god but Allah* and *Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah* (49: 19, 48: 29). These phrases sum up the prophetic-revelatory event in Islam, and the rituals themselves draw their essential meaning from it, as the performance of obedient acts of service *('ibadah*) to and worship of the One God. (Waines, 2003: 30-31)

The emergence of this community is dated in Central Arabia during the seventh century, thanks to the preaching of a simple and until then little known merchant of the city of Mecca: Muhammad. He claimed to have been the object of divine revelation and thus presented a new way of practicing religion; that broke with the previous hegemonic mandates but in turn covered the new and most important needs of the time. And while this

story, such as the growth and expansion of the movement, escapes the competences of this work, we believe it is convenient to mark some points.

The first of these refers to a consequence of the death of the Prophet. Reza Aslan, in his volume *No God but God: The Origins, Evolution, and Future of Islam*, brings arguments in favor of the idea:

> From the moment Muhammad died, there arose dozens of conflicting ideas about everything from how to interpret the Prophet's words and deeds to who should do the interpreting, from whom to choose as leader of the community to how the community should be led. It was even unclear who could and could not be considered a member of the Ummah, or, for that matter, what one had to do to be saved. (Aslan, 2005: 114-115)

Muhammad had not left records of his teachings, so after his death the umma had to (on his own account and being at stake his survival) begin to systematize and record his foundations. So the *ulamas* or scholars were born:

> While performing their tasks of discovery, or rather recovery, of religious knowledge, the *'ulama'* never shrank from engaging in polemics amongst themselves or against other religious communities; nor did they eschew involvement in campaigns of political dissent, for the realm of the political was merely an extension of the religious, as the Prophet's own life exemplified. (Waines, 2003: 46)

One of the greatest political-religious conflicts was the first civil or *fitna* war, caused by the disputes to obtain the political leadership of the community: the caliphate. The fact that no selection criteria had been regulated, added to the inefficiency to reach an agreement between the dissenting parties, culminated in a real fragmentation of the community, forming the two main currents to date: the Sunnis and the Shiites. The first, winners of the conflict and supporters of the Umayyad dynasty (which was "institutionalized" after the *fitna*) considered that the ideal candidates for the caliphate were the Companions of the Prophet and their successors. They claimed that it was dangerous to choose a family member because all political and religious authority would be concentrated on a single figure. Until today they constitute the mainstream. The Shiites, on the other hand, attached importance to Muhammad's nephew, Ali, considered the successor of the prophet and therefore the only being fit for the caliphate, an institution they conceived as hereditary. At present they continue as the minority current.

The second Sunni dynasty, successor of the Umayyad, was that of the Abbasid (661-750), whose greatest representative was Haroun al-Rashid, who turns out to be the ruling caliph in *The Tale of Sindbad the Sailor*. At the time, at the beginning of the ninth century, trade was extremely intense, and it was very easy to enrich with it. The fortune came from the sea: the merchants of Baghdad and Basra – at that time capitals of the Arab universe – chartered ships in common and came to near Canton where they did business with their Chinese counterparts buying spices, silk, ivory and precious woods, which they allowed them to return enriched. Within this context Sindbad is a perfect son of his time, a classic character from the Arab Middle Ages.

The narrative of Sindbad the Sailor takes place in the Baghdad of Caliph Haroun Al-Rashid and it is one of the few stories that have a specific and at the same time explicit temporal-spatial location. Basically it is a meeting between two Sindbads: one, Sindbad the Porter, "who earned his living by carrying loads upon his head" (*Sindbad*, 177), and the rich Sindbad the Sailor, who enjoys a quiet and opulent life. In this meeting, the second is dedicated to telling all his journeys and adventures to the first, entertaining him as his guest. This is repeated day by day for a week, amid feasts with abundant food, drinks and shows. At the end of the story, the Sailor, porobably as a sign of gratitude, offers the Porter to be the steward of his home, and they both live in opulence and friendship until the end of their days.

The structure of the seven voyages of the Sailor is quite similar: the character is a merchant who goes overseas with the aim of enriching himself through economic exchange. Certain elements are repeated, sometimes several times on each trip, and in no apparent order: exotic and striking lands are reached – generally insular – and more than one accident occurs (either a weather disaster or a beast attack) which ends up condemning Sindbad to loneliness and depending on his ingenuity to survive. In this journey he meets, knows and connects with beings very different from himself; both animals and people, until, through the work of Destiny and Allah he gets the oportunity to return to Baghdad, his land, always more enriched than he left. Once at home and after countless pleasures provided by his wealth and to give alms to the needy, Sindbad forgets the depth of the dangers that hit him and, eager for adventures and greater enrichment, he decides to launch again overseas.

2. Axis One: Otherness/Identity

This category crosses transversely the chosen source: the rest of the axes split, relate or collide with that of the otherness, inescapably. I started from the assumption that otherness requires at least two different subjects, with one being in front of another and being able to become the other, since the other is different. But it is precisely the difference of that other that makes it possible for the one to exist. The consideration of otherness and difference is presented as a principle that does not allow exclusion at any time – the exclusion of the other would imply the exclusion of oneself. In other words, alterity, the existence of a different "other," is an indispensable component when defining the "own"; an inevitable aspect in the construction of the subject as such; or as the author says, of the identity discourse.

Such discourse would be based on culture; conceived in this case as a specifically human construction that expresses itself through all those symbolic and socially shared universes of meaning, which has allowed a society to become everything that a people built and on which a discursive referent of belonging and difference is constructed: identity.

Other interesting concepts that the author raises are those of identity as a dialectical construction of the subject, in which the encounter and the relationship with that "other" allow the reaffirmation of one's own existence (the "sameness"): only that dialogue can solve what is our own and what is not; dialogue that, while stable, is not immutable, but is built and rebuilt permanently with social interactions. Therefore, in the human collectivities, identity networks that individuals are weaving can be conceived to approach or move away from others (which are not always the same) and configure themselves. Based on these points of view, we can observe throughout the whole story, different levels of otherness that appear and that, when interacting with the protagonist, finally contribute to the construction and reaffirmation of his identity.

The Sailor is enriched, dedicated to delight in opulent delicacies, perfumes and cheerful music and dance, while the Porter is impoverished, feeling miserable; unlucky. At first glance, they might look like conflicting stories. However, the Porter, when reciting spontaneous chants to Allah about his misfortune, caused by a stealthy look at the opulent Temple of the Sailor, awakens his sympathy – or rather, his empathy – and makes him call him "brother": he is reflected in the Porter, since he remembers the vicissitudes he had gone through during his travels, and how unfortunate and regretful his ambition had made him feel without limits.

We might think that this is why he decides to tell his story to the other, as a moral training to understand two things: first, not to underestimate greed, which can push judgments and actions that are not beneficial and be "the cause of our misfortunes"; and second, to understand that immense wealth is the result of even greater difficulties and torments. In short, that you can't get anywhere without risks or efforts, and that everyone get what they deserve in reciprocity of how much they work for it:

> "Now, my friend, consider the labours which I have accomplished and the difficulties which I have overcome, and tell me if your estate of porter has not made for a more tranquil life than that which Destiny reserved for me. It is true that you have remained poor while I have become fabulously rich, but has not each of us been rewarded according to his efforts?" Sindbad the Porter kissed his host's hands, saying: "As Allah is with you, my master, excuse the ill-timed inconsequence of my song!" (*Sindbad*, 232)

In conclusion, we can interpret that the Sailor sees in the Porter a reflection of himself in another era; he identifies with him, assimilating him in the circle of what he knows – and to which he can therefore approach – and acting accordingly. We see how from the beginning the identity kicks off the development of the Shahrazad story.

At a spatial level, it is the symbol of alterity par excellence, the place where all the "others" of history are usually found. Its appearance is repeated without exceptions in all the adventures of the Sailor, which would not seem casual. What would be an adventure without the discovery of something new, different from what is seen in everyday life?

We say that it is symbolically the space of otherness as it embodies the "other" place in the eyes of the protagonist: far from Baghdad, lost in the middle of the seas, completely unknown, often virgin of human footsteps; and consequently very uncertain. Many times dangerous and threatening, it is the right place against the home of Sindbad – Baghdad, known as a place of peace and stability for the protagonist, a place of identity.

It is possible to observe here how the categories of "space" and "otherness" are more than linked: there are some of them – such as Baghdad, Basra, even the ship that houses the crew – and other aliens – the islands. Both communicated by a single channel; the ocean, whose character seems to be undefined: although it is known and frequented; It is so unpredictable, threatening (many times they encounter monsters in it) and fantastic, that it is very difficult to assimilate.

The island gives us the suitable framework for otherness to enter the scene. On it, nature is the main protagonist: wild, barbaric, undisciplined.

This is how it usually presents and characterizes the types of alterities that appear. We distinguish two levels of otherness moderately defined in the story (both appear on the island, the sea or the sky, never in Baghdad). The first, more pronounced, appears in general related to the animal world: exotic, rare, wild. The role of "most different" is embodied by the island that is actually a whale, the giant *rukh* bird, the immense snakes that threaten to swallow it, sea monsters, and other very rare species:

> I recalled that travellers and sailors had told me in my youth that there existed, in a far island, a bird of terrifying size called the rukh, a bird which could lift an elephant… I saw a fish which looked like a cow and another closely resembling an ass, also a bird which is born from a sea shell, whose little ones live ever upon the surface of the waters and do not fly over the earth. (*Sindbad*, 189, 202)

It is also embodied by more anthropomorphic beings that generally end up representing a threat to the survival of Sindbad, and generate their contempt. As an example, on the third crossing you reach the "Isle of Apes," who steals the ship from the crew and whose king swallows one of them every night, roasting it on a grill. In the fourth, they run into a tribe that fattens the entire group with food that slowly transforms it into less thinking and more similar to cattle (except Sindbad) and then kill and devour it. All these characters are permanently judged with disqualifiers such as "putrescent black man" (21), "great mad dog" (198): this says a lot about how our protagonist lives the otherness – and consequently how he treats her storyteller. Tzvetan Todorov distinguishes two components of the relationship with the other, as in Columbus's attitude towards the other's language:

> Either he conceives the Indians […] as human beings altogether, having the same rights as himself; but then he sees them not only as equals but also as identical, and this behavior leads to assimilationism, the projection of his own values on the others. Or else he starts from the difference, but the latter is immediately translated into terms of superiority and inferiority […] What is denied is the existence of a human substance truly other, something capable of being not merely an imperfect state of oneself. These two elementary figures of the experience of alterity are both grounded in egocentrism, in the identification of our own values with values in general, of our I with the universe – in the conviction that the world is one. (Todorov, 1984: 47-48)

We could see in Sindbad's attitude of contempt an egocentric differentiation: the other is so different that it is impossible to understand when using the scale of values itself and therefore recognize him as a full subject, not as a mere imperfection of himself. It is unavoidably inferior to the known world – identified as the good or the normal – this one measured under the particular parameters of the character's universe, mainly religious, with Islam being the main moral "water separator." Religion acts in this work as the superlative and universal balance where all actions are weighed. A clear example is found in the last story, where Sindbad decides to return to Baghdad with his wife from the island where he had lived for years, after learning that the settlers were not Muslims, which led them to consider them as "brothers of devils." (*Sindbad*, 231)

In general terms, that would be the first level of otherness present in history. The second corresponds to the "not so different," and includes those communities that initially seemed to conform to the identity of Sindbad, complying with its "normal" parameters (a fact that allowed it to settle in them); but that with the passage of time they reveal a radically different and surprising characteristic, which is judged as inferior by the Sailor, which leads him to differentiate himself and cut off the relations that they had so far.

An example of this is found in the fourth story, when the Sailor, after gaining the deep confidence of the king of the island where he had been shipwrecked, accepts the offer of the aforementioned to marry and settle. This is how he marries one of the most beautiful and wealthy young women of the island, feeling at home, and living "in the calmness of supreme joy" (*Sindbad*, 206). The problem arises when he discovers that the funeral ritual of the couples of the island included the burial of the living husband along with the deceased until the first one also died. Aware of the aforementioned process, in the eyes of Sindbad, disgraceful and savage, he ceases to recognize himself as a member of that society in order to get away – scared – in a definitive way as soon as he has the opportunity.

In this case, we may say that Sindbad "sinned" from assimilationism: after long vicissitudes in solitude and hard confrontations with a hostile nature, finding some similarity with the people he meets, confuses equality with identity and does not worry for investigating nothing else. Although he integrates with the other, he does not know it, nor does he recognize it as "other." On the other hand, as soon as he finds out what differentiates the community from its normality parameters, he not only deems it inferior but also claims his status as a foreigner, as a non-member, in order to escape: "I am a stranger, and it is not just that I should have to suffer by your law"

(*Sindbad*, 208), he will say, when they want to bury him with his deceased wife, meaning "I am another, I am not an equal!"

Another aspect that emerges from what is discussed is the dynamic and dialectical construction of identities: they are not static elements but are in a permanent process of construction and reconstruction based on interaction with the other. Sindbad reaffirms his identity every time he encounters that different one; and although there are aspects that he shares with these alternates, integrating with them at times; there are others with whom he cannot agree and it is these that finally lead him to define himself, always choosing to return to Baghdad.

A final possible definition within this category, and following the aforementioned line, is that as well as similar, Sindbad becomes alternate in some of the communities that welcomed him; alternately, he must return to such times as he reintegrates with his troops after encountering them by chance after being lost. For this, many times it must be described and to the adventures lived by all the merchants so that they recognize it as similar and return it to continue the adventure.

3. Axis 2-3: Space/Time

I decided to analyze these categories together because both are basic forms of the existence of matter, revealing its universality, and its generality. The space is three-dimensional; time one dimension and only one; the first expresses the order in which objects that coexist are arranged simultaneously; the second, on the other hand, expresses the succession in which the phenomena that replace each other exist. Despite their essential differences, it is feasible to work them at the same time from that perspective; as the two basic dimensions of existence, the two inevitable and inseparable forms of human experience.

As for the space category, I have relied upon the concepts outlined by Michel De Certeau, in a chapter entitled "Spatial Stories" of his book *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1984) in which he analyzes the concepts of space, place, limit, bridge, etc., not as external and independent entities of the individual, but as conditioned, or more specifically created by the story, the narrative:

> A space exists when one takes into consideration vectors of direction, velocities, and time variables. Thus space is composed of intersections of mobile elements. It is in a sense actuated by the ensemble of movements deployed within it. Space occurs as the effect produced by the operations that orient it, situate it, temporalize it, and make it function in a polyvalent

> unity of conflictual programs or contractual proximities. On this view, in relation to place, space is like the word when it is spoken, that is, when it is caught in the ambiguity of an actualization, trans-formed into a term dependent upon many different conventions, situated as the act of a present (or of a time), and modified by the transformations caused by successive contexts. (De Certeau, 1984: 117)

Firstly, I was interested in the distinction between the categories "place" and "space": the first is defined as "the order […] in accord with which elements are distributed in relationships of coexistence" (*idem*). It implies therefore a certain stability of the same, a "own" and static place of each one of them. The space "is composed of intersections of mobile elements" (*idem*); it is a "practiced place" that transforms that univocity, that stability of the place. In other words, it is in what the place is transformed when the movement enters – and other variables such as direction, time and speed: Thus "the street geometrically defined by urban planning is transformed into a space by walkers. In the same way, an act of reading is the space produced by the practice of a particular place: a written text, i.e., a place constituted by a system of signs" (*idem*).

This transformation from place to space and vice versa occurs through the story. Narrative structures act as spatial syntaxes: "they regulate changes in space (or moves from one place to another) made by stories in the form of places put in linear or interlaced series" (*ibid.* 115). Therefore, a story is always a story of travel, of the practice of space; and thus produces what the author calls "geographies of actions" (*ibid*. 116). In addition, since the story is a subjective construction and conditioned by various internal factors, one might think that there are as many spaces as particular spatial experiences of individuals. A travel story may be more useful to us when it comes to deciphering those who tell us, rather than the space it refers to. How people and societies see certain spaces is, in short, one more way to describe them themselves.

As for the category of time, I have considered Norbert Elias's volume *An Essay on Time* (1993) in which the author combats traditional philosophical visions that affirm that time is an unalterable nature, an objective fact that eradicates or in natural creation (outside world) or in the spirit or reason of the human being, as an innate form of its existence (inner world): he criticizes philosophers who strive to find time as an independent fact and beyond an observable series of transformations, of the flow of time itself, as an immutable and eternal property of Nature or of men.

For the author, time is nothing more than a symbolic synthesis elaborated and conditioned by the society of the moment. It is the ability of

men to relate two or more factual processes in motion, taking one as a reference (usually the most mechanical, as today could be the movement of the hands of a clock). For Elias, the character of the universal dimension that assumes time is nothing more than the symbolic expression of the experience that everything that exists is located in an incessant process. Time is an expression of the attempt of men to determine positions, duration of intervals, rhythm of transformations, etc., in this becoming in order to serve their own orientation.

The Sailor's voyages form the axis of the spatial and temporal experience of the entire source. Both the voyage and its subsequent story are processes that essentially transform places into spaces: not only by touring and practicing them but by rebuilding them in the story. A very clear example of this is seen in the fifth story, when Sindbad tells us of a wreck in virgin land:

> This time I did not have to go far, for Fate had carried me to a very garden of Paradise. On all sides before my delighted eyes were trees with golden fruit, cold silver streams, a thousand wings of birds, and close carpets of scented flowers. I did not delay to eat the fruits, drink the water, and breathe in the refreshment of the flowers. (*Sindbad*, 213)

The content is almost explicit: in the first sentence, Sindbad describes the configuration of positions of the surrounding elements; in the second, however, by involving his own movement, he transforms it into space; instead practiced. And this is, in broad strokes, the core of the voyages: venturing into the unknown and discovering spaces where previously there were places; living spaces, which house different beings and open new possibilities of roads to travel.

This experience in turn allows our protagonist to transform the spaces that he does know: Baghdad (which is seen as a place sometimes and as a space at other times, depending on whether the Sailor is open sea or living there, respectively) when Sindbad returns from his adventures, is the known and comforting space: home. However, Baghdad is also the quiet and monotonous space that makes you long for travel and adventure: the perception of space changes, and not necessarily because the place changes; but rather because the practitioner is the one who evolves, the man is the one who moves differently, and thus perceives the environment.

On the other hand, the trip also gives us a clue as to how it is experienced and means the passage of time at the source. At this point it is unavoidable to talk about the star element: Destiny. The idea that everything that happens is written in advance – in our case, by the will of Allah – and

that over time is being fulfilled is also structuring in history: everything that happens to Sindbad, good or bad, it is because it must happen; because the Almighty so appointed him in a perfect and inescapable plan.

In fact, what today we could only consider a mixture of luck and cunning is what the Sailor had in order to survive all the obstacles. It is seen by him as a divine design. The idea of predestined time would seem to function as a network of justification for the series of transformations that occur throughout history: everything has a reason for being, a reason and it is part of a plan that, as much as mortals do not understand, and they must follow. God articulates human time: the duration of life, its hardships and celebrations, are things that escape the capacity and will of men; The time of his life seems not to belong to them. "But, when Destiny proposes a thing," Sindbad reflects as he speaks of a moment of despair on the fourth voyage, "no human power can turn that thing aside. Also what man may know the future? Alas, I was soon to learn yet again that all our projects are but child's play in the eyes of Fate." (*Sindbad* 206)

On another level of analysis it is possible to relate the way space is treated in the work with the question of identity/otherness. To begin with, we can observe three well-defined spaces that cross history transversely: Baghdad – hometown and home of Sindbad –, the sea, and the various islands in which all the adventures of the sailor are developed.

The first of the three is the space itself: it is the city where Sindbad builds his identity, the place where it takes hold. As such, he is yearned for by him every time a misfortune happens to him in a foreign land, which makes him want to differentiate himself from it and therefore reaffirm himself in his "sameness" or, in this case, in the city that embodies it.

The second – the sea – is a space of passage, of connection between one's individual space and that of others: a neutral place. And third there is the island. We have already mentioned that the latter is the quintessential symbol of otherness. It is the space that contains all the "others" of history. As such, and recalling Sindbad's ethnocentrist perspective, it is the "inferior" space: the wildest, disorganized, unknown, full of threats and dangers. It is the "other" space par excellence.

To crown this category, a final contrast between the protagonists of the source seems competent, which in this case points to how they manage their time. It does not differ too much from how they handle their body: the rich merchant has all the time he wants to devote himself to pleasures: he owns his own time. On the other hand, the Porter, of poor condition, does not own his time, he is not free to choose what to do. However, the attitude towards adversity, the ambitions left by the Sailor in the Porter, are

sufficient for all these differences to be put aside and the former feels identified with the latter, and willing to share with him his experience.

6. Conclusions

The story of Sindbad the Sailor is that of the permanent encounter with the other, and a symbol of that discovery; and speaks at the same time of an external journey as of an internal evolution. The challenges that the protagonist faces, the obstacles he must overcome, the other people he has to meet and to interact with: in a nutshell, the adventures of his life, do not transform him only into an experienced and intelligent sailor, but – and above all – a very wise person who understands, for example, how tempting and threatening ambition is, and who considers that there are no prodigious successes without efforts of the same nature. And that, in addition, after identifying with someone who suffers his same misadventures, he feels the ability (and in my opinion he does indeed have it) to advise him. His journey; as a series of meetings with the other and consequently with himself, from this point of view," it is also his greatest learning. Finally, I should like to cite Borges who concludes his review of the Arabic epic by saying: "*The Thousand and One Nights* is not something which has died. It is a book so vast that it is not necessary to have read it, for it is a part of our memory" (Borges, 1980: np).

