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Voices of Life, Voices of Death in Anne Sexton's Poetry

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Abstract: My paper is part of a larger research topic entitled *Suicide-Bound Poets*. Anne Sexton is a well-known American poetess that belongs to *modernity* through the theme, structure and obsessively recurrent motifs of life and death-terminal paths and steps in the poetic universe. In some critical views, Anne Sexton has been associated to confessional poetry, as being highly subjective, since her verse related the biography problems, mental disorder, and psychotherapy of the author. At the same time, Anne Sexton's discourse introduces poetic voices in conflict that negotiate on life, on death, to her thresholds into an imaginary world. In the way we should *objectively* respond to the text, Anne Sexton "is doing justice" to the readers, even though by hooking the audience into a subjective universe, artistically re-creating the chaotic modern world. This is a constant immolation of the poetess' Self, to produce the work of art. Traces of depression and suicide are to be considered in Sexton's volumes, lurking both in technique and artisticité, which are particularly hers.

Keywords: *confessional poetry, Self, poetic voice, depression, suicide*.

Put your ear down close to your soul and listen hard

Anne Sexton is the typical postmodern artist who allowed herself to be engulfed into the abyss of her own tormented thoughts. Depression and suicidal tendencies were often her most faithful companions, and yet, she somehow managed to create a work of art whose uniqueness would quickly turn her into one of the most appreciated female writers of the twentieth century. Spirited and provocative in her early teens, Sexton gradually turned into a recluse after realizing that the life of a suburban housewife she had chosen for herself by marrying young was not as fulfilling as she had expected. The daily routine of an exemplary mother and wife was more than she could cope with and soon after the birth of her second child she was diagnosed with postpartum depression. And yet, it was then that her development into a confessional feminist poetess began. After a year of psychiatric treatment in a mental institution she met Martin T. Orne, the psychiatrist who fully understood Anne's

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problems and helped her express her thoughts and fears through poetry, which became a tool in the process of achieving the independence a woman strove for in a conventional patriarchy.

When Orne met Sexton, he realized her main issues were the acute sense of inadequacy and the complete lack of self-worth she was struggling with. The lack of formal education seemed to have turned her into a woman who was unable to recognize any qualities within herself (Middlebrook, 1992: xiii). As a daughter, she had been living in the shadow of a mother who was thought to be the writer of the family, although her only merit was that of being the daughter of a writer. Anne had been told many times that her writing cannot be compared with that of her mother, despite the obvious lack of talent of the latter. As a wife, she was completely dependent of her husband and she could not function at all when he was away on his frequent business trips, and as a mother, looking after her children brought her on the verge of madness. She loved her children in her own way, but she realized she could not keep them safe. Her mental state continued to decline and she began to experience all sorts of emotions that would put both her and her children at risk. During some episodes of blinding rage she attacked her children, while some other times, when she felt desperate and alone, she tried to kill herself. At this point there was no other option for her family members than to recognize her mental problems and provide the necessary help. She had now completely abandoned the role of a mother and wife and she had taken on the role of the patient, one that she would keep her entire life. (Middlebrook, 1992: 35)

Confessional poetry along with other forms of personal expression such as journals, letters, or autobiographies, was many female modernists' way of celebrating their creativity. Traditional conventions of art production seemed redundant for the artist in search of an identity, which is why many of them turned to the idea of "a life experienced as an art or an art experienced as a kind of life" (Gubar 1981: 252). The modern artist, in general, relies his writing on personal experience and self-knowledge, but the woman artist, in particular, is never satisfied with her condition, which is why her work becomes a means of self-defining. She builds her identity through writing, and, at the core of her creation, we discover a mythology of the self instead of self-knowledge.

According to Simone de Beauvoir, a woman's self becomes objectified in literature only in the presence of a transcendental phallic image to relate with (cf. de Beauvoir, 2009). If artistic

creativity is connected to "biological creativity, the terror of inspiration for women is experienced quite literally as the terror of being entered, deflowered, possessed, taken, had, broken, ravished – all words which illustrate the pain of the passive self whose boundaries are being violated. In fact, like their nineteenth-century foremothers, twentieth-century women often describe the emergence of their talent as an infusion from a male master rather than inspiration from or sexual commerce with a female muse. This phallic master causes the woman writer to feel her words are being expressed from her rather than by her." (Gubar 1981: 256)

A convincing example in this respect is Margaret Atwood's prose poem "Mud Woman," built around the notorious idea of women being the products of male creation through rough symbolism:

> When he was young he and another boy constructed a woman out of mud. She began at the neck and ended at the knees and elbows: they stuck to essentials. Every sunny day they would make love to her, sinking with ecstasy into her moist belly, her brown wormy flesh where small weeds had already rooted. They would take turns, they were not jealous, she preferred them both. Afterwards they would repair her, making her hips more spacious, enlarging her breasts with their shining stone nipples. (Atwood, 1987: 214)

Anne Sexton begins the adventure of creation from the standpoint of a housewife and a mother who cannot tolerate the constraints of a "normal" society. She learns to write poetry in order to keep her mind occupied with something productive and, in time, writing becomes her sole reason for existence. And yet, like any other woman artist, she too fears the emergence of her own talent. Her engagement in the artistic process keeps her alive, but it does not prevent her from losing control of her mind and body: "I have gone out, a possessed witch, / haunting the black air, braver at night; / dreaming evil, I have done my hitch /over the plain houses, light by light: lonely thing, twelve-fingered, out of mind. / A woman like that is not a woman, quite. / I have been her kind." (Sexton 1981: 15)

I am alone here in my own mind

Eight years of marriage, the birth of two daughters, a psychotic break, constant psychiatric treatment and a television

program called "How to Write a Sonnet" were the necessary ingredients for Anne Sexton's transformation into an artist. This experience, which she herself called a "rebirth at twenty-nine" (Middlebrook, 1992: 3), was not, however plain and painless, for in the process she had completely given up the tasks of mother and wife. She was never fitted for this role anyway, but when she realized she could write good poetry, she dedicated all her time and effort to this new and fulfilling task.

Anne Sexton's transformation from a woman led by frustrations and fears into a successful writer acclaimed by public and critics is unmatched. As the third-born girl of a family that seemed drawn "out of a Scott Fitzgerald novel, children of the Roaring Twenties: good- looking, well-to-do, party-loving and self-indulgent" (Middlebrook, 1992: 3), she was expected to behave graciously like her two older sisters with whom she never managed to get along too well. Her father, Ralph Harvey, a successful salesman, dedicated most of his time to his business in the wool industry, and when he was at home, he preferred attending parties and meeting with friends instead of spending time with his youngest daughter. Young Anne must have felt really neglected by her father and, unfortunately, during her marriage she would have to relive the same devastating emotions all over again as her husband also had to travel long distances for business purposes. Anne's mother, Mary Gray Staples, was the only child of a prestigious family whose members worked in the field of politics and journalism. As a child, she was used to get everybody's attention and unconditional love and as a mother, she might have been too attentive towards her husband and parties and too inconsiderate of her children's needs.