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The Literary Atlas of Bread and Partners: From *Beowulf* to C.S. Lewis

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Abstract: This article attempts to cover a small, but significant part of the cultural history of bread, which focuses on the representation of bread and its so-called cultural partners in English literature: leavened bread and wine, bread and beer, bread and water, bread and salt, bread and milk, bread and butter. The history of bread is closely interconnected with cultural identity and over the years, not only the production of bread has changed, but bread itself has changed. This change has been captured in literary texts which illustrate how particular contexts and norms have determined the making of modern bread. The article explores how the literary works included here reflect cultural norms, practices and values that are associated with bread production and consumption at a certain historical time and in a specific social geography in order to determine how they have shaped the perception and behaviour of particular social groups.

Keywords*: history of bread, cultural product, spiritual meaning, artistic creation, manna, white vs. dark bread.*

Introduction

It is an obvious fact that until very recently there has not been written, in the English language, a History of Bread, even though it has been considered to be the staple food of mankind, "the staff of life," the body of Christ. And even when such a History was written, it did not count the literary stage in. Studies on bread mixed traditional history, cultural history, medicine, travelogues, and cookbooks. More has been written on how to make and bake bread, on the chemical and physical processes involved in bread-making, on trends and innovations in bakery as well as on the revolutionary recipes that have been reinvented and adapted to the contemporary world of gluten-free machine recipes and no-knead methods.

One such attempt was in 1904, when John Ashton's *History of Bread* came out of print in London at the Religious Tract Society, a missionary evangelical Protestant organisation, whose publications were designed to be instructive since they were consumed primarily by women, children, and the poor. This publishing society was born in 1799 at St. Paul's Coffee House in London, it expanded and grew by promoting

Christian literature before changing its imprint to Lutterworth Press in 1931 to provide didactic literature for young people and adults.

Another attempt was made by Heinrich Eduard Jacob, American journalist and author of German origin, born in a Jewish family, when he wrote *Six Thousand Years of Bread: Its Holy and Unholy History*, published in 1944 in New York. According to him, bread originated in Egypt and led to other inventions, such as the oven, and later to yeast and sourdough. His portrait of bread in prehistoric times and the ancient world is more a story than a history, the tone being more didactic than scientific, and the examples rather mythical and sentimental. When it comes to bread in modern times, more factual details are provided, such as bread rationing in WW I and II and his own experience in Buchenwald. Jacob was sent to Buchenwald concentration camp, where bread was, in his own words,

> [...] a mixture of potato flour, peas, and sawdust. The inside was the color of lead; the crust looked and tasted like iron. The thing sweated water like the brow of a tormented man… Nevertheless, we called it bread, in memoriam of the real bread we had formerly eaten (380).

More recent studies on bread focus on bread as food as well as a cultural product: William Rubel's *Bread: A Global History* published in 2011 announces that "every loaf has a multi-layered story to tell" (9), thus considering the social, religious, economic, cultural and historical contexts. Unlike other cultural histories, this one added some recipes at the end of the book, along with practical advice on kneading and baking bread.

What is missing in all these social and cultural histories of bread is the literary background. Many literary figures have connected their life and works with the concept of bread: John Donne and John Milton were both born in Bread Street, London, whose name derives from the city's bread market; on the 16th of January 1599 Edmund Spenser died "for lack of bread," according to Ben Jonson; and Benedetto Varchi tells how his father sent him to prison to be kept on bread and water as a punishment for his passionate reading of Italian books (*Curiosities of Literature* vol.3, 130)

Bread, the Staple Construction of Civilisation

Beer and wheat convinced the nomadic tribes to settle down and build civilisations based on an agricultural system. In an ancient Summerian story of Gilgamesh, the reader learns how a prostitute treated Enkidu to bread and beer, considered amongst "the pleasures of civilization." After all, Enkidu comes from the world of nature to the urban

realm of Gilgamesh and becomes familiar with the civilizing powers of the city. In this ritual of initiation, where the prostitute is the imparter of knowledge, who integrates him socially by making him aware of his own sexuality and his own death, the liminal Enkidu becomes a human social being: "After eating his fill and becoming drunk on seven jugs of beer, Enkidu took himself a bath, anointed himself with oil and 'became human'" (Sinclair, 55). Besides becoming human, Enkidu becomes heroic when attempting to threaten Gilgamesh's position as a king.

In the epic poem *Beowulf*, Hrothgar's beer hall represents the central meeting point for all warriors who made vows to the lord, told stories from the battlefield, and made plans about future heroic deeds, thus fostering the spirit of fellowship in the early Teutonic civilization. Their singing in the beer hall enrages Grendel even more, since he was excluded from such common feasting. The battle itself between Beowulf and Grendel is described as "beer serving" (Nelson, 84), a metaphorical way of saying that alcohol can turn someone into an aggressive person.

Next to beer, there was bread. In Beowulf's times bread was called "hlaf" in Old English, wherefrom the word "loaf" comes. An Anglo-Saxon working man consumed up to two loaves of bread per day and he ate it with meat or cheese (Staver, 171). It is likely that Hrothgar's feast consisted of wild meat from hunting roasted over the fire, baked fish, bread, butter and cheese, fruit and honey desserts, whereas peasants usually ate a considerable quantity of coarse bread with cheese.

Apart from the importance that Old English feasts attached to the presence of the poet, the "scop," the minstrel who narrated or sang stories and legends that would please the company, the event that prevailed over the mead, the roasted meat and the loaves of bread, there was the moment of speech. Communication as a means of showing loyalty to the lord, in addition to expressing a heroic character becomes more important than bread at this point. The narrator in Beowulf "tells us nothing of the roast meats, honeyed sweets, or loaves of bread, he tells us in details of the speeches in this first feast, which were given to welcome Beowulf and his men" (Staver, 43). The speeches on the courage and bravery of the warriors represent, on the one hand, the importance Anglo-Saxon literature attached to heroic deeds, while on the other, the celebration of the heroic ethos by means of oral storytelling was a way of preserving and transmitting history. Knowledge and acknowledgement of one nation's heroes prevailed over food, which came secondary in this case.

It is in Paradiso Canto II that Dante mentions the "Bread of Angels," "il pane degli angeli" which is a spiritually charged metaphor for Knowledge of God or wisdom and which Dante hopes will satisfy man's

hunger for knowledge. He even warns the reader not to venture on the sea unless he is prepared for it, for "The sea I sail has never yet been passed." Boccaccio goes even further than that and says that tales not only satisfy men's hunger for knowledge, but they also help a person live longer. Boccaccio believed that fiction and tales provide much needed nourishment to people and he even stated that "the poets of the past found more 'bread' in their tales than rich men among their treasures which enabled them to live into old age, whereas those who wanted material bread died young" (Thompson, 147).

Bread takes a different symbolism in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales.* The difference between white bread and dark or barley bread is a direct sexual allusion to virgins and wives. Whereas virgins are like "pure wheat-seed," precious and inaccessible, "wives are like the inexpensive everyday plates made of wood in the Middle Ages: of less value but used every day" (Hallissy 109). White bread was considered a luxury in the Middle Ages and it was consumed by the aristocracy; dark bread was on the peasants' table. Wives are made of dark barley, and, even if they are not unique, fine-grained and appetizing like white bread, they are still accessible and nutritious: "Let them be bread of pure wheat-seed/And let us wives be called barley-bread/And yet, with barley-bread, Mark can tell it/Our Lord Jesus refreshed many a man" (Chaucer, *The Wife of Bath's Prologue*, 149-152).

The religious reference to bread is an extension to Boccaccio's prediction for living a long life:

> This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh. (John, 6:50-71).

The first biblical mention of bread is in the Genesis, 14:8, "Then Melchizedek, King of Salem brought out bread and wine." Abraham took the bread and the wine that Melchizedek had brought forth in a Eucharistic offering. Bread feeds the masses (John, 6: 1-15) and is the food supply for the Last Supper. As a symbol of Christian sacrifice, biblical bread metonymically represents all food, both spiritual and physical. During Passover, no leavened bread is eaten, in commemoration to all Israelites who fled Egypt in haste (Exodus 12), which is why the bread did not have the necessary time to raise by means of fermenting yeast. Another spiritual type of bread is the manna, also known as the "bread of heaven," which can taste either "like wafers made with honey" as it is asserted in the

Exodus (16:31) or in Numbers (11:8), where the taste was like "the taste of a cake baked with oil," perhaps when ground and cooked. This is how Christ responds to Satan's challenge to turn stones into bread in Milton's *Paradise Regained*:

> But, if thou be the Son of God, command
> That out of these hard stones be made thee bread;
> So shalt thou save thyself, and us relieve
> With food, whereof we wretched seldom taste."
> He ended, and the Son of God replied:—
> "Think'st thou such force in bread? Is it not written
> (For I discern thee other than thou seem'st),
> Man lives not by bread only, but each word
> Proceeding from the mouth of God, who fed
> Our fathers here with manna? In the Mount
> Moses was forty days, nor eat nor drank;
> And forty days Eliah without food
> Wandered this barren waste;

Jesus turned water into wine (John 2:1-11) at the marriage at Canna, the first miracle attributed to Him in the Gospel of John. In the Genesis (27:28), when Isaac blesses Jacob, he says "May God give you the dew of heaven and the richness of the earth - an abundance of grain and new wine." The dew of the sky falls on earth and then returns to heaven to come down again in the shape of God's blessing for the earth to produce grain and new wine.

Andrew Marvell rounds off his poem "On a Drop of Dew" with the image of manna as "sacred dew" melting in the sun just like the human soul which returns to the skies after death: "but does, dissolving, run/Into the glories of th' almighty sun." Manna plays a particular significant religious role in Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe.* After being shipwrecked on the island, Crusoe's main concern is with providing himself with food. When he accidentally drops out some grains on the ground and notices the barley grow in a climate that was not appropriate for corn, along with stalks of rice nearby, he thinks that these were "pure productions of Providence for my support" (Defoe, 84).

Manna can also feature in literary works without carrying the religious symbolism. On the contrary, it can be employed in a purely domestic manner. In Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*, when Portia and Nerissa trick their husbands into believing they committed adultery by insinuating that the doctor and the clerk obtained access to their beds by means of the rings as tokens, Lorenzo speaks their language and warns that

"Fair ladies, you drop manna in the way/Of starved people." The Romantics alluded to manna with less spiritual significance and more sexual connotations and erotic allusions attached to it. Thus, in William Blake's *Book of Thel* "morning manna" is a gift from God: "For thou shalt be clothed in light and fed with *morning manna*/ Till summer's heat melts thee beside the fountains and the springs/To flourish in eternal vales." The white gown, the wine, and the honey of the "bridal feast" suggest the transformations that the maid undergoes from virgin to mother, while the presence of supernatural food blends the sensuous and the allegorical imagery to illustrate Thel's pondering over the mysteries of life and death.

The Enlightenment professed a religious approach to bread in the literary works. The famous phrase "bread is the staff of life" became well/known after the publication in 1704 of Jonathan Swift's Tale of a Tub. After praising the qualities of beef, which he characterizes as "the king of meat," Peter does the same to his brown loaf of bread:

> Bread, (says he), dear Brothers, is the staff of life; in which bread is contained, inclusive, the quintessence of beef, mutton, veal, venison, partridge, plum pudding, and custard: and to render all complete, there is intermingled a due quantity of water, whole crudities are also corrected by yeast or barn; through which means it becomes a wholesome fermented liquor diffused through the mass of the bread.

Bread is once more used as a metonym encompassing all food. In eighteenth-century Britain most working people fed more on meat than on bread, a white loaf being a luxury difficult to find. Surprisingly, however, the riot that broke out in Bristol in 1795-6 was triggered by the cost of meat and fish, not bread. The assize of bread was rigorously controlled by magistrates, who were "caught between the complaints of the bakers and the pressing hunger of the poor" (Poole, 100). When one baker, John Jenkins, reduced the price of bread, thus solving starvation and avoiding losing money himself, he was praised by the media for his "'truly patriotic' moral economy" (100), while, at the same time, the Company of Bakers was hostile to his practice and pleaded to the magistrates for a prosecution (100). On the other hand, there were the bakers in London, also known as "knaves" (Malcolm, 99) who were involved in the adulteration of bread to increase its weight along with their profits. The inhabitants of London experienced poisonous bread in the eighteenth century, an act of corruption, as described by Tobias Smollett in The Expedition of Humphrey Clinker:

> The bread I eat in London is a deleterious paste, mixed up with chalk, alum, and bone-ashes, insipid to the taste, and destructive to the constitution. The good people are not ignorant of this adulteration; but they prefer it to whole-some bread, because it is whiter than the meal of corn. Thus they sacrifice their taste and their health, and the lives of their tender infants, to a most absurd gratification of a misjudging eye; and the miller or baker is obliged to poison them and their families, in order to live by his profession (139).

One of the leaders of the French Revolution, Georges Danton set the geography of bread in the Enlightenment: "After bread, the need of the people is knowledge" (qtd. in Chesterton 502). In *A Sentimental Journey,* Laurence Sterne distinguishes between "those who wish only to eat the bread of their own labour and those who eat the bread of other people's and have no other plan in life but to get through it in sloth ignorance, for the love of God" (9). One interpretation to Yorick's dismissal of the Franciscan monk's request for donations for his convent can hint once more at Sterne's attacks on Catholicism; alternatively, when Yorick regrets his decision and wants to make up for it, it is not for spiritual remorses, but out of hypocrisy and fake sentimentalism, since he wanted to be noticed and admired for his so-called benevolence both by the lady in the scene and the reader.

In Victorian times the staple food of the rural poor was still bread and cheese or bread and butter. In Dickens's *Great Expectations* Pip's and Joe's meals consist of bread and butter, the staple food for breakfast that is also enjoyed by the boys in *Nicholas Nickleby.* David Copperfield's breakfast consists of bread and butter next to a cup of tea. In Micawber's house he keeps a small loaf and "a modicum of cheese on a particular shelf of a particular cupboard" (170) to have for supper. The major interest in food, mainly bread, was the consequence of the Corn Laws implemented by Parliament between 1815 and 1846 as a protectionist measure against cheaper foreign imports of wheat and other grains, collectively called "corn" in England. The working class suffered from high food prices. The convict Magwitch best represents this food crisis in England. His hunger is satisfied by Pip's stealing food from his own home. Being hungry, Jane Eyre tries to give her handkerchief and her gloves away in exchange for some cakes of bread in a shop, but she is turned down. Later on, when she passes a farm-house, she notices how the farmer ate his supper of bread and cheese and, trying to overcome her pride, she asks for a piece of bread. She is given "a thick slice from his loaf" and the reader can't help noticing

the glance of surprise on the man's face, as if he was not aware of the scarcity of food due to the Irish famine.

Speaking of Ireland, in the twentieth century, Irish characters paid tribute to bread while associating it with the artistic creation or the insightful mind. Leopold Bloom does that when he muses over pyramids built on bread and onion, the two staples of the Egyptian diet: "Pyramids in sand. Build upon bread and onions. Slaves" (245). Molly likes having bread, butter, and tea in bed for breakfast. Bread remains the staff of life in Edwardian Dublin and Bloom's metaphor of bread alludes to the Lord's Prayer and the spiritual community. While Stephen turns his thoughts to Ibsen, Bloom is absorbed by the pleasant smell emanating from James Rourke's city bakery:

> […] the very palatable odour indeed of our daily bread, of all commodities of the public the primary and most indispensable. Bread, the staff of life, earn your bread, O tell me where is fancy bread? At Rourke's the baker's, it is said (813).

In *Ulysses, The Oxen of the Sun episode* Joyce assimilates the ritual of the Catholic Mass in which ordinary bread and wine are transubstantiated into the body and blood of Christ to a similar process that he attempts to do in his writing. He sees in this process a conversion of "the bread of everyday life into something that has a permanent artistic life of its own" (Sicari, 31). The same principle applies in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, where Joyce finds a similarity between the role that the artist plays in society and the role of the priest sharing the Eucharistic bread." Unlike Joyce, who used the religious doctrine of transubstantiation for artistic purposes in his writings, C.S. Lewis does not attach any other connotations to bread, apart from the spiritual one, the bread of life, the staff of life: "It is only our daily bread that we are encouraged to ask for." (*Learning in War Time*) Even in his fantasy work, *Chronicles of Narnia,* bread and its companions are part of an invisible industry in which "grain is cultivated and harvested, ground, refined, and baked." The reader cannot say whether this happens by magic or by divine unquestionable power - bread and beer, butter and milk, onions and potatoes, fruits, nuts, and wine are plentiful on the tables of Narnia's residents, but we are not told the origin of these products. Lewis explains that

> Common bread, miraculous bread, sacramental bread – these three are distinct, but not to be separated. Divine reality is like a fugue. All His acts

> are different, but they all rhyme or echo to one another. It is this that makes Christianity so difficult to talk about (23).

Conclusion

Surely there are lots of other literary examples and some focus on the association between bread and eroticism, others on race and gender, such as Lillian Smith's *Killers of the Dream,* where white middle class women believe it is sacrilegious for them to take Communion unless they "break bread with fellow men of other colour" or William Morris's *News from Nowhere*, which presents a dystopian world where people even forgot how to bake bread, which is a first step towards damnation. What is important is that bread, in any association, whether it comes with salt, wine, butter, beer, water, even milk, like in *Little Red Riding Hood* or the nursery rhymes of Christina Rossetti, or has been employed as a physical charm, a medicine, a necessity, a gist, an invitation, a superstition, a welcoming sign, an Eucharistic symbol, it still preserves, in a palimpsestic way, beneath all these layers that wrapped it up, its religious and spiritual significance.

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Shaping the Posthuman Other in Toni Morrison's *Home*

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Abstract: This paper is an interpretation of Toni Morrison's novel, *Home* (2012), using posthumanist theories of liminality. It is an examination of the way in which the author blends references to the past and present with predictions for the future so that the protagonists reside simultaneously in multiple time intervals. The novel's main characters, influenced by Post Traumatic Stress Disorder or the threat of eugenics, are forced to co-exist in continually shifting networks of knowledge, discourse and power. More than merely connected to the world around them, the posthuman subjects travel across and within the borders of self and other, evolving into a new breed - a metaphorical time-traveler.

Keywords: *posthumanism, trauma, post-racial discourse, eugenics, gender, class, memory.*

In Toni Morrison's *Home*, the two protagonists, Frank and Ycidra, journey towards redemption in a world distorted by war both on the front and in the heart. The novel is set in the 1950's when the major trauma generator is the Korean war. Frank Money is continuously haunted by the horrifying images of dismembered bodies on the battlefield, dissolved human attributes, immense cruelty and death, which trigger countless disorders on the psychological, moral and physical level. The Korean war renders substance and realistic power to the novel but its main role is actually to connote the societal tensions stemming from class, economic, gender, religious and racial differences.

One argument to sustain this idea is the attitude of old war veterans in Lotus – the hero's native town – who fought in more relevant wars and deny status to the one in Korea. Even Toni Morrison confessed, in *Interview Magazine*, her feelings about the 50s: "Then I thought about what was really going on. What was really going on was the Korean War. It was called a 'police action' then — never a war — even though 53,000 soldiers died." In *Home*, Reverend Locke also claims: "An integrated army is integrated misery. You all go fight, come back, they treat you like dogs. Change that. They treat dogs better" (18).

For Justine Baillie, Morrison's novel was mainly written as an allegory in which Frank Money was chosen "to represent black experience

in 1950s America in a novel that echoes twenty-first century, post 9/11 anxieties" (Baillie, 197). She finds similarities with current reality:

> "The allegorical nature of *Home* is clear as America continues to send men home from war, Morrison concerned to project the present onto the imaginings of the past 'to yield up a kind of truth.' The war in Korea is remembered lest America slip further into amnesia or nostalgia for the prosperity of the Eisenhower years and *Home* is written to redress the ideological distortions of political discourse." (Baillie, 198)

The war imagery pervades all stages of the novel, lingering in Frank's memory and provoking uncontrollable reactions typical of the Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (P.T.S.D.). The story is rendered fragmentarily by employing the stream of consciousness technique which reveals a protagonist who hardly knows if what he experiences are consequences of the violent past, effects of the harsh present or glimpses into a disfigured future.

In the beginning of the novel Frank does not remember anything and is full of pain, "everything reminded him of something loaded with pain" (8). He recalls his past in the war with "his homeboys"(8), which is again excruciating because he had not been able to save them. In this context, he receives a letter about his sister: "Come fast. She be dead if you tarry" (8). All these facts made Frank lose control of his own being.

Frank has a very fatidic image of his hometown: "Lotus, Georgia, is the worst place in the world, worse than any battlefield. At least on the field there is a goal […] In Lotus […] there was no future. […] There was no goal other than breathing, nothing to win […] If not for my two friends I would have suffocated by the time I was twelve" (83). The only instances when he can touch on the idea of freedom are when he reminisces about the time spent with his childhood friends or when he thinks about his sister. He claims: "Only my sister in trouble could force me to even think about going in that direction. Don't paint me as some enthusiastic here. I had to go but I dreaded it" (84). He insists that the narrator is incapable of truly understanding him and speaking on his behalf: "You don't know what heat is until you cross the border from Texas to Louisiana in the summer. You can't come up with words that catch it. Trees give up. Turtles cook in their shells. Describe that if you know how´" (195).

Furthermore he argues with the narrator about the hardship he had to go through on the battlefield: "Korea. You can´t imagine it because you weren't there. You can't describe the bleak landscape because you never saw it. First let me tell you about the cold, […] Korea cold hurts […] Battle

is scary, yeah, but it´s alive. Orders, gut-quickening, covering buddies, killing- clear, no deep thinking needed. […] Worst of all is the solitary guard duty" (93). His post-traumatic stress disorder comes from his experience in the war but it is mainly triggered by a horrible deed he authored. He sexually abused and killed a little Korean girl who was scavenging for food in the vecinity of his post. One day, the girl "smiles, reaches for the soldier´s crotch, touches it. It surprises him. Yum-yum? […] he blows her away" (95). Only in the end of the book does Frank confess that he is guilty for the murder of the Korean girl:

> "I have to tell you the whole truth. I lied to you and I lied to me, I hid it from you because I hid it from me. I felt so proud grieving over my dead friends. How I loved them. How much I cared about them, missed them. My mourning was so thick it completely covered my shame. […]
> I shot the Korean girl in her face.
> I am the one she touched.
> I am the one who saw her smile.
> I am the one she said "Yum-yum" to.
> I am the one she aroused.
> A child. A wee little girl." (133)

This terrible confession appears to have alleviated his psychological scars: "How could I let her live after she took me down to a place I didn't know was in me? […] What type of man is that? And what type of man thinks he can ever in life pay the price of that orange?" (134). In fact, the whole time, Frank does nothing elese but to repress his traumatic memory of killing the Asian little girl. In the first stage he attributes the murder to someone else, and in the second he claims the authorship of the murder.

Judith Herman claims that any child "trapped in an abusive environment [who] must find a way to preserve a sense of trust in people who are untrustworthy, safety in a situation that is unsafe, control in a situation of helplessness" (Herman 102). These traumatic stituations "shatter the construction of the self that is formed and sustained in relation to others" and "cast the victim into a state of existential crisis" (Herman 51). Kali Tal, speaks of military victimization, implying that the soldier in combat is not only a victim but "both victim and victimizer, dealing death as well as risking it. These soldiers carry guns; they point them at people and shoot to kill. Members of oppressed groups, by contrast, almost never control the tools of violence" (Tal 10). Kali Tal's definition of trauma is inclusive: "An individual is traumatized by a life-threatening event that displaces his or her preconceived notions about the world. Trauma is enacted in a liminal state,

outside of the bounds of 'normal.' human experience, and the subject is radically ungrounded" (Tal 15).

Under the powerful effect of his trauma, Frank recoils and claims that the writer is incapable of capturing his experience. "You can't imagine it because you weren't there," he says referring to the Korean War. "You can't describe the bleak landscape because you never saw it." He snaps at the author once again when he recalls his family forced departure from Texas: "Write about that, why don't you?"

Morrison involves another posthuman trope when she exposes Cee once more to the horrors of racism combined with science and advanced technology. Cee, the intern assistant of a doctor - a "white coat", as she calls Dr. Beauregart Scott, hinting at the terrifying episodes in rural Texas when her family had to leave home to escape the violence of the "white sheets" - becomes the subject of experiments in eugenics performed by the modern Frankenstein doctor who maims her and leaves her in front of death's door. Had it not been for Sarah's heroic warning sent to Frank and his rapid response, Cee would have died due to supposedly sterilization practices inflicted upon her by the doctor whose books speak of white race supremacy and eugenics.

Through the novel, Morrison examines the symbol and the notion of "home". The term "home" is at once general and specific, a physical place as well as a psychological and cultural concept that carries great significance. The gap between the terms "house" and "home" becomes essential to the complicated paths of main characters Frank and Cee Money. The home in which Frank was born was abandoned when his parents needed to leave Texas out of the fear of not being lynched by racist landowners. Cee was even less privileged: she was born on the road, reason for which her relentless step-aunt called her a "gutter child" while her mother, Ida, failed to offer her solace. The siblings lived in numerous different places, mostly in the same Southern Community, but as they mature, they realized that they never had a home to call their own. This and the lack of employment opportunities made Frank enroll in the military. In the same manner, the lack of experience and perspective made Cee elope with the first city boy she met only to realize that he was only after her aunt's revered Ford.

Home is a novel about the quest for community, for family, or a home where people can feel safe and loved. Similar to *Song of Solomon* in which Milkman Dead's tries to connect with his family and culture, to *Jazz* whose characters are building new homes in a new city or to *Paradise*, which employs two homes - one a building where women can be left in peace, and the other a town were African Americans can find a refuge.

Beloved, is also about building a home away from the ghosts of the past. In earnest, Morrison appears to be commenting on her earliest novels on several occasions. For instance, when Frank recalls the incident on the train when a man was beaten up and his wife humiliated by the same aggressors:

> "Earlier you wrote about how sure I was that the beat-up man on the train to Chicago would turn around and whip the wife who tried to help him. Not true. I didn't think any such thing. What I thought was that he was proud of her but didn't want to show how proud he was to the other men on the train. I don't think you know much about love. Or about me."

This passage reminds of Morrison's debut novel, *The Bluest Eye*, in which Cholly Breedlove learns to despise his first love after she witnesses his racist humiliation.

One of Morrison's favorite metaphors to describe her fictional project is that of the house and home. "If I had to live in a racial house," she stated in the essay "Home" (1997), "it was important . . . to rebuild it so that it was not a windowless prison into which I was forced, . . . but rather an open house" (H 4). Tessa Royon believes that "the house in need of rebuilding stands for many things at once: for mainstream American ideology, for the national literary canon, for the genre of the novel, and even for language itself". The challenge Morrison sets herself is to transform these flawed but powerful structures, and to create a better version of reality that she conceives of as 'home.' (Royon, 12)

Whether or not the main characters finally find their home remains open as Frank transgresses the boundaries of time in a post humanistic subjective manner, most of the time without knowing where he would land or how he will be changed in the process. Similarly, Cee is trapped in her representation of the past as a helpless little child in incapable to fathom the perilous present path she is on and the unexpected future of spiritual and cultural awakening.

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"What if there is nothing to *choose*?" *XXY*, Sex, the Language of Science, and the *Choice* to Teach/Learn Non-discrimination

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Abstract: This paper draws upon my experiment of using the story of Salmacis and Hermaphroditus, in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, and Lucía Puenzo's feature film *XXY* to introduce my undergraduate students, in the Identity and Gender course, to the epistemically and ethically critical aspects of making (*not* having) sex as a *skandalon* into which we may run in everyday life. Both works address intersexuality (formerly known as hermaphroditism) – treated (i.e., addressed) philosophically or mythologically in bygone days, yet treated (i.e., eradicated) hormonally and surgically nowadays. For educated audiences, the now obsolete medical term *hermaphroditism* conjures the spectre of Hermaphroditus, if not Ovid's story. I argue that, in Ovid, Hermaphroditus's curse on the waters may suggest a displacement of ancient society's ostracism of biological difference, mystified as the spite which drives the sexually non-mainstream person. In *XXY*, the ancient curse has been bent such as to show the "hermaphrodite" turning (male) representatives of the mainstream into her/his allies for a future of non-discrimination. Without attempting to give pride of place to either ancient poem or contemporary film, I will suggest how they can be deployed to teach non-discrimination, not just the configuration of sex in the language of biomedical sciences. To this end, I review feminist science criticism and more generally feminist critique of the conceptualisation of sex under patriarchal heteronormativity to highlight the epistemic bias which we must unlearn.

Keywords: *sex; biomedicine; intersexuality ("hermaphroditism"); science criticism; Metamorphoses (Ovid); XXY (film, Lucía Puenzo, 2007); non-discrimination*.

"*[D]ulcique animos novitate tenebo*" (Ov., *Met*. 4.284), "[I] will charm your minds with a tale that is pleasing because new" (trans. Miller).[1] Ovid's narrator's words,[2] in Book 4 of the *Metamorphoses*, could well describe my task in the Gender and Identity course which I teach in the American Studies undergraduate programme of the Faculty of Letters. Or,

[1] All citations of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, as well as their English translation, are taken from Miller's Loeb edition.
[2] Save, in my case, the controversial appraisal *dulcis* ("sweet").

rather, I aim less to *charm* ("hold"/*teneo*)[3] my students' minds (*animae*) than to *disenchant* them: to jolt my students to a life not of blind/blithe acceptance of everything they live, encounter or learn, but of enquiry, of not-taken-for-granted-ness. My consciousness-raising goal *can* be achieved also by recourse to the Roman poet whom Christian exegesis and moralisation from the twelfth-century *aetas ovidiana* to the Renaissance, as well as Latin teaching, did rescue from neglect and oblivion, if only by bending his poems' spirit, in an age highly intolerant of non-Christian mores. Indeed, reading Ovid is not primarily about tolerance or its absence, about one particular set of moral or aesthetic values or another. Nonetheless, his works, especially the *Metamorphoses*, betray his deep-seated ambiguity about figures of power such as Emperor Augustus, patron of the arts and censor of the artists (Feldherr, 2004: 84-7; Roman and Roman, 2010: 78; Williams, 2009: 156, 165), which can inspire us to this day. The interrogation of power, in particular, in our age when power works as much top-down as in diffuse fashion (Foucault, 1980: 98-107), can take many forms. One of my favourite academic games is unveiling the subtle working of power at epistemic level, by stubbornly scratching at hard surfaces to discover what lies beneath. It may be a daunting task, but it always pays off.

Ovid may not be the most obvious choice to teach Identity and Gender in the USA. Notwithstanding, my research and teaching experience persuades me that his work – and the *Metamorphoses* in particular – can be fruitfully harnessed to heuristic and epistemic projects. I must credit Ovid's Marsyas tale, as focused upon by Bruce Holsinger in his *Body, Music, and Desire* (2001), for first drawing my attention to the subtle poetic deployment of the body to speak truth to abusive power.[4] That realisation helped me, some fifteen years ago, to consider a new and provocative direction of enquiry in Middle English biblical drama and also directed my attention to early modern anatomical illustration. Alongside other *Metamorphoses* tales, Marsyas's suggests that body, gender and epistemic representation are the not always silver lining of the power – knowledge – truth relation addressed most famously by Foucault (1980: esp. 51-2, 90-131). This paper draws upon my experiment of using Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (1-8 CE) and Lucía Puenzo's debut feature film *XXY* (2007) to introduce my students to the epistemically and ethically critical, at times

[3] The polysemous verb *teneo* (*OLD*, s.v. "teneō" senses 22-24) centres on *holding* something either literally or figuratively (to hold the attention; to understand; to retain in the mind).

[4] My thanks to Professor Monica Pillat Săulescu, of Bucharest University, for bringing Holsinger (2001) to my attention during my doctoral research.

painful, aspects of making (*not* having) sex as a *skandalon* which we may often face. Even before its tenth anniversary, Puenzo's film was famous for its "delicate, emotionally potent" approach[5] to *intersexuality*. Formerly known as *hermaphroditism* and treated (i.e., addressed) philosophically or mythologically, nowadays it is treated (i.e., eradicated) hormonally and surgically. For educated audiences, the term *hermaphroditism* conjures the spectre of Hermaphroditus, if not his story in the *Metamorphoses*.[6] Without attempting to give pride of place to either work, I will discuss them chronologically to suggest how they can be deployed to explore, teach, and learn about, the gamut of attitudes as embedded in the configuration of sex in the language of biomedical sciences.

One is *not born, but becomes,* Hermaphroditic: Hermaphroditus in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*

How did Hermaphroditus, the progeny of Hermes and Aphrodite, turn into the hermaphrodite, whatever the latter may be (named)? Ovid starts his story (*Met*. 4.285-388) on a foggy note: the narrator avers that she cannot ultimately unravel *the cause – causa latet* (4.287) – which the *aetiological* legend nevertheless *centres* on. Notwithstanding the paradox, invoking hidden cause and widely known effect can *seduce* the audience – "*dulcique animos … tenebo*" (4.284) – into listening:

> *Unde sit infamis, quare male fortibus undis*
> *Salmacis enervet tactosque remolliat artus,*
> *discite. causa latet, vis est notissima fontis.*
> *Mercurio puerum diva Cythereide natum*
> *naides Idaeis enutrivere sub antris,*
> *cuius erat facies, in qua materque paterque*
> *cognosci possent; nomen quoque traxit ab illis.*
> ("How the fountain of Salmacis is of ill-repute, how it enervates with its enfeebling waters and renders soft and weak all men who bathe therein, you shall now hear. The cause is hidden; but the enfeebling power of the fountain is well known. A little son of Hermes and of the goddess of Cythera the naiads nursed within Ida's caves. In his fair face mother and father could be clearly seen; his name also he took from them.") (Ov., *Met*. 4.285-91)

[5] Dargis's brief review quoted on the British poster of *XXY*.

[6] Piironen's review of *XXY* mentions Hermaphroditus but ignores Ovid's story: "Society has long had an uncomfortable relationship with hermaphroditic figures. The condition's namesake Hermaphroditus, son of Hermes and Aphrodite, marks what is probably the first positive representation but these have since been few and far between" (2014: n.p.).

Not with Hermaphroditus does 'his' tale start, but with a *fons* – spring or fountain, the waters of Salmacis (*undis Salmacis*, *Met*. 4.285-6)[7] – and the promise to account for its "ill-repute" (*infamis*, 4.285) for "weak[ening] (*remolliat*)[8] all men who bathe therein" (4.285-6). Men's enfeeblement at the mere touch (*tactus*)[9] of water – the maternal element – with an *unknown cause*? Freud is just round the corner!

Ovid's story soon gains narrative momentum. Once he has turned fifteen, Hermaphroditus leaves the mountain of Ida to wander in unknown lands and delight in seeing strange rivers (*Met*. 4.294-5). Eventually, he reaches Lycia, where the nymph Salmacis, the only naiad who rejects Diana's society and pastime, dwells[10] in "a pool of water crystal clear to the very bottom" (*stagnum lucentis ad imum* / *usque solum lymphae*, 4.297-8). Salmacis is gathering flowers; on spotting the youth, she "long[s] to possess what she saw" (*cum puerum vidit visumque optavit habere*, 4.316).[11] Yet – the narrator, Alcithoë, pauses her narration – the nymph first composes herself (4.317-20) before starting her seduction game: she entreats the youth to be hers, and even to marry her if he is not yet betrothed (4.320-8). Innocent Hermaphroditus blushes (4.329-33). Only when Salmacis insists for a sister's kiss (4.334-5) will his silence yield to speech or, rather, to a cry (4.336). However, seemingly apprehensive that he might flee away, as threatened, she feigns surrendering to his wishes and departs, if furtively looking back at the boy (4.337-41). The ruse proves successful: an unsuspecting Hermaphroditus undresses and enters the soothing waters. Stunned (*stupuit*)[12] by the sight, Salmacis realises that "her love kindled as she gazed at the naked form" (*tum vero stupuit nudaeque cupidine formae* / *Salmacis exarsit*,[13] 4.346-7). Her ardent desire

> *vixque moram patitur, vix iam sua gaudia differt,*
> *iam cupit amplecti, iam se male continet amens.*

[7] *Unda*, "a wave of the sea, the sea; a body of flowing water, a river, spring" (*OLD*, s.v. "unda").
[8] *Remollio*, "to soften" (*OLD*, s.v. "remolliō").
[9] *Tactus*, from *tango*, "to touch" + *-tvs* (*OLD*, s.v. "tactus"; "tangō").
[10] With reference to gods, the verb *colo* means to "dwell in (a place, usu. by virtue of being worshipped there and thought of as giving protection, etc.)" (*OLD*, s.v. "colo").
[11] *Opto*, "to express a wish for, desire" and to "choose, decide on" (*OLD*, s.v. "optō").
[12] *Stupeo*, "to be or become physically powerless, numb, paralysed; to be or become stunned, dazed, speechless, etc with some strong emotion, to be astounded, aghast, bewildered, etc., to be amazed or dumbfounded" (*OLD*, s.v. "stupeō").
[13] *Exarsit* is the third-person singular perfect indicative active form of *ardeo*, "to be violently excited or passionate" (*OLD*, s.v. "ardeō" sense 5).

("Scarce can she endure delay, scarce bear her joy postponed, so eager to hold him in her arms, so madly incontinent") (Ov., *Met*. 4.350-1)

is further inflamed by his diving into the waters to swim (4.352-5). Salmacis exults and instantly dives (4.356-7) to embrace him passionately:

pugnantemque tenet, luctantiaque oscula carpit,
subiectatque manus, invitaque pectora tangit,
et nunc hac iuveni, nunc circumfunditur iliac;
denique nitentem contra elabique volentem
inplicat …
("she holds him fast though he strives against her, steals reluctant kisses, fondles him, touches his unwilling breast, clings to him on this side and on that. At length, as he tries his best to break away from her, she wraps him round with her embrace") (Ov., *Met*. 4.358-62)

There is apparently no escape from the nymph's embrace,[14] which the narrator compares to a predator snake's on a bird (*Met*. 4.362-4), ivy's on a tree (4.365) and a sea-polyp's on its prey (4.366-7).[15] Though overpowered, Hermaphroditus struggles to "den[y] the nymph the joy she craves" (*sperataque*[16] *gaudia nymphaea* / *denegat*, 4.368-9). The scene may be the youth's initiation into manhood – both in erotic and in gender terms, the latter to prove him an agent driven by his own will-power.

Eventually disabused (aroused?) by his unyielding mood, Salmacis requests the gods that her and Hermaphroditus's entwined bodies never disentangle (*Met*. 4.371-3):

nam mixta duorum
corpora iunguntur, faciesque inducitur illis una …
nec duo sunt et forma duplex, nec femina dici
nec puer ut possit, neutrumque et utrumque videntur.
("their two bodies, joined together as they were, were merged in one, with one face and form for both"; "they were no longer two, nor such as to be

[14] By contrast, the nymph Echo (Ov., *Met*. 3.341-510) sounds coyly restrained in her appeals to Narcissus (3.370-8, 387-9), with whom she has fallen in love, although this apparently owes to her speech defect as effected by Juno's curse.

[15] Salmacis's sexual advances to Hermaphroditus reverse the typically male to female form of rape the *Metamorphoses* often depicts, even as the story uses the same predator–prey imagery. Though female, the narrator is here – as elsewhere in the poem – but the mouthpiece of Ovid's (and his Greek sources') patriarchal society.

[16] *Spero*, "to look forward (to something desired), hope for; to anticipate" (*OLD*, s.v. "spērō").

called, one, woman, and one, man. They seemed neither, and yet both.") (Ov., *Met*. 4.373-5, 378-9)

Hermaphroditus turns into hermaphrodite through the merging of male, his former self, and female, the nymph Salmacis, in one body. (It is a divinely wrought conflation all through, if curse-ridden, entailing her ontological liquefaction through – qua surrender to – love. However assertive originally, the woman cannot remain self-empowered.) Seeing himself thus enfeebled (*mollitaque*, *Met*. 4.381) to the condition of but a half-man (*semimarem*, 4.381), Hermaphroditus conjures his parents to aid him to cast his own curse on the waters (Salmacis's abode qua ontological being). "Whoever comes into this pool as man may he go forth half-man (*semivir*), and may he weaken at touch of the water" (*quisquis in hos fontes vir venerit, exeat inde / semivir et tactis subito mollescat in undis*, 4.385-6), Hermaphroditus curses; and the waters are instantly imbued (*tinxit*, 4.378)[17] with that power, or rather poison (*medicamine*, 4.378).[18] The now hermaphroditic Hermaphroditus cannot bear that any man (*sic*) who will thenceforth bathe in the pool should fare any better than himself. That's mean indeed. Yet, might Ovid suggest something different than the unhappy youth's *spite* on the unafflicted? Could the story rather encode the unafflicted persons' *prejudice* against those perceived as enfeebled (4.381) sexually? Could this be, therefore, but a thinly disguised social drama of ostracising difference, so that representing certain individuals as *different* and *therefore evil-minded* can subsequently legitimate marginalising, normalising and/or disciplining them?

One is *not Allowed to be Born* Hermaphroditic: Puenzo's Film *XXY*

What can we learn about ourselves as individuals and also society (in a broad sense) if we redirect to *XXY* my rhetorical question about social dramas generated by sexual difference? Puenzo's 2007 film,[19] I argue,

[17] *Tingo*, "to imbue" (*OLD*, s.v. "tingō" sense 6).

[18] *Medicamen* is "a substance administered or applied to produce certain effects upon the body, medicament, drug; remedy" (*OLD*, s.v. "medicāmen" senses 1, 2). The same meanings describe *medicamentum*, which, moreover, can also be *malum medicamentum*, viz., poison (*OLD*, s.v. "medicāmentum"); in its both curative and destructive capacities, the latter word recalls the Greek φάρμακον ("a poisonous drug").

[19] Puenzo acknowledges in the end credits that her script is based on a short story by Sergio Bizzio – the uncredited "Cinismo" (2004).

conceivably remediates[20] Ovid's Salmacis and Hermaphroditus story not only in its externals, from medium to plotline and imagery, but especially regarding such moot points as sexuality and (not exclusively sexual) conduct pitted against their societal regulation. In *XXY*, the drama of the Kraken family centres on the intersexuality of Alex (Inés Efron), which has caused and is likely to continue to cause her/his[21] unacceptability in a world driven by clear-cut taxonomies and misgivings about, even ostracism of, in-between-ness. Alex was 'diagnosed' from her/his intrauterine existence as a subject of medical scrutiny (*XXY*, 01:08:35-01:09:24): thus confesses her/his father, Néstor Kraken (Ricardo Darín), to Ramiro (Germán Palacios), their family friend and plastic surgeon invited to their place by Néstor's wife, Suli (Valeria Bertuccelli). Quite tellingly, fifteen years before the doctors wished to have the birth filmed for its medical interest; they moreover urged immediate postnatal surgery, arguing that the baby's sole memory of the trauma would be the scar. Nonetheless, Néstor, himself a marine biologist, was able, at the time, to persuade his devastated wife not to yield to such medical pressure for *normalisation*.[22] To Néstor, Alex "was perfect" (*XXY*, 01:09:15-01:09:22). Streamlined from birth through hormonal medication[23] to be female, yet emotionally unable to accommodate her/his penis, at the age of fifteen Alex stops taking corticoids. Her/his masculinity accordingly burgeons in ever more assertive forms of 'cross'-gender conduct; tomboyish gait, outfits and acts, impulsivity, even aggressiveness double the rebellious distrust of received wisdom peculiar to adolescence. Her/his mother, therefore, contemplates the prospect of Alex's radical and irreversible streamlining through surgery, which is why Suli has invited over their

[20] I use *remediation* in Bolter and Grusin's (1999: 5–15) sense: that new communication technologies challenge the condition of their predecessors, even as the latter attempt to reaffirm it. This also entails remediating prior modes of social and cultural modes of communication, so that to *re-mediate* becomes to *remedy*.