Anne was particularly altered because of her parents' indifference. She could neither respect the dress code imposed by her father, nor behave according to her mother's wishes. She was always seeking attention and she craved affection, but all she ever obtained were punishments for being too loud, too messy and too troublesome. With parents so preoccupied by looks and appearances, it was impossible for the little Anne not to feel alienated and rejected. She needed her mother's love, but she was forced to reconcile with the idea that the only person in her family who would love her unconditionally was Anna Ladd Dingley, her aunt, who lived with the Sextons until her death. Anna became Sexton's most intimate friend and paid much attention to her niece's needs. She was the only one to notice Anne's health problems and probably the first person who

realized that the young girl should be submitted to a psychological consult. When Anna's health severely deteriorated, Sexton felt somehow responsible, and when she died, she remained with a deep sense of remorse that would hunt her for the rest of her life.

Sexton's adolescence was a period of experiments and rebellion. Teasing boys and exploring new territories were some of her favourite activities. By the time she was enrolled in a boarding school, she had also become particularly interested in poetry and developed a fascination with death. She began to write poetry, like most of the teenagers, but she quickly gave up her new hobby, mostly because of her parents' distrust in her creative capacity. She even managed to have some poems published in a local magazine, and yet, her socially involved and selfish parents were too busy to notice their daughter's propensity to poetry. They did not recognize her creative capacity and they even made her stop exercising her talent by making her believe she could not compare with her mother who was supposedly the writer of the family.

With an alcoholic father and a controlling mother, Sexton sought refuge somewhere else. She met Alfred Muller Sexton II and right after high school she married him. He knew what it was like to have a family like Sexton's, for his family was quite similar. And yet, the young couple that seemed to walk towards happiness hand in hand was rapidly struck by disaster. After a few happy and fulfilling years, Sexton had her first child and she found herself in the situation to take care of her child alone, as her husband was gone on business trips most of the time. By this time, her feelings of loneliness and abandonment resurfaced and, after giving birth, she was even diagnosed with postpartum depression.

All of a sudden, marriage and children no longer seemed like a good idea for Sexton. She loved her husband and children, but she could not bear the thought of taking care of her daughters alone when he was away. She started therapy and she also began having short affairs that were meant to complete the void caused by her husband's absence. Of course, sexual indulgence did not offer her the peace and joy she craved for, but at least it managed to make her life a bit spicy. At first, no one noticed the troubles she was dealing with, for she always behaved properly when her husband was at home, but her condition gradually worsened, and it soon became clear for everybody that she was unable to look after her own children. At that point, her mother and her mother-in-law intervened and tried to help her take care of her daughters and perform her housewife duties.

Unfortunately, their intervention only worsened her mental state and she soon attempted suicide. As Middlebrook states, right after she took the pills that were supposed to help her sleep, Sexton realized she had made a mistake and called for help, which might suggest that she did not really want to die. Perhaps she wanted to punish everybody for taking away her children, or perhaps she only needed attention. It is impossible to fully understand the cause of such a dramatic gesture, but what we know for sure is that the treatment for mental disorders was limited at that time and that Sexton's suicidal tendencies eventually led to her untimely death.

Sexton's daughter, Linda, was the one who suffered the most during her mother's frequent nervous breakdowns, since most of her random bursts of rage, when Sexton became quite violent both physically and verbally, were directed towards her defenceless young daughter. And yet, the one she hurt the most whenever she attacked her husband and children, was herself:

> Both Linda and the typewriter were extensions of herself. Sexton attacked Kayo by attacking herself, the writer in her who was symbolized by her typewriter. Sexton may have attacked Linda to disown that recalcitrant part of her inner being who wished to smear feces on her own mother when she had been so rigid about Sexton's constipation problem as a teenager. (Sanguinetti, Kavaler-Adler 2011: 369)

Therapy with Dr Orne helped her a lot in her development as a writer, but it did not improve her relationship with her family. Poetry and therapy became her sole reasons for existence, and even these were meant to be questioned at some point. After Dr Orne moved to Philadelphia for personal reasons, Sexton continued therapy with other doctors, but the effects were not as positive as before. She started abusing alcohol and sleeping pills, and the fights with her husband became more and more virulent. Sexton did not seem to care about anything but poetry. Her children were more than once witnesses to her drunken fights with her husband and, on several occasions, they even had to find excuses for their parents' behaviour in front of the police forces.

On October 4, 1974 the 45-year-old author ended her life by asphyxiation. There was almost nothing in her behaviour that suggested she would do such a thing. She went to her therapist, she attended her appointment with one of her friends, she put all her

things in order and silently waited to die in her garage while listening to the radio.

All I wanted was a little piece of life

Being a patient in a mental institution seems to have been more adequate for Sexton than being a mother or a housewife. Of course, accepting that she was mentally ill was just as difficult for her as it was for her family. And yet, years later she recognized the experience was very beneficent, for it was the first time when she did not feel alone or misunderstood: "It is hard to define. When I was first sick I was thrilled [...] to get into the Nut House. At first, of course, I was just scared and crying and very quiet (who me!) but then I found this girl (very crazy of course) (like me I guess) who talked language. What a relief! I mean, well ... someone! And then later, a while later, and quite a while, I found out that [Dr] Martin talked language. [...] By the way, [husband] Kayo has never once understood one word of language… I don't know who else does. I don't use it with everyone. No one of my whole street, suburb neighbours" (Sexton; apud Colburn, 1988: 11). To Dr Martin, the one who discovered her talent and encouraged her to write, she even dedicated a poem in which she shows her gratitude for helping her begin her transformation into a writer: "You, Doctor Martin, walk / from breakfast to madness. Late August, / I speed through the antiseptic tunnel / where the moving dead still talk/of pushing their bones against the thrust / of cure. And I am queen of this summer hotel [...] Your business is people, / you call at the madhouse, an oracular / eye in our nest. Out in the hall / the intercom pages you. You twist in the pull / of the foxy children who fall / like floods of life in frost. / And we are magic talking to itself, / noisy and alone. I am queen of all my sins / forgotten. Am I still lost? / Once I was beautiful. Now I am myself, / counting this row and that row of moccasins / waiting on the silent shelf." (Sexton, 1981: 3-4)

Of course, Sexton's talent was not enough for her to become an excellent poetry writer. She had always felt inferior for not going to college, but now it was time for her to continue her studies in order to perfect her writing. First, she attended a poetry workshop at the Boston Centre for Adult Education, where she studied under the guidance of John Holmes and met her dear friend Maxine Kumin. Next, she attended the Antioch College Writer's Conference, where she redefined her writing techniques due to valuable advice received

from professionals like Snodgrass, who became her friend and mentor and whose work inspired Sexton to explore the mother-daughter relationship in her poetry. The first example is "Unknown Girl in a Maternity Ward," a tragic poem that tells the story of a mother whose child is taken away from her after giving birth. Without a doubt, Sexton puts herself in the young girl's position and in the imaginary world she creates in her writing she plays the part of a loving mother who would do anything not to be separated from her baby; like Sexton who lost her children because of her mental condition, the unknown girl in her poem is also forced to abandon her child and admit he is the product of a "sin and nothing more:" "But the doctors return to scold / me. I speak. It is you my silence harms. / I should have known; I should have told / them something to write down. My voice alarms / my throat. "Name of father – none." I hold / you and name you bastard in my arms. / And now that's that. There is nothing more / that I can say or lose. / Others have traded life before / and could not speak. I tighten to refuse / your owling eyes, my fragile visitor. / I touch your cheeks, like flowers. You bruise / against me. We unlearn. I am a shore / rocking you off. You break from me. I choose / your only way, my small inheritor / and hand you off, trembling the selves we lose. / Go child, who is my sin and nothing more." (Sexton, 1981:25)