[21] I use *fe/male* and the corresponding pronominal forms to suggest the impossibility but especially inadvisability of operating a rigid sexual identification of the intersexual protagonist of *XXY*.

[22] The Foucauldian term is used by another victim of medical either/or streamlining of sex, for whom such *normalisation* equals *castration* (*XXY*, 00:50:16–00:50:21) – and one particularly dangerous for a child for it induces the child's fear of her/his own body (*XXY*, 00:50:25–00:50:36).

[23] Is *medication* in this film the scientific remediation of Ovid's Hermaphroditus's *curse* on the pond? In both cases, that which changes the properties respectively of the person and of the pond, hence of its users, comes from a source of power, i.e., *science* through the physicians' (ad)ministrations and *the gods* through their son's invocation.

Argentinian friends Ramiro[24] and his wife Érika (Carolina Peleritti), with their son Álvaro (Martín Piroyansky).

It is noteworthy that *XXY* appears to reverse some of the polarities of Ovid's story, even as it replicates much of its plot. Like Ovid's Salmacis, Alex, the intersexual, androgynous looking fe/male protagonist of *XXY*, decides to prey sexually on the youthful visitor as soon as s/he meets Álvaro. In initiating sexual intercourse with Álvaro, first verbally and then in actual fact,[25] Alex remediates Salmacis, although her/his intersexuality would rather require an enfeeblement like Hermaphroditus's. Not only does the comparable age of Alex and Hermaphroditus suggest their equivalence, but it also cautions that on encountering wo/men, maleness and masculinity may be at risk at this formative age. Unlike Salmacis, Alex apologises to Álvaro for her/his sexual assault, only to learn that, unlike Hermaphroditus, he actually enjoyed the experience[26] of a wo/man on top, if to sodomise him (*XXY*, 00:58:00-00:58:34).[27] Álvaro is now undecided about his own (sexual) identity, an *emasculation* – preceding his sexual intercourse with Alex – which Ramiro deplores, but has been unable to eradicate in his son (*XXY*, 01:15:13-01:15:30). Does the curse of Ovid's Hermaphroditus on

[24] Ramiro has come to assess Alex's medical case; Néstor will only learn much later about his wife's plans.

[25] As soon as Alex spots Álvaro s/he introduces her/himself to him in most unorthodox terms: not by an "I am…" / "My name is…" but by exposing Álvaro's masturbation in his room and admitting that s/he does so on a daily basis; subsequently, Alex confesses s/he has never had sex and enquires whether Álvaro would have sex with her/him (*XXY*, 00:07:20-00:08:24). The issue of having sex resumes later (*XXY*, 00:30:16-00:35:35), when Alex presses Álvaro, reluctant because of her/his age. Nonetheless, Álvaro follows Alex into the shed where s/he initiates the sex scene which Néstor chances to witness. All these scenes draw closely upon Bizzio's "Cinismo." The significant difference is that "Cinismo" has not thus far revealed the true "defecto físico general" (Bizzio 10) of 12-year-old Rocío (Alex's model): not mismatching features such as eyes and nose, each beautiful in themselves, but intersexuality. The short story discloses the latter in the wake of the youths' failed intercourse (prevented by Néstor's accidental appearance), when Néstor decides not to reveal the scene to anyone for an interesting reason: "¿qué tenía de inquietante que su hija hermafrodita y menor de edad le rompiera el culo al hijo de su invitado?" (Bizzio 21), "what was so disturbing that his minor, hermaphrodite daughter broke his guest's son's ass?" Reading cynicism in(to) this rhetorical question depends on one's – and one's milieu's – not having successfully confronted homophobia as the underside of heteronormativity.

[26] Álvaro even invites Alex to resume what they began back then, so as to finish it off! When Alex retorts that s/he wishes something else, Álvaro compliantly answers that so does he (*XXY*, 00:58:34-00:59:00).

[27] Retrospectively, *how* did Salmacis *embrace* Hermaphroditus? Could Salmacis herself be an intersexual, which would explain the fluidity that Ovid's naiad governs, i.e., both waters and gender identity?

those who would henceforth bathe in the treacherous pond suggest that sexuality itself is an unfathomable, perhaps murky, pond until the gods ruling society decree it one way or another? The very encounter of Alex and Álvaro occurs in a *marine* paradise[28]: this echo of the Garden of Eden, with its rivers (Gen 2.10-14), elides Eve, the Judaeo-Christian 'temptress,' with Salmacis, the pagan one. Quite tellingly, the film story pauses to allow the spectators to delight in the inlet where Alex is floating tranquil (*XXY*, 00:55:54-00:56:47) – paradise regained – before Álvaro shows up.[29] Intruded upon, Alex gets out of the water, only to be 'chased' back into the social world of allegedly natural classifications which, nonetheless, will soon start being eroded for Álvaro too when Alex initiates him sexually the taboo way.

Ovid's tale may not have been Puenzo's (only) cultural echo in her film and in its source, Bizzio's "Cinismo." So could have been the story of the French hermaphrodite born a girl, Adelaide Herculine Barbin, in 1838, and departed a man, Abel, in 1868. Famously brought to light in 1978 by Foucault, the story is also mentioned by Leroi (2005: 217-22). Herculine – or Alexina, as she called 'herself'[30] (what a coincidence with Puenzo's protagonist's name!) – was consulted by a Dr Chesnet brought in by her confessor-priest. Subsequently, Chesnet reported that Alexina juxtaposes female features (a vulva, a labia majora and a feminine urethra) and male features (a penis or penis-long clitoris, testicles, sperm discharges at night, and a male body shape), but lacks the womb and menses (qtd. in Leroi, 2005: 221-2). Yet, unlike Puenzo's character, Alexina has "tastes" and "inclinations" which "draw her towards women" (qtd. in Leroi, 2005: 222), whether sexually (as confessed by Alexina) or in gender terms (as expected in the highly constrictive nineteenth century). Very much like Alexina body- and sex-wise, Puenzo's Alex is nevertheless 'aggressively' agentive – like Ovid's Salmacis.

Streamlining Sex by Discourse or Scalpel: Intersexuality as the West's *tertium non datur*

A Polish director would never have even conceived the topic of *XXY*, Dr Anna Krawczyk-Łaskarzewska interjected to me at a conference in Łodz, Poland. Why not, I wondered. Because in Polish there is full grammatical

[28] The Krakens have relocated from Buenos Aires to an island village in Uruguay to remove Alex from the world and its distressing curiosity (at best).
[29] Álvaro prepares to undress and join Alex; the Ovidian echo is quite apparent.
[30] My scare quotes.

agreement between the first-person singular pronoun and verb declension, whose form always *shows gender*, she explained. I would add that grammatical gender and biological sex seem to conspire (perhaps not only in Polish) against individuals with what has been named, since 1920, *intersex conditions*, but erstwhile *hermaphroditism* (in mythological terms). Grammatical gender, like societal gender – in the sex/gender binary championed by radical feminist Gayle Rubin, yet critiqued by Moira Gatens[31] – is as arbitrarily imposed on entities,[32] whether human or not, as sex is assigned (*sic*) to humans at birth.

For Rubin (2011: 47-57), the psychoanalytic description of the female pre-Oedipal stage as aggressively active libidinal desire for the mother suggests society's hijacking of *innate* sexual impulses through the *socialisation* of conduct so that women eventually *acquire* femininity under heteronormativity.[33] Does this recall the sexual assertiveness of Ovid's Salmacis or Puenzo's Alex, if not its object too? Does it reinforce Monique Wittig's conclusion that the "category of sex" is a *category of social dominance* (1992: 2-8) – hence also the patriarchal construal of women as the (socio-politically, not just physically) "weaker sex"?

That 'sex' itself is not entirely natural, nor the result of neutral empirical observation, but "a political category that founds society as heterosexual" and accordingly "does not concern being but relationships" (Wittig, 1992: 5), has been argued by both Monique Wittig and Michel Foucault. It is eminently apparent in the contemporary western intolerance of intersexuality: intersexuality disrupts neat sex dichotomies and the labelling of certain organs as reproductive.[34] In her critical assessment of

[31] Gatens (1996: 7-8) criticises socialisation theorists' construal of the sex/gender distinction qua body/consciousness distinction for "posit[ing] a naïve causal relation between either the body and the mind or the environment and the mind" which "commits both viewpoints, as two sides of the same coin, to an a priori, neutral and passive conception of the subject" (8). Gatens (9) argues that precisely the different significance attached to a so-called feminine (or masculine) behaviour when lived out by a woman as opposed to a man demonstrates the untenability of the sex/gender distinction.

[32] A telling case in point occurs in German: the neutral gender ending *-chen* makes the noun *Mädchen* ("girl") neutral, not feminine, despite its biological reference!

[33] Psychoanalysis is therefore "a theory of gender" not to be dismissed (Rubin, 2011: 57). Indeed, it was a psychoanalyst, Robert J. Stoller, who examined the relationship between sex and gender in "various biological anomalies (for example, neuters and hermaphrodites)" and then in "the biologically normal but *psychologically* disturbed individual (for example, the transsexual)," on which he reported in *Sex and Gender* (1968) (Gatens, 1996: 5, original emphasis).

[34] See my critique (Ciobanu, 2014: 63) of the entrenched Christian-inflected scientific identification of the sexual organs teleologically as the *reproductive* organs. Their name *genitalia* derives from the Latin *genitale* ("the male or female genital organ(s)"), which is

Simone de Beauvoir's famous claim, in *Le deuxième sexe* (1949), that "one is not born, but rather becomes, a woman,"[35] Judith Butler observes:

> Although writing in very different discursive contexts, Wittig and Foucault both challenge the notion of natural sex and expose the political uses of biological discriminations in establishing a compulsory binary gender system. For both theorists, the very discrimination of "sex" takes place within a cultural context which requires that "sex" remain dyadic. The demarcation of anatomical difference does not precede the cultural interpretation of that difference, but is itself an interpretive act laden with normative assumptions. That infants are divided into sexes at birth, Wittig points out, serves the social ends of reproduction, but they might just as well be differentiated on the basis of ear lobe formation or, better still, not be differentiated on the basis of anatomy at all. In demarcating "sex" as sex, we construct certain norms of differentiation. And in the interest which fuels this demarcation resides already a political program. (Butler, 1986: 47)

Such remarks on sex are particularly apposite for Puenzo's film: the protagonist's sex looks indeterminate even prior to birth and therefore 'requires' clear determination, sooner or later undertaken surgically. The medical choice in *XXY* is not a fictional whim, though, but an act symptomatic of contemporary societal intolerance of any *departure from norm*: *ab-normality* calls for *norm*alisation.[36]

In Plato's or Ovid's times, sexual difference called for an aetiological legend to press its *naturalness* through divine institution, thence the myth of the androgyne (*Symposium* 189d–193b; *Metamorphoses* 4.285–388) yet also the mythicisation of homoerotic attraction (rampant in ancient Greece). Notwithstanding, Plato's legend of "human nature" (Plato 174), couched in terms of *teaching*, sounds a cautionary note in both its opening and closing paragraphs:

> First you must *learn* what Human Nature was in the beginning and what has happened to it since, because long ago our nature was not what it is

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the neutral form of *genitalis* ("concerned with creation" or with "procreation or reproduction"), from *gigno* ("to create"/"to give birth") and *-alis* (*OLD*, s.v. "genitāle"; "genitālis"; "gignō").

[35] "One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman…. it is civilisation as a whole that produces this creature, intermediate between male and eunuch, which is described as feminine" (de Beauvoir, 1956: 273).

[36] See Foucault (1995; 1978) on societal mechanisms of normalisation of criminal (including sexual) behaviour, and Jackson (2006: 108–9) on "norm" in social theory.

> now, but very different. There were three kinds of human beings… – not two as there are now, male and female. In addition to these, there was a third, a combination of those two; its name survives, though the kind itself has vanished. At that time, … *the word "androgynous"* really meant something: a form made up of male and female elements, though *now* there's nothing but *the word*, and that's *used as an insult*….
> Long ago we were united…; but now the god has divided us as punishment for the wrong we did him…. *So there's a danger that if we don't keep order before the gods, we'll be split in two again*, and then we'll be walking around in the condition of people carved on gravestones in bas-relief, sawn apart between the nostrils…. *We should encourage all men, therefore, to treat the gods with all due reverence*, so that we may escape this fate and find wholeness instead. (*Symposium* 189d–e, 193a; emphasis added)

By Plato's time, the adjective *androgynous* had become offensive. The myth itself loses its aura as soon as we notice the moral ends of teaching mythicised natural philosophy. Ovid too stresses the thoroughly unappealing side of androgyny, from emasculation to harmful spite.

To better understand claims about the constructedness of sex, we should review its ideological-political underpinnings as uncovered by feminist science criticism.[37] 'Sex' names the *cultural* (viz., not primarily morphological) *dichotomy* established (rather than observed) between 'females' and 'males' (Hird, 2004: 13) – hence Myra Hird's scare quotes attached to the concepts. Furthermore, the emphasis on "sex *dichotomy* rather than sex *diversity*" (2, emphasis added) betrays a political agenda. This is not to claim that before the twentieth century sexual difference had been ignored. Whether or not an early modern two-sex model succeeded an alleged (pre-modern) one-sex model,[38] western Europe sought to capitalise socially and politically on the observed and metaphorised differences between *exclusively two sexes*.[39] The explanatory theory aimed to establish

[37] Feminist science criticism is vast; see, for instance, Fausto-Sterling (1992; 2000). See also Harding (2015: esp. chapters 1, 2, 3) for a recent feminist assessment of the logic of objectivity in science.

[38] See Laqueur (1990: esp. chapters 4 and 5) on the one- and two-sex models respectively, with their ideological and political biases (cf. Stolberg, 2003); his selective recourse to ancient and early-modern sources, however, invalidates the robustness of his one-sex paradigm, which draws on Galenic theory (Park, 2010; King, 2016: chapters 1 and 2). See Hird (2004: chapter 2) for a historical account of the making of "sex" and "sexual difference" in the West, and Mottier (2008) for a brief historicisation of sexuality as a site of social and political regulation and struggle.

[39] Dichotomously defined "sex" assumes its full meaning only "within the cultural–political framework of its associated concept 'sexual difference,'" itself couched in terms of "sex

heterosexuality[40] as the *natural* way of life in the polity; whenever necessary, it drew upon the Judaeo-Christian legacy of policing sexual life (e.g. Lev 18.1–30, 20.10-22; Rom 1.18, 1.24, 1.26-28). Yet, the discursive regime of *heteronormativity*[41] speaks truth not so much to nature,[42] as its champions proclaim or tacitly assume, as to power, with its bid both to ensure the reproduction of society (Wittig, 1992: 6; Hird, 2004: 27) and to continue the Victorian sexual science project, which "survey[ed], label[led], and eventually treat[ed]" an "entire landscape of 'perversions' including necrophilia, bestiality, and homosexuality" (Hird 27).

In *XXY*, Alex's father grants his child the freedom to choose[43] whether (or not) to undergo surgical streamlining into a definite sex (*XXY*, 01:15:58-01:16:59) so as to avoid being further hurt.[44] Her/his reply, "What

complementarity" and biased towards highlighting exclusively differences between females and males (Hird, 2004: 13). See also Gatens (1996: 10-11).

[40] Heterosexuality – thus christened only in 1892 – has been mystified as the unique operation of nature. Such is further suggested by the insistence, by the Roman Catholic *magisterium*, on women's "vocation" for motherhood, for instance in the 1970s by Popes Pius XII and Paul VI (qtd. in Daly, 1985: 3), in reaction to the international movement to repeal anti-abortion laws and generally in reaction to feminism and women's liberation movements (Daly 3). The reiterated claims rather indicate apprehensions about the 'natural' actuation of this 'vocation.' Neither should the modern interest in *homosexuality* suggest that the sexual option pathologised in 1870 by neuropsychiatrist Carl Westphal had been unknown, or approved of, previously. Notwithstanding Leviticus and Paul's Epistle to the Romans, the *unnamed* homosexuality was included – along with any sexual intercourse not performed within the wedlock and exclusively in the missionary position for procreation purposes alone – in the *unspeakable* "vice against nature" which late medieval preachers' manuals taught the clergy to seek in, and eradicate from, their Christian flocks.

[41] Heteronormativity – "the hegemonic discursive and nondiscursive normative idealization of heterosexuality" – played a leading role in establishing and maintaining discursive practices of sex complementarity that have retained their primacy to this day (Hird, 2004: 27). According to Stevi Jackson, many analyses of heteronormativity ignore the double-sided social regulation which the concept's forerunner, Adrienne Rich's *compulsory heterosexuality*, indicates: that institutionalised heterosexuality both *regulates* "those kept within its boundaries" and "marginaliz[es] and sanction[s] those outside them" (Jackson, 2006: 105) in sexual and labour-division terms (107), so that non-sexual everyday practices are themselves heteronormative (108).

[42] The biological differences between women and men "are defined in terms of their 'function' (heterosexual procreation)" since the nature of heterosexuality is assumed to be "'nature' itself" (Ward, qtd. in Hird, 2004: 27). See also Wittig (1992: 9-15) on the naturalisation of social phenomena through the category of sex.

[43] Néstor contemplates the possibility – or rather advisability – of letting Alex choose for or against the surgery whilst talking to the elderly intersexual streamlined into a man (*XXY*, 00:49:51-00:49:59).

[44] The scene concludes an early episode where three village youngsters virtually rape Alex to check her/his intersexuality (after learning about it from Vando, her/his friend). Now

if there is nothing to choose?" (*XXY*, 01:16:40), is an apt rhetorical question for all of us to consider vis-à-vis intersexuality – and not only. We should recall, nonetheless, that despite contemporary society's strictures on sex determination, its regulation, even repression, has always been at work. Here is Foucault on late modern social developments:

> Biological theories of sexuality, juridical conceptions of the individual, forms of administrative control in modern nations, led little by little to rejecting the idea of a mixture of the two sexes in a single body, and consequently to limiting the free choice of indeterminate individuals. Henceforth, everybody was to have one and only one sex. Everybody was to have his or her primary, profound, determined and determining sexual identity; as for the elements of the other sex that might appear, they could only be accidental, superficial, or even quite simply illusory. (Foucault, 1980: viii)

On the contrary, sifting through French medieval and Renaissance court records, Foucault apparently detects a certain degree of freedom of choice and self-determination. Through naming, at the time of baptism, the father or the godfather determined, if only provisionally (and abstractly), the sex of the hermaphrodite child (Foucault, 1980: vii); however, adult hermaphrodites could *freely* decide whether or not to retain the sex assigned to them at baptism (viii). Less optimistically, though, Foucault's context reveals the underside of such freedom: "the threshold of adulthood" was "the time … for them to marry" (viii) – one framed by sexual taboos, for once chosen by the mature hermaphrodite, her/his sex became fixed forever, "under pain of being labelled sodomites" (viii). Not non-discrimination impulses, sympathy or compassion motivated, therefore, medieval and early modern rulers and prelates to grant hermaphrodites freedom of self-determination sex-wise, but sex police.

Anne Fausto-Sterling (2000: chapter 3) rightly criticises the sense of medical emergency which doctors exude on the birth of an intersexual baby and their precipitation to 'fix' it on the spot. Sadly, the practice "emerged from some surprisingly flexible theories of gender" (45) evolved in the 1940s. Psychologist John Money and his colleagues, the psychiatrists John and Joan Hampson, studied intersexuals and concluded that "sexual behavior and orientation as male or female does not have an innate, instinctive basis" (qtd. in Fausto-Sterling, 2000: 46) – it is not automatically

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Néstor tells Alex that s/he is the one to decide on filing a complaint against her/his assailants (*XXY*, 01:17:17–01:17:53), which, if s/he does, will let everyone know about her/his condition – a prospect which no longer terrifies Alex (*XXY*, 01:18:00–01:18:19).

determined by gonads, hormones and chromosomes. Their insightful conclusion, however, ignored the moot point that the very "categories 'male' and 'female' had no biological basis or necessity": Money and his colleagues "never questioned the fundamental assumption that there are only two sexes, because their goal in studying intersexuals was to find out more about 'normal' development" (Fausto-Sterling, 2000: 46). Christopher Dewhurst and Ronald R. Gordon's *The Intersexual Disorders* (1969) explicitly regards intersexuality as a tragically abnormal condition that requires (and can be offered) appropriate (surgical) *management*:

> One can only attempt to imagine the anguish of the parents. That a newborn should have a *deformity* ... (*affecting*) *so fundamental an issue as the very sex of the child* ... is a tragic event which immediately conjures up visions of a hopeless psychological misfit doomed to live always as a sexual freak in loneliness and frustration. (qtd. in Fausto-Sterling, 2000: 47; emphasis added, EC)

The treatise appeared at a time of medical and surgical quasi-unanimity on how to approach intersexuality, which coincided with the advent of "the post-World-War II ideal of the suburban family structured around strictly divided gender roles" (Fausto-Sterling, 2000: 46). Unfortunately, the antiquated nineteenth-century idiom of Dewhurst and Gordon still informs contemporary jargon: the parents are reassured that the doctors can identify the "'true' sex that lies underneath the surface confusion" so that "their hormonal and surgical treatments can complete nature's intention" (50). The medical establishment thus claims that it can read (when it may be actually reading *into*) intentions, and moreover, nature's – a contention remarkably close to what Francis Bacon articulated in early modernity[45] – which it can bring to happy fruition.