The mother-daughter relationship seems to occupy an important position among Sexton's favourite themes, as if the poetess would try to express and develop in her writing whatever she could not accomplish in real life. In "The Double Image," for example, Sexton brings into question her relationship with her mother, as well as her relationship with her daughter Joyce. The poem refers to the period in Sexton's life when she was recovering after a suicide attempt and trying to connect with her youngest daughter, while her mother was also fighting for her life and, instead of forgiving Anne for what she had done, she decided to have her portrait done so that all her pain and suffering remained forever engraved: "In south light, her smile is held in place, / her cheeks wilting like a dry / orchid; my mocking mirror, my overthrown / love, my first image. She eyes me from that face, / that stony head of death / I had outgrown. / The artist caught us at the turning; / we smiled in our canvas home / before we chose our foreknown separate ways. / The dry red fur fox coat was made for burning. / I rot on the wall, my own / Dorian Gray." (Sexton, 2000: 33)

Sexton continued her training by attending a writing seminar initiated By Robert Lowell at Boston University. At the same time she also joined the meetings organized by Holmes with some of his best students, among which we can mention Maxine Kumin, Sam Alberts and George Starbuck. Sexton too was among Holmes' favourite students, despite their differences regarding her writing style. He did not encourage her to publish the poems that speak about her psychiatric experience, for he believed she would be able to completely recover from her illness and then she would regret having exposed herself in such manner (Middlebrook, 1983: 493). Sexton, however, was not discouraged by his advice and she explained her reasons for maintaining the "confessional" character of her poems in a letter and also in the poem "For John, Who Begs Me Not to Enquire Further:" "Not that it was beautiful, / but that, in the end, there was / a certain sense of order there; / something worth learning / in that narrow diary of my mind, / in the commonplaces of the asylum / where the cracked mirror / or my own selfish death / outstared me. / And if I tried / to give you something else, / something outside of myself, / you would not know / that the worst of anyone / can be, finally, / an accident of hope." (Sexton, 1981:34)

O starry night, This is how I want to die

Writing seems to have been Sexton's reason to live for a very long time. She loved her audience and she knew how to make a memorable entrance whenever she was invited to give a reading. And yet, she was never satisfied with what she had accomplished or who she had become. A year before her death she decided to divorce her husband. She wanted to experience life at full intensity, but she soon discovered that the life of a divorcée was not as fulfilling as she had expected. Her even more demanding personality and her repeated suicide threats in the middle of the night made it almost impossible for her to sustain any long-term friendship, and she soon became estranged from all those she loved. She turned to work, but she discovered that not even poetry can fill the void: "The poems stand for the moment they are written and make no promises to the future events and consciousness and raising of the unconscious as happens as one goes forward and does not look back for an answer in an old poem." (Sexton, 2004: 421)

Loneliness and the attraction to suicide were Sexton's greatest enemies. Even as an adult she needed constant attention, and when

she did not get it unconditionally, she took refuge in alcohol, medication, therapy and poetry. By the end of her life, however, therapy was no longer a solution, for she had felt her psychiatrist had lost his professional objectivity, and, despite her professional success, she even turned against her audience at some point:

> What's in it for the poet? Money, applause, adulation, someone to hear how the poems sound coming out of the poet's mouth, an audience...You are the actor, the clown, the oddball. Some people come to see what you look like, what you have on, what your voice sounds like. Some people secretly hope that your voice will tremble (that gives an extra kick), some people hope you will do something audacious – in other words (and I admit to my greatest fears) that you vomit on the stage or go blind, hysterically blind, or actually blind. (Sexton, 2004: 397)

After this episode described by Sexton as one of the most traumatic experiences of her life, she continued to write, teach and give readings, but she also began the preparations for her death. She invited close friends and asked them what they would like as remembrances, she chose a biographer and she named a literary executor. After twelve suicide attempts with medication, the only surprise was the method chosen for her final suicidal act. Writing had kept her alive for as long as it was possible, but now it was time for her to end her affairs with a world in which she "did not feel as if she really existed" (Lester, 1993: 50). And yet, what we should remember of Anne Sexton is that, despite her illness, she was a great writer who had a good life, as she herself confessed in a letter to her daughter, Linda, and who created valuable works of art in which she poured her deepest thoughts and feelings: "Life is not easy. It is awfully lonely. *I* know that. [...] But I've had a good life – I wrote unhappy – but I lived to the hilt. [...] Talk to my poems, and talk to your heart – I'm in both: if you need me." (Sexton, 2004: 424)

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Boundaries Negotiation in Nella Larsen's *Passing*

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Abstract: One of the most recurring stereotypes in African-American literature, written and published during the Reconstruction Era is considered to be the tragic mulatta. This became a moot point while the African-American text in its entirety continued to reproduce the values of the dominant society by adhering to certain conventions for a predominantly white audience. Among the collateral effects of this situation there was that the ruling ideology and literary establishment repressed, to a large extent, genuine representations of black culture, such as oral narratives or work songs. Nonetheless, the new breed of characters – a physical and psychological hybrid between two racial elements – began to thrive as a transitory social and artistic condition. Such is the case with Nella Larsen's novel *Passing* in which the characters' boundary transgression is not solely that of passing for white, but of their community as well.

Keywords: *tragic mulatta, black feminism, racial boundaries, class affiliation, passing*.

The tragic mulatta as a literary product made its appearance at a time when white southern literature was operating with their own black stereotype: the mammy or the Aunt Jemima. In the case of the dominant culture, this stereotype was the result of the necessity to produce a nurturing double to the pedestaled southern white woman. African-American writers, even before the Civil War, developed the tragic mulatta (*Clotell* – 1953 – by William Wells Brown and *Iola LeRoy* – 1892 – by Frances E.W. Harper – the first published novel by a black woman). The purpose of these two and other novels was the uplifting of the black race, although it was an uplift which was approved and accommodated by the dominant culture.

The mulatta, a product of a black slave mother and a white slave master, denied the long-time philosophical concept that blacks were subhuman. In *Clotell* and *Iola LeRoy*, the mulatta is depicted as beautiful, courageous, and refined, much in the same way as her mistress. Her tragedy is that, while she sees the power and pleasures of the master's house, she cannot share in those advantages of the dominant culture.

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However, what seems utterly significant is that white readers, according to Barbara Christian in her work, Black Feminist Criticism, accepted and accommodated the mulatta novels by misreading them:

> White audiences lapped up the stories of the mulattas and their tragedies in the ironic way that the guilty and powerful always delight in looking obliquely at their guilt. The existence of the mulatta, who combined the physical characteristics of both races, denied their claim that blacks were not human, while allowing them the argument that they were lifting up the race by lightening it. (Christian, 1985: 119)

The mulatta thus populates a complex site of negotiation, typical of bordering spaces, where two cultures collide, their resulting factions remaining in a permanent state of mutual adulteration. On the one hand, the whites consider that they are bettering the blacks by indulging into inter-racial relationship, although officially unrecognized, while, on the other hand, the blacks perceive this as a victory of acceptance into a world where, even if only as visitors, they succeed in altering the environment and its inhabitants. Of a greater importance, though, was that the mulatta woman rather than the man was chosen to project this image, which stands for another instance of dominant culture accommodation, or as Christian goes on to say: "Woman in white culture is not as powerful as man, so to pose the existence of a mulatto slave man who embodies the qualities of the master is so great a threat, so dangerous an idea, even in fiction, that it is seldom tried." (Christian, 1985: 120)

Not only do we see, then, the dominant culture's ironic accommodation of this racial stereotype, and thus its overt racism, but also a form of racism coupled with sexism – a double-edged sword which black women had to confront with.

Like *Iola LeRoy*, Nella Larsen's *Passing* depicts heroines whose loyalties are necessarily divided between black and white social codes. That these heroines continued to exhibit white, middle-class values was perhaps indicative of the writer's need to prove black feminine respectability. Nonetheless, as Barbara Christian states, "the [women's] literature had yet to catch up with the new reality" of black women who were not, as the mulatta novels depicted, "genteel ladies whose conflicts about color and class tended to be closer to fairytale than anyone's imagined factual reality."(Christian, 1985: 120)

Of a similar opinion is Werner Sollors, who sees white audience as the main target for such narratives. "Conceived for white readers," he states, "these characters invite empathy because they are so much like whites and so little like blacks; the internal conflict they experience is explainable as a result of racial forces; therefore, no wonder white writers were far more eager to develop them" (Sollors, 1999: 225). Thus, mulatta characters become twice-adulterated, as they become the creation of white writers who seek to allure white audience.

If Sollors refers to both female and male characters, Anna Shannon Elfenbein focuses, again, more on the female tragic mulatta. She maintains that it is difficult to understand whether the character's passivity "is the result of the spot of black blood or a reaction to the yielding femininity demanded of women in the period" (Elfenbein, 1989: 227). In Elfenbein's view, the sexism of the tragic mulatto manifests itself in the heroines' youth and beauty: "To be old or ugly for a woman in a sexist society was a tragedy that compelled little sympathy, but to be young, beautiful, ladylike, and only technically black was truly pathetic." (Elfenbein, 1989: 227)

Hortense J. Spillers continues the same line of reflection by claiming that the theme of the tragic mulattoes, either male or female, tends to lose ground, as the nineteenth century approaches its end:

> A semantic marker, already fully occupied by a content and an expectation, America's "tragic mulatto" exists for others – and a particular male other – in an attribution of the illicit that designates the violent mingling and commingling of bloodlines that a simplified cultural patrimony wishes to deny. But in that very denial, the most dramatic and visible of admissions is evident. (Spillers, 1989: 165)

Spillers alludes here to the nature of the interracial mingling which, by a simple attempt of denial, becomes powerful and thus more visible. In the same vein, in Hazel Carby's interpretation, the mulatto character is endowed with the responsibility of a racial negotiator. "It is no historical accident that the mulatto figure occurs more frequently in Afro-American fiction at a time when the separation of the races was being institutionalized throughout the South," claims Hazel Carby. She is convinced that in the position of a mediator, the mulatto fulfilled two narrative duties: one was to enable the exploration of the inter-racial social, and another to facilitate an

expression of the sexual relations between the races. The ground for the second function was that "the mulatto was a product not only of proscribed consensual relations but of white sexual domination."

It is thus, as Werner Sollors states, "the ability of many literary mulattoes to cross racial boundaries that were considered real, or even natural," which "made them ideal interrogators of the racial status quo" (Sollors, 1999: 245). This attitude led also to the appearance of the popular theme of crossing lines. For, as Caleb Johnson put it in 1931, "crossing the color line is so common an occurrence that the Negroes have their own well-understood word for it. They call it 'Passing.'"

Werner Sollors describes the representation of the mulatto in American literature and art as a double figure. He introduces the idea that both the male attribute and the female one are rendered with a high proportion of tragic flaw:

> On the one hand is the Mulatto as forward-looking prophet of the future (often a male rebel, defiant, not yet recognized for his promise) who denounces accident of birth and trammels of the past and is of a restless, tempestuous, rebellious, patricidal or fratricidal disposition; and on the other is the Mulatto as defined by descent, often a woman who, beautiful though she may be, is yet unable to give herself in marriage (first because of slave status and later because of discovery of racial background in a racist environment) and is thus sad, melancholy, resigned, self-sacrificing, or suicidal. (Sollors, 1999: 240)

The tragic condition of these characters, who are "neither black nor white yet both" have, in Sollors view, the role to "reinstate the legitimacy of two categories" (Sollors, 1999: 240) which is similar to categorizing people by the color of their skin. The attitude of ridiculing the conventions of their representation in literature as an unrealistic one contributes to the same result.

As Sollors asserts, the term "Tragic Mulatto" owes its notoriety, both among critics and in the public sphere, not because it allows a more thorough understanding of past ideologies, but because it sustains, in the form of a subversive-type of ideological criticism, what he calls "the ideology of racial dualism and the resistance to interracial life that are still more prevalent than are calls for hybridity" (Sollors, 1999: 240). In short, making use of the "Tragic Mulatto" term serves a racial point of view and harms the reputation of the nineteenth-century interracial literature. Also, by legitimizing a

perspective of the world that defines people by the color of their skin, leaving those in-between stranded in a limbo, collides with a universal purpose of art in general.

The racial dualism invoked by Sollors may be made responsible for initiating, developing but also repressing the African American literature. It is established that, even before the emergence of slave narratives, white criticism of the African American text exerted a great influence. Frowned upon in the beginning, mocked and falsely supported later for propagandistic reasons, the African American text had a sinuous path to recognition, symbolic of its real-life characters.

Many black women had migrated North by the 1920's and taken employment that was often more oppressive than in the South. They were domestic workers, factory laborers, and prostitutes whose lives were submerged in stereotypes and who witnessed their fragile Southern heritage being blasted apart by an urban, industrial society. In light of this continued devaluation, some black writers, such as Langston Hughes, saw a need to preserve that complex and genuine heritage in a representative literature:

> (The common folks) furnish a wealth of colorful, distinctive material for any artist because they still hold their own individuality in the face of American standardizations. And perhaps these common people will give to the world its truly great Negro artist, the one who is not afraid to be (herself). (Hughes, 2000: 29)

The same happens with Nella Larsen who, in her second novel, *Passing*, produces an intraracial drama about two women's struggle with class, as it both informs and restricts their race and gender identities. Larsen's writing represents, thus, the black female identity in conflict with the constraints of both negative racial discourse of white social systems and contestatory racial discourses of the Harlem Renaissance movement. In the novel, stereotyped polarities of the virtuous "lady" and exotic "other" are in a continuous negotiation as they attempt to find self-definition. Larsen's protagonists struggle with both these extremes, as they are mediated by ideologies of the negro woman, the new liberated woman of the 1920s, and the idealized role of motherhood in social reform movements of the period.

The gender and sexual roles against which Larsen's black female identities struggle can be explored in connection to popular

images of female identity in the 1920s and the impact of black middle-class ideologies of womanhood. The estranged relationship between Clare Kendry and Irene Redfield provides a frame for understanding Larsen's incisive class insights into the boundaries of race, gender, and sexualities that circumscribed black women during this time.