Conclusion

> Until very recently, the specter of intersexuality has spurred us to police bodies of indeterminate sex. Rather than force us to admit the social nature of our ideas about sexual difference, our ever more sophisticated medical technology has allowed us, by its attempts to render such bodies male or female, to insist that people are either naturally male or female. (Fausto-Sterling, 2000: 54)

[45] See Keller's discussion of Baconian science as the art of male mastery over a female nature (1985: chapter 2).

'Nature' can be as artificial as any acknowledged form of human artifice. It is a construct which serves time- and culture-specific interests and reflects the human capacity to dominate and repress. *Ars est celare artem* ("art is to conceal art"), the old motto, couldn't better capture the repressions behind the notion of 'nature.' A very capricious 'nature' though, which elicits compassion for leukaemia but fear of or aversion to intersexuality.

Must we be intersexual, schizophrenic or blind, must we be poor, Black, Native American or Gypsy, to deplore ostracism inflicted on certain people – on ourselves? Must we first watch them experience discrimination before we take an active stand and repel those – societies, institutions, discourses and individuals alike – that either treat these people patronisingly or ignore them altogether? Must one be LGBT – lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender – to understand that all people should enjoy the same civic rights?

In response to the worldwide disquiet about same-sex marriage and following legislative pronouncements in various western countries, Romania was considering, in 2017, the advisability of redefining marriage in the Constitution explicitly as the union between a man and a woman. Conservative politicians and civil associations raised spurious arguments regarding reproduction – rather, the patriarchal reproduction of sexual behaviour and of family roles – centred on the supposed unintelligibility, for a child, of having two mothers or two fathers instead of a mother and a father. (What about single-parent families?) The Orthodox Church of Romania has long sponsored collections of readymade sermons for the use of priests (from which some conveniently read out the 'models'); clergymen thus learn – and teach their parishioners – about the three evils which besiege (*sic*) the church: abortion, homosexuality and drug addiction.[46]

What would, therefore, be the 'right' place, if any, in this continuum of sexual intolerance and regulation, of those who are intersex – and *naturally* so in a dual sense, as reluctant to be streamlined and as including around 1.7 percent of the human population (Fausto-Sterling, 2000: 51-4; Hird, 2004: 47-8, 123-4)? Or, in Shylock's famous words, if emanating from a Jew whom Shakespeare pictures as heinous (just as Ovid's Hermaphroditus is implicitly heinous when he curses the pond):

> I am a Jew. Hath not a Jew eyes? Hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? Fed with the same food, hurt with

[46] I became aware of the practice, in 2001, from a post-liturgy sermon *read out* from such a book by the priest of a tiny mountain resort. I doubt such sermon primers have been challenged and withdrawn in the meantime.

> the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer as a Christian is? If you prick us, do we not bleed? If you tickle us, do we not laugh? If you poison us, do we not die? … (*The Merchant of Venice*, 3.1.46-52)

Are all the above-mentioned people not human like everyone else so as to finally experience non-discrimination and be welcomed within the polity? Education can make a difference in this respect too. It can and should foster transversal skills that integrate the individual within society without forcing on her/him a narrow cognitive and behavioural schema. Literature and film, as this paper has suggested, are invaluable teaching aids to foster positive attitudes towards all our fellows, irrespective of sex, race, class, religion, physical/mental (dis)ability, sexual preference, educational background, age or any other criteria which reinforce harmful divisiveness and hierarchisation.

It *is* our *choice* how to read ethically Ovid's Hermaphroditus's curse on the waters or the resolution of *XXY*'s protagonist's father to support Alex to decide her/his biological future. It is a matter of interpretation whether or not Ovid mystifies ancient society's ostracism of biological difference as spite driving the sexually different person; either way, the tale shows a divided humankind. *XXY* bends Hermaphroditus's curse such as to show the hermaphrodite turning (male) representatives of the mainstream into her/his allies for a future of non-discrimination. *We* decide whether to interpret *XXY* as ending on a hopeful call for a non-divided world or rather with an enfeebling curse on the 'innocent' mainstream, akin to Ovid's Hermaphroditus's. Interpretative choices, I submit, are but superficially a matter of professional training; they are, rather, a matter of ethical awareness and choice to learn to construct together an undivided humankind.

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Samuel Beckett's Tribute to Women in *Happy Days*

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Abstract: Samuel Beckett's *Happy Days* portrays his first female protagonist echoing the past events of her life and embracing the new circumstances that families were built on after the war, being viewed as the embodiment of the modern woman. The play generally focuses on the following topics: alienation, human isolation, impotence and identity crisis presenting subjectivity and the fine line between a real and a fading existence. The present article aims at exploring Beckett's intention regarding the mixture of themes the play presents to the world taking into account the attempt to rediscover the personal struggles in an absurd world.

Keywords: *stories, marriage, modern woman, strength*.

Happy Days embraces Samuel Beckett's preference for the theatre of the absurd in offering what is supposed to be one of his most optimistic works. The play reveals a couple, who in two acts, manages to show the audience a connection to the realistic world while maintaining a surprising image of a woman buried in a mound, who follows her daily routine as nothing had changed in her life (even though days were passing and physically she was obviously changing) while talking to her husband, whose face we do not see until the end of the second act. If other Beckettian plays could somehow be visualized as being part of a rather strange everyday life, having a woman buried from the waist down in the first act and from the neck down in the second could never be imagined as belonging to reality, especially when she has a revolver next to her in plain sight. The protagonist even mentions twice that a man and a woman passed by and they seemed intrigued why she was not helped by her husband, their situation being strange even for the fictional characters. Nevertheless, the playwright never considered the need of explaining why the characters had such a surprising presentation on the stage.

The play's only characters are Winnie, a woman of about fifty who gets sucked in more and more into the mound, and her husband, Willie, of about sixty who sits beside her and reads the newspaper ignoring what is happening to his wife, showing interest in the outside world presented through the news. At the end of the play Willie appears dressed as though ready for a wedding, reminding Winnie of the day he proposed, making her happy that he calls out to her, naming her Win and trying to get her to see

him up close. The progression of her burial in the two acts and the stories that are presented by Winnie show that she was able at one time to use her legs and that her situation, much like life itself is changing as days go by, her husband still having the ability to crawl:

> In *Happy Days*, for example, the image of Winnie gradually sinking into the earth clearly says something about our gradual approach, with every day that passes, to death and the grave. But there is also in that image the pathetic need for contact with her husband behind the mound, the human striving for contact, however impossible it is to achieve; there is also in it the preoccupation of all of us with our possessions, however ridiculous and trivial, and there is reference to the fading content of our memories in the half-remembered quotations from the classics. (Esslin, 2011: 20)

Winnie's nature is that of a very talkative woman who tries to pass the time telling stories about her past – the golden days – although she is aware that her husband is not interested in what she has to say. There is a certain disturbance to her body's inability to move and everything she is doing keeps the audience focused on her hand and face movements, which is something very challenging for an actress to do. This is one of the reasons why Beckett is believed to have acted in front of a mirror all the actions that he attributed to his protagonist in order to try and understand how the audience might perceive Winnie and her situation, representing a modern woman stuck in an existence that offered alienation, loneliness and lack of intimacy. The exploration of the contemporary relationships and the hints regarding how strong women were back in the post-war days made the success of *Happy Days* an inspiration for the author to work on more one-woman plays in the 1970s. Samuel Beckett expressed his admiration for the changing role and for the new positions that women were winning for themselves, feeling more empowered and respected around the world.

The author admitted that he was influenced in writing such a work by Maureen Cusack, the wife of Irish actor Cyril Cusack, who told the playwright that he should write a happy play and so his inspiration was awakened. He confessed to Brenda Bruce (the actress that played Winnie) what he believed the play should be about:

> "Well I thought that the most dreadful thing that could happen to anybody, would be not to be allowed to sleep so that just as you're dropping off there'd be a 'Dong' and you'd have to keep awake; you're sinking into the ground alive and it's full of ants; and the sun is shining endlessly day and night and there is not a tree… there's no shade, nothing, and that bell wakes you up all the time and all you've got is a little parcel of things to

> see you through life." Perhaps he was referring to the life of the modern woman. Then he said: And I thought who would cope with that and go down singing, only a woman. (Knowlson, 2004: 501)

Visually we do not see a woman embedded, wearing a hat and keeping a black bag and a revolver next to her in real life, but at the level of the couple's relationship there may always appear such a distancing between the two partners as though living parallel lives and being dissatisfied with what their relationship had to offer and how their existence turned out to be. However, in order to be able to surpass everything that was going on, the female protagonist, much like Vladimir and Estragon, had to spent her time talking and deviating from topic to topic in order to have the days pass and give thanks to the Lord for another "happy day":

> Winnie: (gazing at zenith). Another heavenly day. (Pause. Head back level, eyes front, pause. She clasps bands to breast, closes eyes. Lips move in inaudible prayer, say ten seconds. Lips still. Hands remain clasped. Low.) For Jesus Christ sake Amen. (Eyes open, hands unclasp, return to mound. Pause. She clasps hands to breast again, closes eyes, lips move again in inaudible addendum, say five seconds. Low.) World without end Amen. (Eyes open, bands unclasp, return to mound. Pause.) Begin, Winnie. (Pause.) (Beckett, 1961: 8)

Winnie needs her husband's presence, much like *Waiting for Godot*'s protagonists need each other, as to have someone that can be beside her by validating her life experiences, even though Willie is quite absent, answering with monosyllabic words and just keeping to himself, a taciturn person in contrast with her chatty nature. When it comes to Winnie and Willie's dynamics

> the mood is entirely set in the rambling disclosedness of Winnie's world: her chaotic discourse, the refusal to recognize what she really is, her attempts at fleeing what at bottom she knows herself to be; and the very smokescreen of the words reveal the "tempting, tranquilizing, alienating, entangling, turbulence" of inauthenticity, as described in Heideggerian ontology. (Kaelin, 1981: 209) l=as baga in text

By using Winnie's character Beckett makes numerous literary references as she mentions the old days and evokes the time she studied in high school and although she misquotes classics such as William Shakespeare, Thomas Gray, Omar Khayyam, Robert Browning, John

Milton, John Keats, Charles Wolfe, W.B. Yeats and Robert Herrick, it is possible for the author to make his allusions heard and by doing so

> In Beckett's selection of quotations and oblique references virtually every historical epoch is represented: pre-Christian Greek philosophies, the blind religiosity and Christian idealism of the Middle Ages, Renaissance humanism, eighteenth-century rationalism, and nineteenth century romanticism. The philosophies, literature, and religion of western man comprise the fragmented mythology against which Winnie fails and suffers, and like a jeweler's foil, mythology highlights the suffering. (Gontarski, 2014: 243)

Beckett's protagonist always has something to talk about, while performing her routine in "hellish light," surrounded by "scorched grass" with her husband crawling in and out of a hole and not exactly paying attention to his wife's actions and stories. He is rather invisible as part of a failing marriage that seems not only loveless, but also sexless. The boredom that the two of them feel is more than obvious to the audience. They are the embodiment of the post-war urban couple who never actually sit down and debate the problems and worries they might have regarding their failing relationship. However, this does not seem to stop Winnie for a bit as she performs with such devotion her rituals over and over again, finding some sort of comfort in her routine, like a safety net, where nothing might go wrong creating a comic contrast for the audience and hinting maybe to a neurotic set of actions. This grooming of hers is somehow obsessive as if trying to control everything that might go wrong with her as she has been awoken by a bell ringing (in the beginning of both acts) and is constantly living in that bright light reminding everyone of hell. The parasol Winnie tries to use catches fire and so she is not protected at all, at least in her imagination. In the second act we see it back again and there is no surprise from her part to find it intact. There is an allusion to Willie's loss of affection towards his wife as it was a gift to her on the day they went punting on the lake. In the second act we see Willie waking up upon hearing the bell, but we do not have an image of her actually going to sleep as it is mentioned that her husband is able to do so, her being the one that hears the bell six times. No relief can be gained by Winnie as she has to face the cruel reality of having no help from her husband and so she has to encourage herself:

> Begin your day, Winnie. (Pause. She turns to bag, rummages in it without moving it from its place, brings out toothbrush, rummages again, brings out flat tube of toothpaste, turns back front, unscrews cap of tube, lays cap

> on ground, squeezes with difficulty small blob of paste on brush, holds tube in one hand and brushes teeth with other. She turns modestly aside and hack to her right to spit out behind mound. In this position her eyes rest on Willie. She spits out. She cranes a little further hack and down. Loud.) Hoo-oo! (Pause. Louder.) Hoo-oo! (Pause. Tender smile as she turns hack front, lays down brush.) Poor Willie – (examines tube, smile off) – running out – (looks for cap) – ah well – (finds cap) – can't be helped – (screws on cap) – just one of those old things – (lays down tube) – another of those old things – (turns towards hag) – just can't be cured – (rummages in hag) – cannot be cured – (brings out small mirror, turns hack front) – ah yes – (inspects teeth in mirror) – poor dear Willie – (testing upper front teeth with thumb, indistinctly) – good Lord! – (pulling hack upper lip to inspect gums, do.) – good God! – (pulling hack corner of mouth, mouth open, do.) – ah well – (other corner, do.) – no worse – (abandons inspection, normal speech) – no better, no worse – (lays down mirror) – no change – (wipes fingers on grass) – no pain – (looks for toothbrush) – hardly any – (takes up toothbrush) – great thing that – (examines handle of brush) – nothing like it – (examines handle, reads) – pure […] (Beckett, 1961: 9-10)

There is, of course, an obvious disparity between Winnie's cheerfulness and her situation. Beckett's characters are known for talking in order to pass the time and this is also the case in *Happy Days* where all of the protagonist's stories have a deeper meaning hinting at many of the wrongs existing in society at the time. When Winnie realises that she has to take a break from talking she turns to actions and checks her lipstick as to make sure that there is nothing wrong with the way she looks. Even though she is in her fifties there have been productions when Beckett insisted that the actress playing her should have a low cut dress and express more sensuality. Nevertheless, he husbands still seemed to ignore her:

> To the extent that *Happy Days* has to do with marriage, it exploits and indeed parodies a stereotype in which a woman talks incessantly while a husband sits apart reading the newspaper, emitting the odd grunt or, very occasionally, offering one-syllable answers. One could accuse the play of a sexist depiction of a gabbling, middle-aged wife, full of neurotically fragile optimism, if the stereotype was not so remorselessly exaggerated and sent up. Nonetheless, it is worth bearing in mind that the play keys into a recognisable discourse of gender that would be lost if, say, Willie was chattering in the mound and Winnie reading the paper. It also, one could argue, plays of recognisable discourses of class and nationality. The pair – and their costumes alone signal this – are clearly middle-class, faintly outdated party-goers. Winnie's optimism also exploits a certain discourse

> of resilient Englishness, cheery and good-humoured regardless of the tribulations. (McDonald, 2006: 68)

One of Winnie's stories is about a girl called Mildred – the name that was first intended by Beckett for Winnie – and her undressing of a doll in the middle of the night hinting at sexual abuse as the mouse in her story has a phallic connotation in Freudian terms and the memory of what Winnie is recalling hints at a buried experience that she wanted to forget but could not. Both the doll and she wear pearl necklaces and she can make a connection in her brain to what the outcome of the doll was and try to escape her memories. Her story presents a childhood nightmare and the characters she introduces are her way of exploring what happened to her growing up and, thus, influencing her sexual identity:

> The sun was not well up when Milly rose, descended the steep... (pause)... slipped on her nightgown, descended all alone the steep wooden stairs, backwards on all fours, though she had been forbidden to do so, entered the... (pause)... tiptoed down the silent passage, entered the nursery and began to undress Dolly. (Pause.) Scolding her... the while. (Pause.) Suddenly a mouse – (Long pause.) Gently, Winnie. (Long pause. Calling.) Willie! […] Suddenly a mouse… (Pause.) Suddenly a mouse ran up her little thigh and Mildred, dropping Dolly in her fright, began to scream – (Winnie gives a sudden piercing scream) – and screamed and screamed – (Winnie screams twice) – screamed and screamed and screamed and screamed till all came running, in their night attire, papa, mama, Bibby and…old Annie, to see what was the matter… (Pause)… what on Earth could possibly be the matter. (Pause.) Too late. (Pause.) Too late. (Beckett, 1961: 55, 59)

The sexual elements of the play are not related only to Winnie's childhood memories, but also to her relationship with Willie. By being buried in the mound she cannot have any sexual moments with her husband, but his showing her the pornographic postcard means a provocation for her. She has her belief in God and so Winnie considers the things she sees as "filth." However, she puts on her spectacles to inspect more closely what exactly is happening in the photo as this new manifestation of sexual preferences is a surprise to her and this is the reason why she returns the card and pretends no having seen it in the first place and turns to reading what is written on her toothbrush:

> The comic interplay between the expression of disgust and Winnie's closer and closer examination of the card maintains both an almost puritanical

> disdain alongside a compelling prurience. Winnie is interested but will not let herself appear to be so. What the card depicts – a couple in a (perhaps unusual) sex act with a masturbating voyeur looking on – might be taken from a *More Pricks than Kicks* story and so is a recognizably Beckettian sexual scene, mixing scopohilia and masturbation with coitus. (Stewart, 2011: 134)

The understating of the word formication as fornication reveals the sexual desires and hints that appear in the play when the couple talks about ants carrying white little balls and Winnie immediately connects the eggs with the idea of sex. The conversation leads also to the problem of sterility and the way in which Winnie and Willie might be the last ones of their kind: "Beckett's sterile worlds may seek to prevent the continuation of the species, but can do little to assuage the suffering of those already condemned to live." (Stewart, 2022: 136)

Happy Days remains a play that embraces the strength women possess trying to look at life in an optimistic way and persevering the desire to fight for one's life until the very end as Winnie does not use the revolver to kill herself as one might have done, showing her determination to be thankful and to continue talking and sharing stories ignoring the deteriorating state of her existence.

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Childhood Memories and the Agent of Death in Dylan Thomas's Poetry

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"Birth is the beginning of death" – Dylan Thomas

Abstract: Dylan Thomas's poetry has often been categorized as being excessively occult and complex. The present paper will attempt to particularly identify the elements that create the mythology of death, trying to emphasize that the spiritual presence that lurks in the poems is deeply connected to his idea of primordial origin and that, in his conception, life and death develop a unique common path – just like time becomes the agent of fiction, memory can become the agent of death.

Keywords: *memory, youth, death, agency, vision*.

Probably the most notable Welsh author, Dylan Thomas was greatly influenced by his origin from which he attained his impressive notion of rhetoric, his distinguished humour and his susceptibility to the sound of the words, due to the religious experiences that supplied the refinement of his imagistic repository. Thomas himself acknowledged the influence the Bible had on his style:

> Its great stories of Noah, Jonah, Lot, Moses, Jacob, David, Solomon and a thousand more, I had, of course, known from very early youth; the great rhythms had rolled over me from the Welsh pulpits; and I read, for myself, from Job and Ecclesiastes; and the story of the New Testament is part of my life. But I have never sat down and studied the Bible, never consciously echoed its language, and am, in reality, as ignorant of it as most brought up Christians. All of the Bible that I use in my work is remembered from childhood, and is the common property of all who were brought up in English-speaking communities. (Thomas in Jones, 2003: xix)

Echoing his Christian cultural background, Dylan Thomas's poetry deals with the reality of death and gives it an important place of interest by transforming mortality into a recurrent theme and by referencing to his personal feelings about the futility of life: "I feel all my muscles contract as I try to drag out from the whirlpooling words around my everlasting ideas of

the importance of death on the living, some connected words that will explain how the starry system of the dead is seen." (Thomas in Goodby, 2017: 78)

His most popular poem "Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night" was dedicated to the author's father, who was fighting throat cancer and Thomas confessed his torment to a friend: "the only person I can't show the little enclosed poem to is, of course, my father who doesn't know he's dying" (Thomas in Jones, 2003: 301). In the form of a villanelle, it encapsulates a universal cry of desperation, grief and protest against fate and uses a very common phrase like "good night" to convey the image of death. The rhythmical pattern of sound-repetition works to give each stanza both a positive and a negative mixture of images:

> Do not go gentle into that good night,
> Old age should burn and rave at close of day;
> Rage, rage against the dying of the light.
>
> Though wise men at their end know dark is right,
> Because their words had forked no lightning they
> Do not go gentle into that good night.
>
> Good men, the last wave by, crying how bright
> Their frail deeds might have danced in a green bay,
> Rage, rage against the dying of the light.
>
> Wild men who caught and sang the sun in flight,
> And learn, too late, they grieved it on its way,
> Do not go gentle into that good night.
>
> Grave men, near death, who see with blinding sight
> Blind eyes could blaze like meteors and be gay,
> Rage, rage against the dying of the light.
>
> And you, my father, there on the sad height,
> Curse, bless, me now with your fierce tears, I pray.
> Do not go gentle into that good night.
> Rage, rage against the dying of the light. (Thomas in Jones, 2003: 239)

Following William Wordsworth's credo that the poet is "the rock of defence for human nature; an upholder and preserver, carrying everywhere with him relationship and love" (Wordsworth, 2007: 77) Dylan Thomas's promotion of the two concepts led to his poetical maturity, advancing form the early poems about death and dying presented as an intolerable end, to a

progressive discovery and acceptance that dichotomies like life and death, the joy of living and the death instinct and youth and old age are mutually dependent and coexistent. This artistic growth had its peek with the publication of the poem that made him famous, "The Force That through the Green Fuse Drives the Flower." Having an apparently familiar theme, the poem is "nothing short of an anatomy of the world whose elements of water, wind, rocks, and plants fuse with vein, mouth, hand, lips, womb, tomb, and worm. Such unity and duality, conflict and union speak for that struggle between conscious and unconscious modes of being, for the need for unity, and for that relatedness and love of which Wordsworth spoke. The poem celebrates not only the elemental in the world of nature, but the elemental in the nature of human beings, the dual forces of love and death, Eros and Thanatos" (Byles, 1988: 88):

> The force that through the green fuse drives the flower
> Drives my green age; that blasts the roots of trees
> Is my destroyer.
> And I am dumb to tell the crooked rose
> My youth is bent by the same wintry fever.
> The force that drives the water through the rocks
> Drives my red blood; that dries the mouthing streams
> Turns mine to wax.
> And I am dumb to mouth unto my veins
> How at the mountain spring the same mouth sucks.
> The hand that whirls the water in the pool
> Stirs the quicksand; that ropes the blowing wind
> Hauls my shroud sail.
> And I am dumb to tell the hanging man
> How of my clay is made the hangman's lime.
> The lips of time leech to the fountain head;
> Love drips and gathers) but the fallen blood
> Shall calm her sores.
> And I am dumb to tell a weathers wind
> How time has ticked a heaven round the stars.
> And I am dumb to tell the lovers tomb
> How at my sheet goes the same crooked worm. (Thomas in Jones, 2003: 90)

Taking into consideration Thomas's poor health, his disorganized life and his heavy drinking and smoking, there is no wonder that everybody around him expected him to die young: "All his life the clocks ticked away his death for him... His father said that Dylan would never see forty" (Fitzgibbon, 1965: 49). The lurking presence of death was probably the

reason that determined the poet to portray with such recurrence the reality of the decaying body, alternating between death seen as a unifying process with nature and death as a natural succession of life: "Birth is the beginning of death" (Thomas qtd. by Shapiro, 1987: 176). Thomas wrote about destruction and the fear of extinction in all the phases of his poetic career and even referred to his poetry as "statements made on the way to the grave." His excessive treatment of the theme might have its origins in his own lung condition, his father's decaying health and, last but not least, his acknowledgment of the destruction produced by the war. This combination of factors gave life to an emotional disruption that was transposed into his artistic work, from different angles at different stages of his life. At a closer look his approach transformed from defiance, negation and refusal to mourn, to recognition and calm acceptance. The role of death is central to his poetry but Thomas dedicated more space to the action of dying as a developing process of aging, seeing birth as a way to explore the origin of life and to praise the stages of childhood. In "If my Head Hurt a Hair's Foot," published in 1939, the author glorifies the person who gave birth to him, who explains to the reluctant baby that refuses to be born that the process of life must take its course:

> 'No. Not for Christ's dazzling bed
> Or a nacreous sleep among soft particles and charms
> My dear would I change my tears or your iron head.
> Thrust my daughter or son to escape, there is none, none, none,
> Nor when all ponderous heaven's host of waters breaks.
>
> 'Now to awake husked of gestures and my joy like a cave
> To the anguish and carrion to the infant forever unfree,
> O my lost love bounced from a good home;
> The grain that hurries this way from the rim of the grave
> Has a voice and a house, and there and here you must couch and cry.
>
> 'Rest beyond choice in the dust-appointed grain,
> At the breast stored with seas. No return
> Through the waves of the fat streets nor the skeleton's thin ways.
> The grave and my calm body are shut to your coming as stone,
> And the endless beginning of prodigies suffers open. (Thomas in Jones, 2003: 169)

On the other hand, in "After the Funeral" (1939) he concentrates on the aftermath caused by the death of his aunt, who was defeated by cancer, describing the feelings that flourish after the ritual of burial. Having only

one stanza but intricate sentences, the poem is divided into three segments: exposure of the hypocrisy of the funeral ritual, the poet's rejection of the event and the way in which he keeps the image of his humble aunt in memory:

> Her flesh was meek as milk, but this skyward statue
> With the wild breast and blessed and giant skull
> Is carved from her in a room with a wet window
> In a fiercely mourning house in a crooked year.
> I know her scrubbed and sour humble hands
> Lie with religion in their cramp, her threadbare
> Whisper in a damp word, her wits drilled hollow,
> Her fist of a face died clenched on a round pain;
> And sculptured Ann is seventy years of stone.
> These cloud-sopped, marble hands, this monumental
> Argument of the hewn voice, gesture and psalm
> Storm me forever over her grave until
> The stuffed lung of the fox twitch and cry Love
> And the strutting fern lay seeds on the black sill. (Thomas in Jones, 2003: 159)

In another series of poems published in the last part of his life Thomas got particularly concerned with the destruction of the human race and the inherent death of all humanity displaying a serious preoccupation with the drama of war and the future of the planet in the atomic age. The evolution of his approach to mortality shows a distancing from the personal attitude towards the death of a relative or even his own passing and a developed awareness for the collective doom. "In Country Sleep," published in 1947, exposes to the reader a world full of horrific events and threats of death, in which the poet addresses his daughter and portrays a world full of dangers and incertitude:

> Only for the turning of the earth in her holy
> Heart! Slyly, slowly, hearing the wound in her side go
> Round the sun, he comes to my love like the designed snow,
> And truly he
> Flows to the strand of flowers like the dew's ruly sea,
> And surely he sails like the ship shape clouds. Oh he
>
> Comes designed to my love to steal not her tide raking
> Wound, nor her riding high, nor her eyes, nor kindled hair,
> But her faith that each vast night and the saga of prayer
> He comes to take

Her faith that this last night for his unsacred sake
He comes to leave her in the lawless sun awaking

Naked and forsaken to grieve he will not come.
Ever and ever by all your vows believe and fear
My dear this night he comes and night without end my dear
Since you were born:
And you shall wake, from country sleep, this dawn and each first dawn,
Your faith as deathless as the outcry of the ruled sun. (Thomas in Jones, 2003: 228)

Another poem, "A Refusal to Mourn the Death, by Fire, of a Child in London" (1945) discusses the death of an unnamed victim of the Second World War. The cyclicality of the structure places death on a position of unification with the natural world, which can be equated with the end of self-identity and the assimilation of the background:

And I must enter again the round
Zion of the water bead
And the Synagogue of the ear of corn
Shall I let pray the shadow of a sound
Or sow my salt seed
In the least valley of sackcloth to mourn

The majesty and burning of the child's death.
I shall not murder
The mankind of her going with a grave truth
Nor blaspheme down the stations of the breath
With any further
Elegy of innocence and youth.
Deep with the first dead lies London's daughter,
Robed in the long friends,
The grains beyond age, the dark veins of her mother;
Secret by the unmourning water
Of the riding Thames.
After the first death, there is no other. (Thomas in Jones, 2003: 221)

There are two distinguishable working stages in what regards the images of death in the poem, that of the girl caught in a bombing raid an that of the entire human race; yet, another one was identified, namely "the death of death" which means that the reason for mourning is no longer present: "[t]he body is equated in pagan terms with the images of death – the earth, plants, birds, and darkness – and is regenerated only through the cycle of

nature. The soul is associated with the images of water, light, Zion, Synagogue, and fecundity, images which, in the Judeo Christian context, symbolize eternal life." (Sunderman, 2006: 33)

"Ceremony After a Fire Raid" (1945) also tackles with the signification of death and tries to explain the meaning of the death of a new-born in an air raid; even if the process of dying is a complex one, Thomas attempts to find significance in the infant's pointlessness ending:

I know not whether
Adam or Eve, the adorned holy bullock
Or the white ewe lamb
Or the chosen virgin
Laid in her snow
On the altar of London,
Was the first to die
In the cinder of the little skull,
O bride and bride groom
O Adam and Eve together
Lying in the lull
Under the sad breast of the head stone
White as the skeleton
Of the garden of Eden.
I know the legend
Of Adam and Eve is never for a second
Silent in my service
Over the dead infants
Over the one
Child who was priest and servants,
Word, singers, and tongue
In the cinder of the little skull,
Who was the serpent's
Night fall and the fruit like a sun,
Man and woman undone,
Beginning crumbled back to darkness
Bare as the nurseries
Of the garden of wilderness. (Thomas in Jones, 2003: 201)

In the poems that have as central theme the death of humankind related with the atomic age, Thomas is aware and observes the end of an era, the disappearance of man, the doom of the planet and this approach can be connected with the Christian belief in an apocalyptic end of the world and of the human race. In some of his poems Thomas appears to be hinting to a Christian reading of human existence but in others he simply annuls his

ecclesiastical heritage and this kind of ambivalence suggests that he is trying to design a concept of his own, to adapt and reinterpret some of his religious values. Due to this inability to classify it as devotional, the author's religious approach has a more general role without necessarily giving a definite sense of the sanctity of life or an overwhelming realization of the magnitude of death in our lives.

Being impacted by John Donne's words in the last sermon as Dean of St Paul's Cathedral, *Deaths Duell* (1631) "Wee have a winding sheete in our Mothers wombe, which growes with us from our conception, and wee come into the world, wound up in that *winding sheet*, for wee come to *seeke a grave*" Dylan Thomas came to the conclusion that destruction was a form of journey and he structured it into his poetry in two stages: decay and death. His obsessive preoccupation with the theme of death was probably caused by the overwhelming presence of the decaying process in all forms of life and when he finally realized the universality of it, he started to accept its inevitability.

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Charles Dickens's *Little Dorrit* - the Writer's Egress into Confessionalism

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Abstract: Our essay identifies the autobiographical elements within Dickens's novel *Little Dorrit*, seen as the writer's response to his age marked by the Industrial Revolution, the process of urbanization, and the technological development, and as one example of his concern with social issues such as poverty and marginality. A closer reading of *Little Dorrit* reveals a wealth of personal details, giving the novel a pronounced dimension of confessionalism: his early childhood and the first encounters with the labyrinth of Victorian society, the first-hand reports from the debtors' prison, or the institution of the Circumlocution Office.

Keywords: *autobiography, confession, Dickens*.

1. Introduction: The Writer's Universe

The roots of a functional approach to political literature go as far as the Victorian era, a golden age for the arts and therefore for literature that gains in creativity. The Industrial Revolution and the development of cities explain the recurrent references to the dangers of the city (related to poverty and living conditions in urban areas). The recourse to the manor and the development of the English countryside in the descriptions echo the fears of seeing rural England disappear under industrial pressure. Gradually the voice of those who reformulate the great ethical questions posed by technical progress is heard. Many novels also reflect the growing interest in psychology, the human mind and its enigmas.

In her study devoted to what she calls "the social-problem novel," Josephine M. Guy asserts that, basically, the Victorian novels are concerned with the relationship between the individual and society, because

> the main way in which society is made known to the reader is through the interaction of character with a social milieu. The plots of many novels work by placing a character in conflict with a social environment, and a theme of much early Victorian fiction is the process of education whereby transgressive individuals are made aware of the wrongness of their deeds or attitudes and are integrated back into society through a companion

> recognition of the rightness or appropriateness of its values. (Guy, 1996: 68)

The Victorian age was marked by complexity and variety, featuring significant developments both in the social and religious spheres of life: the rise of Darwinism and socialism, of the doctrine of Utilitarianism and Agnosticism, or the advent of Freudian psychiatry went hand in hand with the emergence of the Oxford Movement, the Evangelical Movement, and the spread of the Broad Church. And all these movements had their ideologists and theoreticians, among them philosopher Thomas Carlyle and art critic John Ruskin, naturalist Charles Darwin and biologist Thomas Henry Huxley, Scottish poet and minister George MacDonald, or famous writers like George Eliot, William Thackeray or Charles Dickens.

The historical period in which Dickens lived – between the first and second half of the 19th century – was marked by some facts relevant to the artistic foundation and pragmatic scope of his work, such as the Industrial Revolution (directly focusing on social ideology), the urbanization process (reflecting on the configuration of social classes) and technological development (represented by the concept of social progress). An ardent critic of social injustices, concerned with issues such as poverty and marginality in his day, Dickens struggled with these issues, but even believed that transformative measures should take place within them. Moreover, using clear and objective language, it can be said that the importance of his literature lies not in isolation in the textual grandeur or relevance of social analysis, but in the conjunction of form and content for the sake of literary expression.

The 19th century radically changed the modus vivendi of the Western world, especially in the great urban centers of Europe, a trend that later spread to several other regions, triggering an effective transformation of society in general. The industrial age, leveraged by the capitalist economy and the positivist mentality unleashed unprecedented technological development, resulting not only in new sociability, but also in other ways of interpreting reality and its multiple meanings.

The idea of a common culture has been replaced, and the concerns of literature and political theory came together in the narrative, which has long been central to literary imagination and it constitutes a key concept of literary analysis. By contrast, in moral political theory the concept has rarely figured prominently. In the work of MacIntyre and Charles Taylor, however, the idea of the narrative emerges as an important component of an adequate understanding of self and of its relationship to political morality.

The most inevitable consequence of this self-conception of literature is that many writers have to adopt or assimilate all the controversial issues within the literary works. Human solidarity would be seen not as the fact to be recognized by clearing away prejudice or burrowing down to previously hidden depths but, as a goal to be achieved, the philosophers "see the old struggles between science and form of struggles between science and religion, reason and unreason, furthermore, reason and all those forces within culture" (Rorty, 1986: 3). Human solidarity is to be achieved not by injury but by imagination, we can feel others' suffering in the works of sensitive writers. The actual role of novels, poems, plays, paintings and building in the social movement of the last century and a half has given it still greater plausibility, now these two tendencies have joined forces and have achieved cultural hegemony: for most contemporary intellectuals, questions of ends as opposed to means imply how to give a sense to one's own life or community.

2. Charles Dickens: The "Generously Angry" Novelist

On June 9, 1870, Charles Dickens passed away at the age of fifty-eight. That day, while the Queen mourned in Windsor the great loss to the nation, someone heard of a little girl selling fruit on Drury Lane: "Did Dickens die? So you mean Santa will die too?" The juxtaposition of the Queen's and the poor girl's statements – discounting already the pinch of Dickensian-flavored dramas – serves to give an idea of the immense popularity of the author who had acquired an almost mythological dimension in English life. Most likely the little fruit seller was familiar with Dickens's adaptations and Christmas stories that incessantly flooded the theaters, circulating her name as a currency of amusement – in a stream from popular theaters to cafes and tobacconists, going through the homes of the middle classes and even reaching the reading offices of the rich. In the obituary published by the *Daily News*, Dickens was described as the only writer everyone read and liked.

Just two years after his death, the *Daily Telegraph* recalled that Dickens' stories became the subject of the moment they were released, more akin to politics and the news in general – as if they belonged not so much to the universe of literature but to facts and events. Undoubtedly a commodity that began to discuss commodity-based society itself, which was made available to readers and listeners eager for information on a monthly basis, which took the pulse of the spirit of time and was shaped by that same spirit: this was a very salable commodity. It should be stressed that some prophylactic measures made the success of these stories an even clearer

shot. Although he irritated some of the most conservative readers by insisting on attacks on the legal and parliamentary system and against aristocratic privileges, Dickens never supported unpopular causes shared by more radical contemporaries, such as the Chartist movement, or the Crimean War opponents, or even those critics offirm British action to contain the uprisings in the Empire's colonies – finally, our author has tried to avoid as much as explicitly controversial issues tarnished his public image.

He also made sure that the clear norms of decorum were strictly followed, purging from his work suggestively sexual content, filtering out any foul vocabulary, purifying sentences and periods so that everything went according to the good manners. In the preface to *The Pickwick Papers* (1837) he wrote: "[the author] trusts that throughout this book there will be no incident or expression that might blush the most delicate face or hurt the feelings of the most sensitive of people" (Dickens, 1937: xv). In addition, it sought to please various tastes, giving a narrative orientation that privileged a wide range of events, with a wide gallery of characters and numerous episodes of humor and suspense vividly scattered throughout richly described environments and scenarios.

There are about 130 films based on Dickensian narratives and only *Dracula* and *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* outperform *Oliver Twist* and *A Christmas Carol* in the race for the most adapted fiction work yet. But this enduring favor with the public also conceals another fact: despite having, from the earliest days, a select group of admirers among literary scholars, until the mid-twentieth century there was a firm reluctance in the English-speaking academia to accept Dickens in the pantheon of great authors – despite his popularity and, according to some commentators, perhaps precisely because of his immense popularity. In any case, in the last fifty years the elucidative effort has appropriated the Dickensian work, reinforcing previous great tendencies of critical fortune and misery, sometimes seeing a material capable or not for canonization, sometimes primarily as the well-finished product of a petty-bourgeois, hegemonic and patriarchal ideology, and finally, more rarely, as a work rich in contradictions and fissures, that is, as the testimony of the clashes of literary form in the battle between revealing and hiding, considered in the friction of its invoice with history. According to Jameson,

> in a novelist like Dickens we find a static, lifeless opposition between amusing eccentrics on the one hand, and a sentimentalized middle-class universe on the other (sentimentalized precisely because the novelist has taken it at face value, has smuggled into his work a preconception as to the

> nature of that external reality which it was the business of the novel to explore without any preconceptions. (Jameson, 1971: 175)

In this sense there is a concern with false consciousness, with dehumanizing rationalizations and hypocritical deformations. If many of the ideas circulating in his day were well-rounded records of such rationalizations and deformations, in the form of the Dickensian work, however, an analytical treatment of these theories and conceptions does not appear: they are treated as a matter for artistic elaboration, interpretative effort and analytic decomposition. Dickens had to deal with the tension between orthodox ideas, which sought to ratify a particular state of affairs, and a reality of injustice and inequality that increasingly challenged the social order justified by this set of ideas. In this way a certain radicalism emerges in the making of the Dickensian work which has at its core a vision of what is good and benevolent, of the ultimately benign character of a meaningful life.

The nascent industrial capitalism fostered the proper atmosphere so that the very foundations that structured its condition of existence as a system were challenged and affirmed, questioned and legitimized. In Dickens's relations with utilitarianism there are some of the indices of this particular historical configuration. The main precept of utilitarianism was to subject all institutions to the tests of rational utility in order to enable happiness for most individuals. It was in this spirit that the movement encouraged campaigns for political, social and judicial reform that, we must recognize, generally resulted in improvements in English society in the period.

Another precept referred to the possibility of an objective ethics, in which the judgment of right and wrong actions would be dependent on calculations concerning the amount of pleasure or pain that such actions would produce. Rather than a tendency, the principles and procedures of utilitarianism markedly influenced radical thinking, in a sense not only different but in many ways similar to the influence exerted by Dickens himself, since, as Williams reminds us, "would have accepted happiness or pleasure as absolute criteria, in the countercurrent of most philosophical and religious systems of the time" (Williams 1973: 339). This is one of the ways to highlight the points of contact between him and the utilitarian reformers. Like these, Dickens vehemently rejected any conservative idealization with reference to the past, shared a belief in the need for reform of the legal system, and despised the aristocracy and its social pretensions.

Dickens's relative indifference to the 1832 and 1867 Reform Acts underlines his view that both were not sufficient to modify the class-based

power structure in Victorian society. If many point to a political short-sightedness of the writer in this case, it is worth noting that the second Act, while doubling the number of voters, included only the city workers, leaving out the miners and agricultural workers who lived in small villages, as did the entire female contingent. The Victorian reforms thus had too slow a pace and shyness that did not fit the Dickensian diagnosis. Largely guided by the *laissez-faire* principle, the prevailing social order created a reality in which the best-off in life had access to goods and services garnered by economic liberalism, while the dispossessed were left with the benevolence of landlords. in enlightened charity for some or Christian for others. Direct government action in the educational process, possibly Dickens' most vehement claim, was precariously exercised until the Education Act of 1870, which in turn failed as an instrument for compulsory teaching. The uneven and irregular development of the legal system since medieval times was decisively carried out only with the Judicature Act of 1873, thus three years after the death of the novelist. And finally, the most urgent public health and sanitation problems were remedied only with the 1875 Public Health Act, although earlier attempts had been made.

The presence of a revolutionary perspective leaves suggestive marks on the form of the novel, which does not mean to say – at least not directly – that Dickens was writing the aesthetic negative of the *Communist Manifesto*. As diverse but by no means alien works, they are epochal symptoms, and in the novel the solution lies in the revolution of the human spirit: the system, institutions, and social structures must be rescued and redeemed by a transformation wrought by love and innocence.

Thus, the diagnosis that social changes are necessary often arises in a language of popular religiosity associated with child innocence. However, this does not constitute an easy appeal by Dickens to salvation or redemption somewhere else, less vile and unclean, where justice would finally find its raison d'être. We already know that the more men offer to the gods, the more they take from themselves: for Dickens, what seems to be at stake is human intervention with the intention of modification, all guided by a spirit of innocence and purity. There is, of course, a penchant for idealistic escapism, but the deep thrust is lucid and transformative. Present in the invoice are the elements of a world dominated by human action, the interferences and reciprocal alterations of man and his environment and, finally, the disintegrating consequences of this process, in which the exploration of each other no longer enables recognition of common origin. Style thus represents not only the nuisance of a real situation, but also the recognition of that situation and, therefore, of a necessary transformation. On the other hand, if change in hearts precedes system change, both the

revolution and the mitigating reforms seem to be rejected. To quote Feltes (1987), we are, of course, in the realm of the "heroic phase of liberalism," where the improvement of general conditions presupposes the "innocent" and "human criteria" guided world of interests. As we can see, such conciliation has not been legitimized by history, which has caused the Dickensian work problems and challenges whose formal marks incite aesthetic disappointment in some, but generate critical curiosity in those who believe in the relevance of literature.