Passing depicts the troubled relationship between Clare and Irene, who are childhood friends from the same black community but of different class backgrounds. Irene, the main protagonist through whose consciousness the narrative is most frequently told, meets Clare in an exclusive restaurant in Chicago, after not having seen her for twelve years. What Clare has been doing is passing for white, and has been doing this so successfully that she has moved into the elite class: her white husband is a reputable business man dealing with financial affairs. By contrast, Irene insists on her commitment to her ideal black middle-class existence. Although she is the wife of a black physician and mother of two boys, her friend's life is both attractive and worrying to her.

The novel begins with the story of Irene's original encounter with the passing Clare in which, against her better judgment, Irene accepts an invitation to Clare's apartments for an afternoon. Once there, she encounters Clare's husband, John Bellew – called Jack by Clare – and witnesses a disturbing exchange. Jack jokingly accuses Clare of becoming darker each day. Further, as a term of endearment he calls her "nig," declaring that, since he knows she is not one he does not mind toying with the idea. In this scene Jack is not only revealed as an avowed racist, but Clare's performance of race – both white and black in this moment – is secured by the class context of the scene in which assumptions of "pure" whiteness function. Jack Bellew's racism is thus overpassed only by his ignorance when he declaims: "nothing like that with me. I know you're not nigger, so it's all right. You can get as black as you please as far as I'm concerned, since I know you're no nigger" (Larsen, *Passing*, 1988: 184). He becomes even more drastic, when he declares: "I draw the line at that. No niggers in my family. Never have been and never will be" (Larsen, *Passing*, 1988: 184). His attitude is presented in a very unequivocal way as a bigoted victim of prejudice who not only fails to appropriately understand and read reality closer, but also society, in general. Clare, situated within the domain of upper-class white womanhood through her marriage, can joke about being black, as not just her skin color, but also her class status secures her position as a

white society matron. Distressed, Irene protects Clare's secret, but decides never to have anything to do with Clare in the future.

The rest of the novel depicts Clare re-entering Irene's life again to become part of her social circle and family in a perhaps desperate attempt to return to the black community. Ultimately, Irene becomes suspicious that Clare and her own husband, Brian, are having an affair. In the meantime, Jack discovers Clare is black. In the final dramatic scene, Jack arrives uninvited to a party gathering and accuses Clare of being black. In the confusion, Clare mysteriously meets her death by falling from the window. Throughout all of these encounters with Clare, Irene has conflicted feelings about her. Early in the novel Irene expresses her feelings towards Clare: "It was as if the woman sitting on the other side of the table, a girl that she had known, who had done this rather dangerous and, to Irene Redfield, abhorrent thing successfully and had announced herself well satisfied, had for her a fascination, strange and compelling." (Larsen, *Passing*, 1988: 161)

Larsen's fiction thus works as an interstice of class contestation in the context of various pressures, which eventually leads to her women protagonists' negotiating their own sexuality. In the marriages of Larsen's central characters – Clare Kendry and Jack Bellew and Irene Westover and Brian Redfield – there is the bartering of sexual agency for security of class position, evident in the repression both wives endure. For Clare with Jack, the security of burgeois marriage requires a silence about her racial identity, although Jack verbally desires and even fetishizes her as "nig." Irene, on the other hand, sacrifices her sexual agency in a sexless marriage in order to have the safety of middle-class race uplift.

Larsen's title, *Passing*, reflects the political and cultural struggles over race boundaries, succinctly phrased in Du Bois's claim that "the problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color line"(DuBois, 1965: 221). This problem of social boundaries premised upon race difference, most readily and brutally targeted as the difference of color, gave shape to the color-struck emphasis of the 1920 Harlem Renaissance literary movement.

Hull tells us that "Color defined the Harlem Renaissance. Philosophically and practically, it was a racial movement whose overriding preoccupation can be seen in all its aspects and manifestations..." (Hull, 1987: 17) Descriptions of characters' color and the social politics surrounding skin color forwards much of the drama in the fiction Nella Larsen.

One assumption has been that the Renaissance literary movement was obsessed with color and mulatto figures because of an elite movement, which was overly influenced by Western-European concepts of beauty and art that were apparent in its own perceptions of an exotic and primitive Africa. Reading the mulatto figure as a trope representing the social politics of contesting race during the Renaissance allows for an analysis of its problematic function, one that, if in the intraracial color spectrum it presents a critique of the social construction of race, can use this critical position to address the essentialized positing of blackness at work in racism.

Hazel Carby insists that as a "narrative figure," the mulatto has two principal functions: "as a vehicle for an exploration of the relationship between the races and, at the same time, an expression of the relationship between the races. The figure of the mulatto should be understood and analyzed as a narrative device for mediation" (Carby, 1987: 89). The seeming color-struck features of Renaissance fiction, its concern with the mulatto figure, functions as a mediating contradiction, one that both replicated the color prejudice found in American culture at large and resisted race stereotypes by showing the diversity that makes up African American communities. In *Quicksand*, Larsen's character Helga Crane describes this spectrum with awe:

> For the hundredth time she marveled at the gradations within this oppressed race of hers. A doze shades slid by. There was sooty black, shiny black, taupe, mahogany, bronze, copper, gold, orange, yellow, peach, ivory, pinky white, pastry white. There was yellow hair, brown hair, black hair; straight hair, straighten hair, curly hair, crinkly hair, wooly hair. She saw black eyes in white faces, brown eyes in yellow faces, gray eyes in brown faces, blue eyes in tan faces. (Larsen, *Quicksand*, 1988: 59)

Helga Crane's observations of the variety of skin colors within a black community gathering work towards disputing "blackness" as fixed by skin color or any imagined distinct biological quality. Instead, her cataloguing of the diversity of physical blackness posits the theory that a racial construction that relies on such stereotyped traits – skin color, cultural interests, and intellectual capacity – is a false construction. As Gloria Hull points out, one facet of his representation problem was that although the color spectrum was being celebrated in Renaissance art, it was not as readily

accepted as a social and economic model: "Deep historical links between fair color and beauty, and fair color and class affiliation, are not easily broken." (Hull, 1987: 17)

This context produces passing, which refers to the ability of light and white-skinned African Americans to cross or "pass" racial boundaries enforced by a network of social institutions in the U.S. in order to obtain social and economic gains available to Anglo or non-ethnic citizens. In the concept of a black person's "passing" for white opportunity, the historical conflation of race and class in the U.S. is demonstrated; passing for white is a theme specific to U.S. constructions of how race informs economic and class status through social institutions; and Larsen's treatment of this theme was hardly novel in African American literature. (McLendon, 1995: 13-27)

Cheryl Wall suggests that Larsen's characters subvert the tragic mulatto convention because: "They are neither noble nor long suffering; their plights are not used to symbolize the oppression of blacks, the irrationality of prejudice, or the absurdity of concepts of race generally. Larsen's deviations from these conventional representations signal that her concerns lie elsewhere, but only recently have critics begun to decode her major themes" (Wall, 1995: 89). Thus, an important space that allows for a subversive reading of Larsen's mulatto figures is in her use of the mulatto to represent a class-mediated race and gender identity, one that investigates institutional racism and the contradictions of race consciousness.

Passing inscribes dressing and the colors of this ritual, as a metaphor that can negotiate the crossing of boundaries between black women's desires and social systems. Thus, we might read Clare's attempt to have a new red dress as both a symbol of her female desire, red signifying a daring and sexual assertion of her subjectivity, and as a dressing of herself beyond her black working-class constraints. The many uses of silence and dressing in this text, as they are played out in relation to themes of racially constructed bodies, suggest a theory of cross-dressing: using the equipment of specific class-race-gender intersections to pass across the boundaries imposed on other specific intersections. Larsen's cross-dressed negotiations employ cultural images of classed and gendered bodies to mediate systematic race boundaries by contesting who might embody these images with a subversive embodiment.

Clare's boundary transgression is not solely that of passing for white. Although it disrupts the notion of a discrete white community, it also results in a transgression of her loyalty to her

black community, or to "the black community" in which she has been excluded class wise. Larsen's narrative instructs us as to the repercussions for a black woman of not adhering to the class standard of community expectations.

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Bitter Lemons of Cyprus: An Island of Conflicts in Durrell's Oriental Perspective

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Abstract: In his travel book, *Bitter Lemons of Cyprus* (1957), Durrell shows how representations of cultural and political conflicts are inextricably linked to representation of modern oriental thought. He sees the clashes of tension in living styles of bi-polar society, characters and British politics. The conflicts are depicted within the Western consciousness out of whose unchallenged centrality on oriental world emerged. Durrell's oriental perception and racial prejudices from his Anglo-Indian perspective are found in the depiction of all sorts of conflicts. He seems to present conflicts in multilingual societies without art of negotiation. Thus, this paper attempts to highlight the sources and results of the conflicts of varieties as experienced through Durrell's stay in the island of Cyprus.

Keywords: *Cypriots, conflicts, cultural differences, communalism, oriental thought.*

Introduction

Lawrence Durrell (1912-1990), assigned to the British official duties abroad, has served at various levels in the representatives of foreign countries, getting tasked by the British Administration in the colonial policies. He has put forth ideas and suggestions in compliance with the British colonial policies. Although he appears as opposed to the British colonial policies, Durrell has been described as colonial, having served for the British foreign officials (Said, 1994: 34).

Durrell shows that he is one of the many individual imaginative writers of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, whose examination of the oriental, as Said points out,

> was based more or less exclusively upon a sovereign Western consciousness out of whose unchallenged centrality an oriental world emerged, first according to general ideas about who or what was an Oriental, then according to detailed logic governed not simply by empirical reality but, by a battery of desires, repressions, investments, and projections. (Said, 1994: 36)

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Kayintu (2011) in his article states:

> Orientalism as a practice might have begun early in the history of humanity, but modern orientalism is thought of as beginning after the discovery of East. In Asia and Africa, the European countries sent troops along with commercial agents, officials, and Christian missionaries. The remote continents have become markets for Europe's industrial products and suppliers of its raw materials. (Kayintu, 2011: 698)

According to Edward Said "Orientalism is defined as a discourse establishing an epistemological and ontological distinction between the East and the West" (Said, 1994: 72). The East, on the basis of this distinction, lacks individual, social and cultural features owned by the West. Through a discursive strategy, non-Western policies are pushed back into "primitive" or "backward."

The images of the European white man are dependent on the negative image of the oriental, "the other." The encounter with "the other" has always been one of the principal elements of western literature. Such an encounter has two levels: either the indigenous natives encounter the European culture, with its magnificent array of Christianity, hierarchy, or weaponry, or the white European settlers encounter what appears to them as mysterious, dark, and threatening native culture (cf. Said, 188). The relationship between East, as the other, and West has always held the superior position. The dichotomy between "self" and "other" is differentiated in the context of Orientalism.

The third world people are displayed only in twisted structures and preferences, having lost the values of humanity. In *Bitter Lemons of Cyprus* (1957), Turkish men are reflected as "cowards" (Durrell, 2000: 244), which is profoundly disrupting the power and authority. In his oriental perception Turks are not only "lazy" (Durrell, 2000: 53) but also "dull-minded and foul-smelling" (Durrell, 2000: 48). In a similar fashion, he likens Turks to the "reptiles, sharks and dragons" of the oriental regions (Durrell, 2000: 61). He also establishes a similarity between "lighting in the sky and the dragons from Anatolia" (Durrell, 2000: 46). In the description of the "imam" preaching in Greek, Durrell, likens him to a turkey sounding in "hissing" words (Durrell, 2000: 256). When comparing the Turkish policeman to Greek police officers, Turkish policeman are portrayed as "sleepy, seemingly mute, helpless and depressed"

(Durrell, 2000: 28), whereas the Greek police inspector is very "elegant, gentle speaking in perfect English" (Durrell, 2000: 31). The author does not make any distinction between the Turks of Turkey as presenting the laziness and racially typical features of the Turks, and, as an extension of style, the racial nature of the typical features of the Ottoman Empire. He adds, "They [Turks] seem to be consumed in a disease up to soaking." (Durrell, 2000: 33)

The author quickly realized "the historical key to unlocking the culture of Cyprus as it was before the all-perverting influence of nationalism," was not that of the Ancient Greeks, or even that of Ottoman Islam, but that of Byzantium (Severis, 2000: 245). There's a suggestion that the relative peace within which Greek and Turkish inhabitants coexisted belonged to that of a more ancient civilization, with patterns of daily life more compatible with the landscape and the climate. Each colonizing wave had been assimilated to the island, never conquering it beyond the surface. There were still many differences between the Greeks and the Turks, but the national characteristics were described with a delicious style. (Durrell, 2000: 17-20)

Durrell's prose is, very often, brilliant. It is a style that emphasizes character without resorting to stereotype, with both efficiency and visual extravagance. Being also an accomplished poet, he has techniques and literary tools that other writers never knew of. Principle amongst them is the depth of his knowledge of plants, animals and geography, and the way in which they give life to the text. It is precisely the observational power afforded by those textual skills that led Durrell to grasp the forces and movements happening around him: ancient and unique island ecology, battered by storms and turbulent currents from elsewhere.

Conflicts in the Island

Bitter Lemons is a most extraordinary book. As the work of a lyrical travel writer, we first see beauty and then horror, when the revolt against the British and the clashes between the ethnicities in the island start to grow. As a record of normality slipping uncontrollably into chaos, the failure of politics and administration seals the island's fate. Sadly it seems that its lesson has been largely ignored by the politicians who might have avoided the terrible developments. One could imagine that an *enosis* (unification with Greece) is now inevitable. Not union with Greece, but rather the

union of the whole of Cyprus with the new Europe, the early undercurrent of whose formation was in reality the force that stirred the crisis of 1955.

After World War II Britain would grant the Greek-Cypriots *enosis* (Mas, 2003: 233). However, it was later found out that the British administration was delayed in handing the power over to Greece (Durrell, 2000: 138). During the 1950s, the demand for *enosis* was disseminated in the island. At the beginning of the 1950s, the British government began to counteract *enosis* and instead to promote communalism. The bi-ethnic and religious community was reinforced towards the partition of the island.