According to Williams, "What Dickens saw as redemption through love and innocence Marx saw as revolution, and the difference is crucial. But still, [for both] total change is seen as the necessary response to a total condition" (Williams, 1970: 50). However, both advocated the need for structural changes in society, thus criticizing limited actions, apparently advanced but regressive in essence. Dickens' firm conviction in the qualities of innocence and love as essential redeeming impulses has been dismissed as mere sentimentality.

3. Confessional Dickens – The Prison as Confessional

Barry Westburg, in his volume *The Confessional Fictions of Charles Dickens* (1977), does not mention *Little Dorrit* as one of the three comprising Dickens's confessional trilogy. However, the novel was published seven years after *David Copperfield* (1850) and four years before *Great Expectations* (1861) – novels which, together with *Oliver Twist* (1838), are "radical probes into growth, time, and life-structure and deserve study together as keystones of Dickens's creativity" (Westburg, 1977: xiv). What we are interested in is the presence in the novel of autobiographical elements – those fragments of the great confession that Goethe was writing about – which contribute to the overall structure of Dickens's fiction.

In Volume One, Chapter Two of *The Life of Charles Dickens*, John Foster refers to the "Autobiographical Fragment" which Dickens himself had given him:

> I was so young and childish, and so little qualified – how could I be otherwise? – to undertake the whole charge of my own existence, that, in going to Hungerford Stairs of a morning, I could not resist the stale pastry put out at half-price on trays at the confectioners' doors in Tottenham Court Road; and I often spent in that the money I should have kept for my dinner. Then I went without my dinner, or bought a roll, or a slice of pudding. (Forster, 1872: 36)

Forster included the 20 pages of Dickens's manuscript in his biography. It is the material evidence of the writer's confessional mood which permeates all his writings. Without being overtly autobiographical, a novel like *Little Dorrit* – in which the specter of the prison looms large, motivating many of the characters' actions – may be understood as the writer's egress into confession from the overwhelming realities of Victorian politics.

Even if *Little Dorrit* is not a declared autobiographical (or confessional) novel, one cannot deny that it impresses the reader with the complexity of the plot, the multitude of characters and the quasi-fictional locations created by the author to shed light on major and minor aspects of human life. The society that Dickens created for his novel is one of the oppressed, overwhelmed by the symbolic reality of the prison – the Marshalsea debtors' prison in London, where Dickens's own father, the employee of the British Royal Navy, John Dickens, was imprisoned with his family in this same jail, in 1822. Only little Charles was freed, but in exchange for jobs slavers in a nearby factory. Marshalsea Prison was demolished in 1842, after Dickens published the posthumous papers of the Pickwick club, the first of the novels where he describes it. The bad reputation of the prison was based on its status as a favorite place of blackmail. Nestled in a private neighbourhood, some of the luckiest debtors could set up businesses and even restaurants, while the vast majority lived in small rooms that supported up to twelve inmates. So, those who were fortunate to have a merciful creditor and little given to charge excessive interest, harbored some hope of getting out of prison.

The prison and the condition of being imprisoned, physically and spiritually, are essential for a proper understanding of the novel, which opens with a scene in Marseilles, France:

> A prison taint was on everything there. The imprisoned air, the imprisoned light, the imprisoned damps, the imprisoned men, were all deteriorated by confinement. As the captive men were faded and haggard, so the iron was rusty, the stone was slimy, the wood was rotten, the air was faint, the light was dim. Like a well, like a vault, like a tomb, the prison had the knowledge of the brightness outside; and would have kept its polluted atmosphere intact, in one of the spice islands of the Indian Ocean. (Dickens, 1857: 2)

Everything is imprisoned, not only the prisoners, but also the *faint* air and the *dim* light in the tomb-like confinement. What the novel suggests is that "the 'free' world is also dominated by the prison. Those who are not

literally imprisoned cannot escape the prison because they devote their energies to wrong purposes" (Alber, 2007: 63). Then, just like Marseilles, London is a prison, "Dark and miserable as ever. A light in my mother's window, which seems never to have been extinguished since I came home twice a year from school, and dragged my box over this pavement. Well, well, well!" (Dickens, 1857: 23)

Unlike the most popular novels written by Dickens, the protagonist is now a woman, a girl who, in contrast to characters like the most rogue and imperfect Oliver Twist, is a model in good faith. Born, raised and educated in prison, Amy Dorrit sometimes manages to go out into the city and, in one of those escapades, falls madly in love with Arthur Clennam, a nobleman. However, it seems that Arthur's newly deceased father had to do with Mr. Dorrit's economic collapse. In parallel, as is often the case with great nineteenth-century novels, many other stories are tied, mixing unrequited love affairs, criminals and the description of London in the first half of the 19th century.

Throughout the novel we detect a sense of social and political confinement: to live in the ruined the gloomy place was a big challenge, especially for a young girl born in the debtors' prison, Dickens intellectually adopted Amy Dorrit as a heroine to erase the prison's effects.

The title page of the 1857 edition of *Little Dorrit* shows the protagonist leaving the Marshalsea prison, "the prison, which could spoil so many things, [and] had tainted Little Dorrit's mind no more than this" (Dickens, 1857: 314). The prison, acts almost as another character in the novel:

> It was an oblong pile of barrack building, partitioned into squalid houses standing back to back, so that there were no back rooms; environed by a narrow paved yard, hemmed in by high walls duly spiked at top. Itself a close and confined prison for debtors, it contained within it a much closer and more confined jail for smugglers. Offenders … were supposed to be incarcerated behind an iron-plated door closing up a second prison, consisting of a strong cell or two, and a blind alley some yard and a half wide, which formed the mysterious termination of the very limited skittle-ground in which Marshalsea debtors bowled down to their troubles. (Dickens, 1857: 41)

The central motif of the prison triggered and justified many of the characters in every action: for example, when Fanny Dorrit decided to marry Mr. Sparkler it was because of the bitterness of life in the Marshalsea only to free herself from poverty.

The theme of the prison and the symbolic force of the representation of the Marshalsea are omnipresent and pervade the whole novel. The prison is both as a reality and metaphor because the members of the Dorrit family (especially old William and little Dorrit) will never, even in the second part of the novel feel truly free. The prison is both an autobiographical reminiscence of a traumatic event in Dickens's life, and a profound symbol of the condition of human existence. The universe – seen as a concentration camp universe – seems to be the grim meta-message of Dickens, makes *Little Dorrit* the blackest, the most bitter and the most inclement of Dickens's novels.

Dickens's universe in this novel is not only concentrationary but also labyrinthine and illegible. Because equally powerful of the prison metaphor is the metaphor of the labyrinth, which is expressed with the very complicated plot, with the innumerable characters, with the continuous and in some ways very modern branching and proliferating of secondary stories, the game of thematic references but above all – and it is which makes this book truly extraordinary – through language. With *Little Dorrit* we find ourselves immersed in a language of the absurd and nonsense, in the verbal bizarre and in the grotesque fable, splendidly represented by the rambling (and labyrinthine) way of speaking of Flora Finching, of her aunt and Maggie the demented.

The *prison* is understood metaphorically as a state of mind that oppresses all human beings, rich and poor, indiscriminately, as a feeling of *suffocating enclosure* sharpened by the context in which the various events take place. Moreover, all the places represented in the text take up, with some variation, the characteristics of the material, physical prison. The city of London itself becomes a prison, evoked through the adjectives *gloomy*, *close* and *stale*. The author also uses semantic contaminations played on the *pathetic fallacy*: the *melancholy streets*, in which the mood of melancholy it is projected in the streets of the city, personified, in turn, in a *penitential garb of soot*, and the expression *some doleful bells*, where *sad*, *afflicted* recall an atmosphere of sadness. Finally, the repetition of the noun *streets* in the passage "Nothing to see but streets, streets, streets. Nothing to breathe but streets, streets, streets," (Dickens, 1857: 21) emphasizes the idea that any escape from this condition of oppression is impossible. According to James M. Brown,

> The prison imagery permeates every social world in the novel. It cannot be escaped from. Prison imagery constantly attends the Dorrits on their travels through Europe, culminating in a developed analogy between life in the Marshalsea and the genteel society of the Anglo-Italians… The novel is to

> explore the possibilities of living in a social environment seen as generally imprisoning and yet, as an individual, escaping its taint and achieving authentic and fulfilling social relationships. (Brown, 1982: 86)

The allegorical significance that characterizes the descriptions of London in the third chapter, in which Arthur Clennam walks the streets of the city, is the first indication of a key to the reading of the text: the prison of Marseilles and that of Marshalsea are the symbol of a condition psychological of man, projected into the surrounding space, and for which any means of escape, or at least material ones like money, is only illusory. This is demonstrated by the fact that William Dorrit fails to integrate completely into high society, even after he became rich and left London, as he was still haunted by his own past. The trip to Italy and the inherited money allow him to leave the physical prison of the Marshalsea, but frustrate the attempt to escape from his psychological condition. In the nineteenth chapter of the second book he is invited by the Merdles to a reception, has a failure that leads him to pronounce a speech, apparently devoid of rationality, but actually significant, as it dramatically highlights the impossibility of escaping from the aforementioned psychological condition of paralysis:

> Ladies and gentlemen, the duty – ha – devolves upon me of – hum – welcoming you to the Marshalsea. Welcome to the Marshalsea! The space is – ha – limited – limited – the parade might be wider; but you will find it apparently grow larger after a time – a time, ladies and gentlemen – and the air is, all things considered, very good. (Dickens, 1857: 489)

With his numerous hesitations and repetitions, an omen of an imminent collapse of the prisoner who died a few moments later in his Italian residence, this speech dramatically expresses the idea that the prison has never actually abandoned William Dorrit, acquiring a deeper value in the second book. Significantly, right towards the end of the latter, there is also the irreversible collapse of the Merdles, who represented from the beginning the model to which many members of London society aspired, the center of an elite, admired and respected by all. This end confirms the idea that no individual is immune to suffering, not even the rich and powerful, whose privileged condition would be based on ephemeral values.

The novel is characterized as a whole by its static nature, due to the lack of a real action capable of making changes. In this way the author reaffirms the concept of a society made up of people who have no will of their own, and who are unable to pursue their goals but strive to participate in a comedy, struggling to find a place in the reality in which they live and

playing a role that prevents them from achieving happiness. William Dorrit is undoubtedly the most obvious example: even after leaving the Marshalsea, he is conditioned by the judgment of a society that would have blamed and marginalized him for his past, and he commits himself until the end to re-establish his own image instead of appreciating freedom and economic well-being, shared with the family. Brown considers that,

> … the concept of the prison informs the experience of most of the individuals within the novel – another example of method of characterisation being tied up with a controlling and critical way of seeing society. The richness of this theme in the novel is one of the undisputed artistic benefits of the prison emblem. (Brown, 1982: 88)

4. Conclusion: Confessionalism and the Awareness of Expectation

All genres of creation by word maintain a relationship with life, all start from their need. But if among all the literary genres the confession is the one that in an energetic way knots life and writing, it is by the almost methodical redoubling to which that third element that is living submits. The novel may sound like a transformed life, but flee from reality to better capture it, abandon time to establish an imaginary time in which the meaning will finally reveal itself. Philosophy may not seek but another kind of life, still it is giving up time and reality, it is subjecting it to its ideality. This was already the complaint that Kierkegaard directed to the philosophy of his time, to create men capable of constructing beautiful conceptual structures but destined to direct their lives under comfortable categories, thoughts that did not disturb the life of their thinkers because they were unable to produce a transformation.

Confessional literature is generally controversial and usefully adapted to all the genres, and may be understood as a fundamental tool to examine the social, political and cultural issues, which is essential for literature. A simplified approach to the autobiographical genre reveals that the three radicals that make up the word *autobiography* – in Greek: αὐτός-*autos* (self) + βίος-*bios* (life) + γράφειν-*graphein* (to write) – define the term as "the writing of one's own life." Uncommon in Antiquity, the genre really hatched with Western humanism and the rehabilitation of the individual – *Je suis moi-même la matière de mon livre* ("I am myself the subject of my book"), says Montaigne at the beginning of his *Essays*, which constitute the most more authentically autobiographical ... and the most unclassifiable). The expressive function is obviously dominant (I, me): but

if the reflections, the feelings concern personal experience, the autobiographer does not cease taking witness to his reader to whom he gives the status of witness, judge or confidant, and obeys a universal aim which makes him man among men. The pact of sincerity which is the basis of the autobiographical enterprise does not exclude a certain manipulation, conscious or not. The author "transforms his experience into destiny" (Malraux), provides arguments to make him feel guilty (Rousseau) or gives in to the simple pleasure of telling. Refusing more or less "literature," he finally gives the most striking examples (Sartre).

Throughout his life, Dickens benefited from the experience gained as a young reporter, and he crisscrossed the streets, a habit that continued throughout his life. His stories keep transporting the reader all over London, with his arrows of spires streaking across the horizon, the dome of St. Paul's erecting its mass; the sounds of the city echo in counterpoint, the creaking of trains, the whistles of railway stations, the cries of newspaper vendors or peddlers, sometimes in onomatopoeic rendering. Like the powerful Thames which irrigates it, London is traversed by a permanent movement, by the flow of the crowd but also mutations making it, for its inhabitants, the characters, the narrator and the reader, difficult to apprehend, becoming sometimes a market, labyrinth, prison, sometimes agent of regeneration.

All of Dickens's novels could be collected under the generic title of "Great Expectations," because they are all full of the characters' and the writer's ardent hopes and anticipations. In them you can expect anything from the first person you meet, the first smoking pipe, the first incident, the first feeling – in a word, from everything that can satisfy your dream. Indeed, all of Dickens's novels are full of "great expectations," and only one has hoped for collapse. Then the bright, conscious generation that Dickens belonged to began to lose hope. All the strength and the glory of the "middle class" of his time is that this class did not see them; all perfection lies in the fact that it was a culture of the nation, but did not understand it. Had Dickens known he was optimistic, he would have lost his joy. In *Great Expectations* Dickens tried to become a calm, detached, even cynical observer. He tried to become a Thackeray and won an unexpected victory by investing in this modest modern tale a not at all modest and not modern force. He was trying to be reasonable and, against his will, he wrote exaltedly. He was trying to be exact and, against his will, he wrote with a giant brush because Dickens perfectly understood the present. And like everyone who has this understanding developed especially sharply, he did not see the future very clearly.

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Arab-American Autobiography – Edward Said's *Out of Place*

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Abstract: This is a less-known portrait of the author of *Orientalism* as an Arab American writer of the *exile*, taking into account the ambiguous, even multidisciplinary nature of the term: an external exile of the writers and their characters, following similar paths; an inner exile, manifested by the writing through its space of creation which is, among others, the language, the mythical place of a quest for identity, which crystallizes all the linguistic tensions with the origin in the learning of the colonizer's language (English, in our case) by the colonized; or, it could simply mean exile as deterritorialization.

Keywords: *autobiography, displacement. exile, identity, Out of Place*.

1. Introduction: A Postcolonial View of Exile

Today, the notion of exile seems overused by the many articles devoted to it, starting with those coming from its original discipline, political sociology, then other related disciplines, ethnography and anthropology, until its recovery by literature. But what kind of exile is it? It could be the external exile of writers and their own characters following paths similar to those of their creators. It could also be the inner exile, manifested by the writing through its space of creation which is, among others, the language, the mythical place of a quest for identity, which crystallizes all the linguistic tensions with the origin of the learning of English, or French by the ex-colonized. Finally, it could be the exile as a word, "delocalized" in a place other than that traditionally reserved for its space of enunciation.

The colonial and postcolonial problematic has historicized, but also somewhat trivialized, this literary trope, by associating it with concepts such as identity or emigration often linked to each other. And, produced in part by this colonial history, the concept of Englishness (or, Francophony, as the case may be) has added to this field its new ambiguity. By exporting the English or French language as literary models that accompany it in spaces that did not see them create and develop the Englishness (or Francophony) puts them in a situation of exile, it makes "displaced words" out of their space coherence, but at the same time it allows them to enrich themselves with the very surprises of their displacement.

The Arab countries have always been a meeting point between the East and the West. Edward Said and his school of followers have found ample reasons to insist upon the two-fold nature of the vicious circle that the East and the West are set in. They are right to distinguish between civilization and backwardness, humanity and barbarism, religiosity and heathenism, and the list may well continue. "European superiority over Oriental backwardness" (Said, 1979: 35) was a commonplace statement in history and culture, supported by the self-called "advanced" Europeans who held the opinion that the countries in the East had no independent history or culture of their own. It is the reason why the only chance of survival for the so-called "uncivilized" territories was to be ruled and be under the hegemony of the Western powers who took up the challenge of bringing civilization to those backward lands of the Orient. Said's explanation is revealing:

> Orientalism is […] a collective notion identifying 'us' Europeans as against all 'those' non-Europeans, and indeed it can be argued that the major component in European culture is precisely what made that culture hegemonic both in and outside Europe: the idea of European identity as a superior one in comparison with all the non-European peoples and cultures. There is in addition the hegemony of European ideas about the Orient, themselves reiterating European superiority over Oriental backwardness. (Said, 1979: 7)

Postcolonial studies, largely made by critics from the former colonies and the Commonwealth, tirelessly develop the literary representations of "displacement," migration, exile, wandering, "deterritorialization," in writers themselves generally from the Third World. Edward Said – probably even more than Gayatri Spivak or Homi Bhabha – is himself an uprooted, divided between East and West, to pick up the categories he is subject to criticism. As a Palestinian, he is even more "out of place," according to the title of his autobiographical childhood narrative.

A life-long supporter of the Palestinian cause, Edward Said in his autobiographical account *Out of Place* (1999) – provides an entirely different picture of the exile's relation with his native land: "My early memories of Palestine itself are casual and, considering my profound later immersion in Palestinian affairs, curiously unremarkable. It was a place I took for granted, the country I was from, where family and friends existed (it seems so retrospectively) with unreflecting ease" (Said, 1999: 20-21). Exile is inherent in an original lack, a fundamental distress. The immigrants crystallize in their being complex mixtures: combination of inner divisions

and duplication of personality, juxtaposition of alienating situations, succession of miseries and small pleasures. Their narrative journeys incorporate individual projects and actions marked by instability and uncertainty, and affect their speeches with signs of doubt, hesitation or confusion. Personal questioning, just like the modes of interpretation of the world, proceed from a modalized writing which manifests and gives meaning to an interior exile.

Exile is both a historical and a metaphorical condition. Provoked by history, born of a brutal dislocation, the wrenching of land and forced emigration, exile is also the "spirit of winter," insurmountable sadness, chasm or abyss, incurable wound or "mutilated life" to use the words of Theodor Adorno (2005). In the case of Edward Said, the experience of uprooting and dislodgement, of the loss of a land and of the past, of a suffering which he says is impossible to trivialize haunts his work and his thought. Exile is never a "surgical cut" but a relational condition par excellence. It articulates the dialectical tension between proximity and distance, inside and out, withdrawal and commitment, memory and forgetting, skepticism and humanism, recognition and strangeness, the earth left, the land of adoption and the dream land, the detour of history and the return operated or called by writing, the loss of place and reconciliation indefinitely deferred with it.

Exile is also metaphorical because it is the very condition of creativity and of the intellectual, always critical and dissident for Said. From the point of view of constraint, this quasi-ontological externality, in any case matrixed in the biography of Said (who was exiled from Jerusalem with his family in 1947) and in his work, can be transformed into an instrument of resistance, a gesture of emancipation and transgression – as finally a liberating alternative. Since the discourse, for Said, is always located, the text related to the world, and knowledge to experience, his work is entirely dependent on exile, shaped and produced by his identity as "oriental subject" and by this experience of dislocation. He does not hesitate to declare, "This book is an exile's book" in his prefaces to *Culture and Imperialism* (1993) and *After the Last Sky: Palestinian Lives* (1986).

Said's speech, whether or not to be a "refugee" or "exile" in the Palestinian diaspora, appears in an interview with Ari Shaviz, an Israeli journalist, titled *Mon droit au retour, Entretien avec Ari Shaviz* ("My right to return, Interview with Ari Shaviz"), published in 2000. Some passages of the interview are interesting from different perspectives: above all that of life in exile and the impossibility of returning. When Said could have seen a "return" to the lands of his origins, he must, on the other hand, note that he

positively elaborated his "no return" in a poetics of non-belonging, of non-possession of a place.

There is therefore a fertility of exile and Said even goes as far as to speak of pleasure. The exile has the audacity of the one who refuses the assigned places and all the "prefabricated" or the conditioning of the thought, the identity and the language; he who frees himself from exclusive roots, be it belonging to a nation, a community, a place, a memory, a story or a field of knowledge. It is because the exile, on the threshold of several appurtenances, belongs exclusively to none and cultivates a "scrupulous subjectivity". This takes both the form of a mistrust of authoritarian speeches, but also a self-critical questioning, a permanent return on its own discourses and practices. One thinks, moreover, of the "internal emigration" and the "suspensive attitude", which Adorno advocated in *Minima Moralia*. This state of in-quietness and distancing allows to question and move its own roots and those of others. The subjective criticism passes before any community solidarity. The intellectual or the exile is destined for instability. Metaphysically speaking, exile is for the intellectual a state of anxiety, a movement, where, constantly destabilized, he destabilizes others, without ever establishing himself in a truth, taking refuge in a "home."