Throughout Durrell's story, a paradoxical attitude amongst the Greek Cypriots is observed: they love and respect their British masters, and at the same time, they want them off the island (Mas, 2003: 235). Britain, personified by Byron (who helped to raise a navy to depose the Ottomans), "signifies freedom, national unity, racial integrity, and most of all modernity" (Durrell, 2000: 130). Greek nationalism, craving "*enosis*" was jealous of the British. No longer wanting to be treated as the children of the British Empire, Cyprus is ready to stand alone. Colonial masters behaved with the usual incompetence and misunderstanding, imagining the Cypriots to be eternally childish people, perhaps even noble island savages within Durrell's orientalist perspective. In secret, tensions between Turkey and Greece were being deliberately inflamed (Durrell, 2000: 122). The colonial administration made a basic error. Cyprus was part of a Europe that had changed and even matured. However, the administration simply could not see that truth. It was no longer an island of farmers, but rather a homeland to a highly mobile international workforce, dispersed across Europe and America.

Eventually, "the vagaries of fortune and the demons of ill luck dragged Cyprus into the stock market of world affairs" (Durrell, 2000: 45), and armed groups emerged demanding an end to the British rule and Cyprus' reunion with Greece. Durrell was not enamored with the Cypriot militants; he felt that they were dragging the island to a "feast of unreason embedded so deeply in the medieval compost of religious hatreds, the villagers floundered in the muddy stream of undifferentiated hate like drowning men." (Durrell, 2000: 147)

The account of his stay on the island ends when he flees the island without saying goodbye to his friends. Approaching the "heavily guarded airport" by taxi, in conversation with the driver

Durrell is told "Dighenis, though he fights the British, really loves them. However, he will have to go on killing them – with regret, even with affection" (Durrell, 2000: 271). Thus, in the light of adverse political developments in relation to the *enosis* crisis, Durrell had to terminate his stay on the island. Prolongation of his stay would become hard as Greek nationalists' surveillance over the British increased its intensity. His own safety on the island would beat stake, as well as that of Turkish-Cypriots (Durrell, 2000: 213). He reflects on the point of leaving the island:

> It was time to leave Cyprus, I knew, for most of the swallows had gone, and the new times with their harsher climates were not ours to endure. My contract still had several months to run , however, and it would be wiser to let it lapse than to hurry away and perhaps give the Greek press grounds for believing that I had resigned on policy grounds, which would have been unfair to my masters. (Durrell, 2000: 228)

Durrell generously handles the description of the atmosphere of clashes with the traditional traits of the island (Durrell, 2000: 104-7). It used to be a place of idleness and relaxation in travel books (Durrell, 2000: 106). However, the troubled state of the island is put on the account of the *enosis* crisis. Durrell claims that the local Cypriot population is aware of all the tension. As an official of the British policies, Durrell became one of the instigators of the clashes, for he was required to work against the optimistic future prospects in the way of establishing *enosis* on the island. Durrell did not hesitate to emphasize that the island inhabitants preferred to be under the British administration and free from the Ottoman heritage (Durrell, 2000: 107). The peaceful and idle atmosphere of the island introduced traditional Cypriots' hospitality and pleasant orientalist quietness. The aspiration of *enosis* is mentioned many times and on occasions as the most apparent indications of turmoil in the seemingly peaceful decoration of the island and through the villages on the way to Kyrenina. (Durrell, 2000: 13)

Durrell himself transforms into a source of clashes by not favoring *enosis* among the Cypriots. As an Englishman and as the head of the Information Service on the island, he was tasked to counteract against Greek-Cypriots towards union with Greece through the magazine *Cyprus Review*. In this task, he ironically had to cite his support to the Turkish Cypriot community to achieve partition, which was the British Administration's last option. As

editor of the *Cyprus Review*, Durrell's mission was to bombard the minds of the Greek-Cypriots in a propagandist plan (Given, 1997: 63). He attacks the official direction from Athens with the "rhetoric of local demagogues and priests" (Durrell, 2000: 178). For the Athens radio, he says that its wavelengths are "the distant drums and noisy contentions, based in hate, in spite, in smallness" (Durrell, 2000: 145). As an official of the Information Office, Durrell feels obliged to defend the British Governor's anti-*enosis* position by counterattacking Greek affronts to get freedom from the British.

Another source of clashes in the island originates from the orientalism, which is utilized by Durrell for the dehelenization of life and feeling in Cyprus. The novel is abundant in offering the evidences that label the island with anti-Hellenic characteristics: "Cyprus was more eastern than its landscape would suggest" (Durrell, 2000: 32). He attempts to display the allusions so that Cyprus should appear distant from Greece, "being so close to the area of Turkey and Levantine countries." (Durrell, 2000: 59)

Durrell finds Cypriots different in temper from the Greeks from Greece: "I made my first acquaintance with the island temperament which is very different from the prevailing extrovert disposition of the metropolitan Greek" (Durrell, 2000: 28). He also agrees that Christian inhabitants of the island were not psychologically Greek, "neither in spirit nor character" (Durrell, 2000: 107). However, in the influence of orientalist perspective, he is not honest towards Greek-Cypriot friends, as he does not prevent from taking advantage of their goodwill for his own good: "I'm afraid I have become quite unscrupulous in my use of this weapon" (Durrell, 2000: 115). That is the result of the dominant orientalist influence on the literature into which he was grown.

Conclusion

Durrell's conclusions under the influence of orientalism continue when he reveals the conversations with officials on the island. Nicosia is described as "some flyblown Anatolian township" (Durrell, 2000: 155), as it is aimed "Byzantine culture was something more than the sum of the elements it drew from languishing Hellenism and the influences of the Near East" (Durrell, 2000: 123). From these words, it is obvious that ethnic religious divisions of the island are overtly evident, and this is another source of potential clashes in the island. He adds: "… in such a small island everybody is

friendly with each other, though very different" (Durrell, 2000: 68), which is a clear allusion that communities need to be separated from one another under bi-communal administration.

Durrell's duplicity and ambiguity are apparent when he adopts downgrading attitude towards the Greek-Cypriot when a drunken Greek-Cypriot boasts in a loud voice (Roessel, 1994: 11): "As for the English, I'm not afraid of them – let them put me in irons" (Durrell, 2000: 29). We see that Durrell criticizes both Turks and Cypriots in order to suit his sentiments to his purposes. The anti-Enosis sentiment is discovered in a discourse he attributes to a drunkard (Roessel, 2000:237), while his opposition to the Turkish influence is traceable in some reflections in which he humiliates the Turks for not being able to adapt to civilization.

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The New Theory of Litvistics

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Abstract: The study represents an interdisciplinary work wishing to shed light upon the relationship between natural sciences and the humanities, while describing the intricate and yet organic dialectical exchanges or influences between these two apparently remote domains. Basically, we speak about the differences and similarities between sciences and arts, in general, and, in particular, about the invisible communication between the history and philosophy of science, on the one hand, and literature and comparative literature, on the other. However, in the present paper, we will only focus upon what theory means and what it represents in order to see what literature, as a form of art, implies in theoretical terms. Of course, we will also speak about what comparative literature, as a form of science, is and, most importantly, how should one understand and use the concepts or methodologies implied by it. We will also speak about evolution, evidently, in literary terms, and we finally suggest the transference of a certain linguistic theory within the field of literary studies. We call this new type of integrated approach „lituistics."