2. Edward Said: A Migrant's Portrait

One of his last (and most beautiful) collections of essays, which is titled *Reflections on Exile*, opens with the evocation of his arrival in New York, par excellence the city of immigrants. Born in Palestine under the British mandate, raised in Beirut and especially in Cairo in a Protestant Christian Palestinian family, trained in the best American universities in comparative literature and philology, which his first works brilliantly illustrated in the sixties, especially his dissertation on Joseph Conrad, Edward W. Said was promised a brilliant future as a critic and literary essayist, in the heart of the American university, to which he was perfectly integrated, in accordance with the mimetic desire commented by the authors of *The Empire Writes Back*. But the 1967 Israeli-Arab war, which places him in the delicate position of a Palestinian American, forces him to rethink his position not only as a professor but as a citizen, and to commit for a time alongside Yasser Arafat, before criticizing him openly. It is in this context that one must place his first essays on the Arab world and on Palestine, which extend his literary works to politics. Said, besides many interviews – and especially those of *Culture and Resistance*, in 2004 – devoted nine books to the Arab world and the Palestinian question, as of *The Arabs Today, Alternatives for Tomorrow*, in 1972. And it is precisely like the first

part of a trilogy also including *The Question of Palestine* (1979), *Covering Islam: how do the media and the experts determine how we see the rest of the world?* (1981) that we should read *Orientalism*, published in 1978.

The historical frame of reference of Said's main work on exile, *Out of Place*, must also take into account the development of his critical bibliography. Yet, we find that the text published in 1999, four years before his death (in 2003), appeared only six years after *Culture and Imperialism*, and ten years after *The World of the Text and the Critic*, where Said forges his own idea of literary criticism in close relation to the re-reading of relations between East and West. On the other hand, *Orientalism* goes back to 1978, and it is the first work that made it famous, even if it is not his first intellectual attempt engaged: still before, there is *Beginnings: Intention and Method* (1975), a fundamental attempt to understand the method of his critique of culture. Said examines not only literary texts of the nineteenth and twentieth century, but, for example, in the reconstruction of the image of the East by the European West, he uses other discourses of culture, that they are musical documents, painting or cinema, which is also of great importance in his autobiography.

For all these reasons, *Out of Place* is a more self-reflexive moment, and by necessity, a "conclusive" one since it is also an opportunity to take stock of one's intellectual life. In 1999, after being diagnosed with leukemia in 1994, Said managed to take advantage of the disease ("What have become of me, what has happened to me?") to recover the period from 1935 to 1951, that is to say, the moment of "exile" or "exodus" of Palestine, then of Egypt, terms he prefers to "diaspora" and "refugee" when he speaks of himself in his relations with the Palestinian community. Said's situation within the co-presence of the Arab-Palestinian and Israeli peoples in Jerusalem represents a third identity, since he is of evangelical Christian family, a factor that will make him feel his own strangeness from his childhood, with the fact to be born into a family of expatriates in Cairo. In the biography of Said, the role of the autobiography is thus a kind of point of arrival to dig rationally ("to stray once again from the affective dimension") in its past, in the effort of clarification and understanding of family roots.

3. Being "out of place": The Burden of a Bicultural Identity

Out of Place, the original title of Said's autobiography (which he first thought of calling *Not Quite Right*) well describes this dislocation, this position of externality, inadequacy and impropriety. The whole of his work is inspired by minority and exilic figures, literally eccentric and nomadic,

marginal and maladjusted, out of step and out of season: Giambattista Vico, Jonathan Swift, Joseph Conrad, Edward Kipling, T.E. Lawrence, Erich Auerbach, Thomas Adorno, Glenn Gould, Emil Cioran, etc. The book is not only the story of a strange, marginal man. It is also more than that. It is the story of a collective history, not only of Edward Said's family but also of the Palestinian diaspora. A diaspora that began at the turn of the century with the First World War and the emergence of Zionism, culminated with the creation of Israel and continued in the wake of subsequent events that disrupted and transformed the Middle East throughout the twentieth century.

What does Said mean to be "out of place"? The question arises from the need to clarify the meaning of the title of this autobiography, as explicitly asked by the journalist. Being "outside," or "always in the wrong place," which forces even more the negative connotation of the displacement, is a leitmotif of the memoir of Said which invades his story from the first pages. For example, about his birth in Jerusalem, when his family lived in Cairo, about his childhood as a stranger, compared to his peers and even his sisters, born in Egypt just like in the story of his passing from one school to another, Said always stresses his status as a stranger. Naturally, in the retrospective perspective offered by the autobiographical act, which in the end will translate into a poetic awareness of non-return, is born, on the other hand, as a negative sensation of exclusion and disintegration, which gradually takes on various forms: from the linguistic form (Arabic and English spoken by the mother who deprive it of the uniqueness of the mother tongue), to the spatial form (the absence of a homeland), becoming only at maturity a positive factor of identity. The lack of belonging to Said's private life is presented in the form of a very efficient image: the excessively loaded suitcase which, at each departure, in fact masks the fear of not being able to return. The American Said, who began in 1951 as a student in high school and then university in the new country, is once again experiencing the annoyance of not feeling really American or Palestinian. He is experimenting with a new identity break, which is obviously another step in the long journey of building a composite identity.

This progressive construction of identity, readable in the light of autobiography, is stated very meaningfully by Said in the terms of an "invention," referring to the Latin *inventio*, that is to say "rediscovery." In the classical rhetoric, *inventio* was used to designate the act of discovery of past experiences which were then reorganized giving them a new and eloquent character. It is not a discovery out of nothing, but a "rearrangement," which corresponds to the act of telling its origins, and opens the autobiography of Said. This is what they say: parents invent or discover their own children, by telling their origins. In the interview, Said

admits precisely: "in this sense, I ventured myself," he mentions that in the autobiography he finds the equivalent where he says he wanted to shed light on the darkness of his childhood and youth, before the American period, reordering fragments of personal memories and what his parents had told him.

The very creation of autobiography is an act of reinventing one's identity. Then, the reference to Vico reinforces this act of confidence in his own poietic ability: it was through him that he had learned the idea that peoples make their own history, as he states in the interview. With Gramsci and Auerbach, Vico is a pillar of the humanist formation of Said, for whom the self-determination of people is a structuring element of his idea of humanism, just as individual origins are acts of the will. The fear of death that accompanies the last decade of Said's life and intellectual production is therefore the fear of not succeeding in finding, reformulating and reinterpreting parts and aspects of his life that remained in the shade, and to which he thinks he must assign a value. But these are moments that are otherwise important for the collective story he thinks he belongs to, at least for the first part of his life. Beside the fear of not being able to reinterpret the narrative of his past, there is in Said the full awareness of the fact that this world before 1948 no longer exists, and even then, in the stories of his parents, this world was an "invented" one, in the sense we saw it a moment ago.

However, there remains Said's desire to reinterpret, to re-tell "a story of loss" in which the idea of returning home is impossible. An important acquisition of this reinterpreting journey is the certainty that every human being can reinterpret his past, and so such a process of consciousness is a possibility open to all. But the possibility of reinterpreting the past means at the same time the opportunity to render one's objectivity to a lost world, a world made of Cairo, Beirut and Talbieh before 1948.

The last question of the interview raises the problem of the dependency between becoming Said and being exiled, being homeless, not feeling uprooted. Said's answer makes sense both individually and collectively, referring both to his individual experience and to that of the Palestinian diaspora community. It challenges the significance of owning a house that has been detrimental to those who have been taken, to reaffirm one's own identity through the exclusion of the identity of others. On the collective level, in terms of the opposition between Israelis and Palestinians, Said thinks of the bi-national state solution, a social fabric so rich and composite that it cannot be identified with only one or the other party, and neither of them can take full possession of it. It is the same speech on the individual level, as regards the construction of identity, as we have already

seen. But as far as his profession of criticism of culture, and in particular literary texts, is concerned, Said proposes an idea of the text as something rich and inexhaustible, and even in itself contradictory, that no interpreter manages to fully possess, recognizing a great debt to Auerbach and his idea of text as coexistence of styles, of various discourses that the philologist unravels through a meticulous sampling process, which is never in itself its own end.

We can establish a correspondence between the staging of *Out of Place*'s staging and the discourse of *Orientalism*. There is of course a connection between Said's identity and that of the community whose destiny he describes. It is for this reason that we may say that *Out of Place* is also the story of a collective history, the history of the Palestinian people, especially the Diaspora. It is also the story of several other actors, small or large scale, who evolved on the Middle East scene during the twentieth century. Inversely, *Orientalism*, a work of scientific analysis, is very close to a personal testimony. The two works are the mirror of each other.

Exile implies a double vision ("in counterpoint") and a plurality of glances that prevent one from setting up as possessor or holder of a truth, a place, a language, a representation of the world or a totaling account. The experience of exile has fragmented and pluralized the experience, and Said relies first on the Palestinian identity to evoke the complexity and discontinuity of a story and memory that have been broken, scattered. In an interview with Gauri Viswanathan (2001), Said explains:

> There are certain figures who are most important to me, renegade figures, people like Genet, a man who in his own society was an outcast and outlaw, but who transformed this marginality into, I wouldn't say a vocation, because that is something much more deliberate than it was, a kind of passionate attachment to other peoples, other than friends, whom he lives with and then later quite consciously betrays. (Viswanathan, 2002: 148)

Edward Said's identity is both rich and complex. Although he was born to Arab parents and raised in the Middle East, many of his social habits have forged a bicultural identity: Arab and Western. While these two cultures are opposed, neither is well camped in Said. For years, he has struggled to define himself. He says he never felt completely at home in one or another of the cultures that shaped him. For this reason, he claims to have constantly felt since childhood that he was out of place. Said's troubled identity is at the heart of his person. If he was alienated for several years, he was ultimately a driving force to build an identity of his own. In *Out of Place* he writes about "this unsettled sense of many identities" which has

preoccupied all his life to such a degree that he only wished he could have been "all-Arab, or all-European and American, or all–Orthodox Christian, or all-Muslim, or all-Egyptian" (Said, 1999: 5) and thus be able to properly answer questions as: "What are you?"; "But Said is an Arab name"; "You're American?"; "You're American without an American name, and you've never been to America"; "You don't look American!"; "How come you were born in Jerusalem and you live *here*?"; "You're an Arab after all, but what kind are you? A Protestant?" (*idem* 6)

To come more directly to *Out of Place*, we see that through the selection of certain passages, it is possible to isolate themes, or better perspectives, from Said's discourse. The first concerns the relationship between collective and individual history, insofar as it allows us to confront the requirement to tell a collective story and to confront and shape one's own individual history, in his case the span of time between 1935 (the year of his birth) and 1962, when he was rewarded his PhD:

> I found myself telling the story of my life against the background of World War II, the loss of Palestine and the establishment of Israel, the end of the Egyptian monarchy, the Nasser years, the 1967 War, and the Oslo peace process. These are in my memory only allusively, even though their fugitive presence can be seen here and there. (*idem* xi)

However, the historical-political event is not the direct subject of the text: it serves as a framework or a reactive (and not neutral) basis for the personal event. This means that episodes of history taken one by one do not fulfill a simple contextualization function of the personal event, but react in relation to it and with it, in the process of formation of Said's individual identity. In the biography, we also see an interesting detail emerge: the almost total silence of his family on the history of Palestine and the collective exodus, or better: Said shows his family silent on this point, both on the exodus only on the sufferings and the consequences that it caused. What proves that history is not used by Said as a contextual material in his biography is the fact, for example, that a date like 1947-1948 does not appear in the text or in the memories of characters. He recalls other crucial dates, for example 1942, with the threat of the occupation of Cairo by the German colonial troops, and consequently, the flight of his family. The translation of personal history, which is discussed later in the text, will touch on the question of language and related memory, in the event that one has the duty, or the wish, to tell the lived experience in a given language (the mother tongue) through the use of another language (the second language):

> Everyone lives life in a given language; everyone's experiences therefore are had, absorbed, and recalled in that language. The basic split in my life was the one between Arabic, my native language, and English, the language of my education and subsequent expression as a scholar and a teacher, and so trying to produce a narrative of one in the language of the other – to say nothing of the numerous ways in which the languages were mixed up for me and crossed over from one realm to the other – has been a complicated task. (*idem* xi-xii)

The fact that the autobiography is written in English, which is not only the language of study, but Said himself is an American, produces in the author (and therefore in the reader), a defamiliarization. It is paradoxical to recall in the new language – the language of Said's American identity, which is at the same time the expatriate's idiom, of "not feeling at home" – an experience lived in a different language and in another place. He is very particular about the language(s) of his Egyptian childhood. Language and place complement each other and, to young Edward, his mother's fluency in English came as a surprise: "I hadn't then any idea where my mother's English came from or who, in the national sense of the phrase, she was" (*idem* 5). However, she spoke Egyptian Arabic with Damascene inflexions, but she "had an excellent command of classical Arabic as well as the demotic. Not enough of the latter to disguise her as Egyptian, however, which of course she was not" (*ibid.*). The consequence of this ethnic and linguistic multiplicity is confusing: "I have retained this unsettled sense of many identities – mostly in conflict with each other – all of my life, together with an acute memory of the despairing feeling that I wish we could have been all-Arab, or all-European and American, or all-Orthodox Christian, or all-Muslim, or all-Egyptian, and so on." (*ibid.*)

In order not to conceal the impulse and motivation behind *Out of Place*, with the resulting exposure of his private life, Said puts into action an extreme clarity that also serves, from the point of view of the narrative autobiographical, to attract the reader, which is induced to believe it, which allows to activate what is called, since Lejeune, the "autobiographical pact": the motivation for his autobiography is "to bridge the sheer distance in time and place between my life today and my life then" (*ibid.* xii-xiii). He explains the need to write as a result of "the emergence of a second self", due to the "increasing number of departures [that] have unsettled my life from its earliest beginnings", his whole existence being influenced by "the many displacements from countries, cities, abodes, languages, environments that have kept me in motion all these years." (Said, 1999: 217)

The autobiographical truth, as we know, is neither historical truth nor entirely subjective truth, but rather a hybrid of the two. In the same way, the relationship between author and character draws a figure, a subject that does not fully identify with either the author or the main character of the autobiography. Especially since Said's autobiography is on stage what he calls "a second self," a child, then a teenager, and a young man seen from the point of view of the mature man that Said is now when he is about to write the book. Another remarkable aspect is the question of genealogy, insofar as it brings back the uncertainty of his identity to the peculiarity of his family, making himself the artisan in turn of a continuous self-invention: "And thus I became "Edward," a creation of my parents whose daily travails a quite different but quite dormant inner self was able to observe, though most of the time was powerless to help" (*idem* 19). Thus, the "out of place" Edward is seen as a creation of three key attitudes of his self-created parents, Christian Palestinians living in Cairo while following "an odd combination of prewar Palestinian habit": (1) a mixture of American folklore acquired by his father during his previous stay in the United States and artificially drawn from the most varied American commercials that his family could know in Cairo; (2) the mimicry of the colonized subject who wants to rise from this condition by imitating the habits and customs of the colonizer, and (3) the need to adapt to a neighboring cultural context constituted by the various minorities Arabs and non-Arabic speakers, and the Egyptian community itself, so as not to isolate themselves from them, "the style of life […] perceived around them in Egypt and which they tried to adapt to their special circumstances" (*ibid.*). In short, his genealogy itself predisposed Said to a complicated identity, tortuous and difficult to unravel, because it was a genealogy interrupted by the exodus. Said says it quite explicitly:

> Along with language, it is geography – especially in the displaced form of departures, arrivals, farewells, exile, nostalgia, homesickness, belonging, and travel itself – that is at the core of my memories of those early years. Each of the places I lived in – Jerusalem, Cairo, Lebanon, the United States – has a complicated, dense web of valences that was very much a part of growing up, gaining an identity, forming my consciousness of myself and of others. And in each place schools have a privileged place in the story, microcosms of the cities or towns where my parents found these schools and put me. (*ibid.* 12)

The place of origin – in the case of Said, Palestine – soon becomes a place of "dream," that is to say only present in the dream, having had in his

childhood and during his youth the function of a data acquired and never reasoned. To him, Palestine "was a place I took for granted, the country I was from, where family and friends existed (it seems so retrospectively) with unreflecting ease," but "As we increasingly spent time in Cairo, Palestine acquired a languid, almost dreamlike, aspect for me" (*ibid,* 20-21). The reason for this reduction of the homeland of origin to a dream, lived passively, is however explained soon after, when Said writes: "the Palestine of remote memory, unresolved sorrow, and uncomprehending anger" (*ibid.* 141).

Immersed in the new American culture, Said chooses step by step to rebuild a genealogy, first by undoing himself an attitude of mimicry vis-à-vis the new homeland, a sign of an unresolved malaise, linked to the question of belonging:

> […] beginning in America I resolved to live as I were a simple, transparent soul and not to speak about my family or origins except as required, and then very sparingly. To become, in other words, like the others, as anonymous as possible. The split be-tween "Edward" (or, as I was soon to become, "Said"), my public, outer self, and the loose, irresponsible fantasy-ridden churning metamorphoses of my private, inner life was very marked. Later the eruptions from my inner self grew not only more frequent but also less possible to control. (*ibid.* 137)

The intention, the very project of reconstructing his double genealogy, has in Said the function of going beyond the idea of a clear identity which, in his case, would have locked him in a cage or would have been solved in repeated failure the attempt to give shape to a complete, one-sided identity, the other of which would have ceaselessly escaped. Thus, in his autobiography, what plays a fundamental role is the transition from the public identity of the American Said to a more complex identity, which recomposes the fragments of the previous Palestinian linguistic and cultural identity, beyond that of Egyptian Said. The point of arrival of the autobiographical journey is thus given here by the wish to overcome the limits between the different cultural identities that compose it, filling with the literary word a kind of emptiness constituted by the repressed past of its personal history, and at the same time collective.

4. Conclusions: On the Worldliness of Exile

Exile is often associated, in Said's work, with "worldliness", which he defines as the acute awareness of the existence and interdependence of

other times and other places. No story, however singular, is isolated from global history. In an article published ten years after *Orientalism* in the American review *Critical Inquiry*, Said gives an explanation of the worldliness that explicitly links the two dimensions of this word:

> "Worldliness" is a notion I have often found useful because of two meanings that inhere in it together, one, the idea of being in the secular world, as opposed to being "otherworldly," and two, because of the suggestion conveyed by the French word *mondanite*, worldliness as the quality of a practiced, slightly jaded savoir faire, worldly wise and street smart. (Said, 2000: 301)

In *Representations of the Intellectual* (1996), he writes: "For the intellectual the task, I believe, is explicitly to universalize the crisis, to give greater human scope to what a particular race or nation suffered, to associate that experience with the sufferings of others" (44). The universal is not an absolute goal a recount; the bringing together and sharing of experiences, the reintegration of the singular into a shared history.

For Said, this "worldliness" is necessarily linked to comparatism, and first of all to literary comparatism. The category of national literature has no more meaning than that of national identity. English or French literature is not for and by itself, but with and against African or Indian literatures. A great work is never only of its place, but it resonates with other situations, other stories – preparing, provoking and illuminating the present, announcing future works which in turn, rewrite it, reinvent it or update it. Said includes the literary works of the allegorical or ornamental in which they are often confined, to reaffirm and compare their historicity, their political significance, their "worldliness". In his 2000 volume *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays*, Said offers the following definition of "worldliness": "*Worldliness* is therefore the restoration to such works and interpretations of their place in the global setting, a restoration that can only be accomplished by an appreciation not of some tiny, defensively constituted corner of the world, but of the large, many-windowed house of human culture as a whole" (Said, 2000: 382, emphasis in the original).

Said opposes any form of identity proclamation. In *Reflections on Exile* he opposes the vision of exile as a romantic identity: "Marginality and homelessness are not, in my opinion, to be gloried in; they are to be brought to an end, so that more, and not fewer, people can enjoy the benefits of what has for centuries been denied the victims of race, class, or gender" (Said 2000: 385). For him, the condition of exile is painful, even "terrible to experience" (*idem* 173), and he defines it as "the unhealable rift between a

human being and a native place, between the self and its true home: its essential sadness can never be surmounted" (*ibid.*). Whatever the achievements of an exile's life, they are "permanently undermined by the loss of something left behind forever" (*ibid.*).

As in his autobiography, exile puts in the heart a separation between "Edward" and "Said". The articles on Egypt – "Egyptian Rites," (153-164) and "Cairo and Alexandria," (337-345) – are a description of the condition of stranger to oneself, the specific posture that he embodies, nor a Palestinian American nor an American of Palestinian origin, but Palestinian, emigrated to Egypt in a French-speaking community, then settled in New York (and not in America), working on texts of European languages: "Egypt isn't just another foreign country, it is special" (*idem* 153). His shift does not begin with his arrival in the "West," but from his childhood in Cairo. These articles show the first exile, that of language first, which makes Arabic the language so far away from a childhood where one speaks English, and that of the territory afterwards, since this city, that of his childhood, is forbidden and described as dangerous and disturbing. It is also a cultural exile, that of a child born in Egypt for whom "colonial proconsuls like Cromer and Kitchener were more familiar […] than Haroun al-Rashid or Khaled ibn al-Walid." (*idem* 391)

To Said, exile initially means – for the first eleven years, at least – a forgetting of Palestine and the Middle East. In the United States, he is essentially an American. Edward Said is aware that he does not have the profile of the typical American. It's not just a question of language or accent, name, appearance, or even academic achievement. He realizes that there is something about him, like his immigrant peers, including American Jews, which is missing or not in keeping with the American model of the time. A kind of attitude and qualities that a model student must possess, including: leadership, a patriotic and Christian spirit.

As a conclusion, it is important to underline Said's progress, which demonstrates a matured mind shaped by the experience of exile, that of a scholar who rejects any submission to fixed ideas or geographically determined worlds. According to Anouar Antara, "his self-perception is of a cluster of flowing currents", which "are of transcendence because they are not static, quite the reverse, they are in constant movement". Said prefers it to "a solid and ahistorical identity" (Antara, 2016: 168). Anyway, the author states that: "With so many dissonances in my life I have learned actually to prefer being not quite right and out of place." (Said, 1999: 295)

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