Keywords: *integral literature, lingterature (litvistics), the given, un-created, created, energeia-ergon, revolution, complementarity, meta-theory, transitive dominants.*

Introduction

Paradoxically, or, ironically, the subject of this research coincides with the nature of its methodology: interdisciplinarity. One immediately realizes that interdisciplinarity is something that both the humanities and the sciences are craving for. If we take a few steps back, we see that, throughout human history, mankind has always been equally interested in these subjects. For instance, for ancient philosophers, like Thales, Aristotle or Plato, philosophy was a type of knowledge which encompassed the two domains. In time, we see the effects of singularization, separation, individuation and methodological specialization coming forth as the main causes, alongside the technical or scientific progress, which brought about the diversity of today's intellectual fields (of thought) or the

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academia. It is important to mention the fact that interdisciplinarity is a way of approaching different problems. Therefore, it is not a free standing value, a value *per se*, such as the aesthetic value, for example, but a linking element which determines the targeted entities to become an extension or a component in a wider network. Starting from these premises, we realize that the interdisciplinary approach can take different forms and shapes. The relationship between two or more elements cannot be and will never be one of collaboration or complementarity, but it is possible for it to become, on the contrary, an antagonistic, contrasting one, and, perhaps, sometimes – one of corroboration/fusion. The problems that arise when speaking about any sort of dialectics are, usually, of linguistic, methodological, cognitive nature, and, sometimes, problems of legitimating and institutional nature can constitute the source of great disputes. The solutions should aim for the adaptation, if not the very elaboration, of a procedure and a methodology particular to interdisciplinary research, meaning that the solutions must represent an epistemological basis, so that we may speak about theoretical and practical autonomy. Consequently, we need various research instruments, among which, the most important, in fact, is that of a universal or comparative theory of literature.

Just to be clear, it is not our intention to assert that literature and the discipline in charge of its knowledge and research (be it literary theory or comparative literature or poetics) have the same ontological, epistemological status, or even the same heuristic purposes as those of the hard sciences which study nature, the universe, the surrounding reality, be it interior or exterior. This is not possible, as Adrian Marino[2] clearly asserts. On the contrary, we emphasize the fact that the closeness between these two types of sciences offers us a clear visibility of their common elements and notes.

In broad lines, attention will be drawn towards the study of similarities and differences among the two ontological and gnoseological categories we have in mind. As we shall see, it is the influences and relationships which exist between these two sides that are of great importance. Therefore, we will try answering a series of

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[2] "We must observe without delay: (comparative) literary theory does not refer to a logical, mathematical or formal being. It is easy to observe why: its object refuses to be part of a scientific approach. Literary theory has its own type of reasoning in its own field of reference, but literature isn't a fundamentally logical type of discourse." (Marino, 1998: 45)

questions. Among the most important ones, let us mention the following: is it possible to build a model or an indexical picture (a theoretical, abstract one), by means of which one could operate when we have a comparative, interdisciplinary approach in mind? Can this study be extended to the study of other adjoining domains? The elements which are necessary for a literary analysis will always depend, or, let's say that they will be ideologically bound unto their governing paradigm from whose perspective the results obtained are used and interpreted. At the same time, theory itself depends – having a pre-emptory systemic being – on those micro-structures incorporated in its skeleton. Consequently, the results of the investigation could also be compromised by these implications. It is redundant to mention that both theory and its concepts depend, in equal measure, on the literary corpus on which they are applied. In other words, what we are trying to do, although the procedure might seem redundant, is to devise a new methodology and, with it, new theoretical instruments with the aim of their concrete implementation in literary research (be it comparative or not).

We will have to draw the reader's attention to the theoretical and fundamental character of this research, so that its results (which have not yet been applied in this format, but which are applicable) may not be understood erroneously as an arid theoretical compilation. We have to specify, from the beginning, the fact that the project intends to be a trans-historical, trans-morphological one, unifying and greatly generalizing, so that the ideas we will rely on will appear remote from each other. We believe that any project of this kind of nature and scope must be sustained by various assertions or deepening statements coming from other domains and directions which are more or less comfortable or related, from the point of view of their accessibility, even though some will not fully agree with this approach, and maintain that "solutions" can and must be sought and found somewhere inside the comparative tradition. It is needless to say that this study is not aimed at researching the relationship between the so called *science-fiction* literature and nature sciences.

An interdisciplinary and, therefore, comparative research of theories about art in general and literature in particular, given the latter two's relationship with the exact sciences, and the evolution of this dialectic in time – this is the end of our endeavour!

Before we speak about the theory of literature we will try to sketch out some basic notions and we will attempt to define both the theoretical positions on which we will base our argument, and the

confines or limits of this research. We will attempt therefore the transfer, transformation or adaptation of a linguistic theory into the domain of literary research, transforming it into a solid epistemological foundation of theories of literature. In Coșeriu's vision, integral linguistics presupposes certain principles, which are comparable, given their role and functioning power, with the principles of nature sciences. We will then discuss a new trend which has appeared within literary studies, but also in the larger context of socio-human sciences – the studies of Darwinian literary criticism.

"Given, un-created, created"

Throughout history, there have been some cases where extreme similarities were discovered between science and arts. Let us begin with a few examples: Valentin Taș cu spoke about the geometrical formula of benzene as being fruitful in elucidating the prosodic and metric aspects of the Romanian popular verse. The works of Imre Toth have shown that the relationships between science and art are interchangeable. Georg Lukacs defined science as a deanthropomorphised reflection of the world, cleansed of subjectivity, while art is an anthropomorphical reflection of existence. This is why, for Georg Lukacs, they represent a totality. They are equally valid human creations. There are of course, some cases in which artists have had certain intuitions which were confirmed by scientists: there are the famous examples found in Jules Verne's work, but there are some other examples which are not that popular. For instance, Walt Whitman said that "every leaf of grass is no less than a journey-work of the stars. He was right. Einstein's fourth dimension was almost simultaneously completed by cubism.

Starting from the essential distinction between that which is *given* and that which is *created*, we will argue that the latter component is included in the first. Thus, man as a creative subject is part of that which is *given*, but he also produces that which is *created.* Obviously, the human subject is the one establishing a connection between nature and art, but also between science and art, both of which are part of the same register of the *created.* In other words, the subject can achieve, through different means, different forms of creations. It is clear that the faculty which lies at the base of both categories (art and science) is creativity.

Traditionally, science-bound creativity is usually described as being discursive, abstract, explanatory, theoretical, observational,

verifiable, while artistically-bound types of creativity imply deep contemplation, representation, imagination, fantasy, make-believe, etc. But, if the sciences represent the study of nature (interior and exterior, subjective and objective, conscious and unconscious), the study of arts is another, more comprehensive form of science (Burgos, 1988: 23), because it contains a conscious, objective fathoming of certain processes, concepts, unconscious and subjective relations involved in the works of art.

This is why we will argue that the human subject possesses a specific function which we will call "the not-yet-created function" or the "un-created." This is to say that, having been created, and having the capacity to create art and science (be it natural science or otherwise), the human subject can analyse that which is not obvious, that which is not there – in general terms, we can say that the literary scholar can observe, analyse and organise something which is not textually, objectualy existent – something which is merely suggested. Taking into account the fact that there exists a general theory of evaluation, as described by Cesare Brandi (Brandi, 1985: 7) or Albert Thibaudet (1966: 46), we must redefine this human capacity by rebranding it and by making it a major aspect of any literary endeavour.

"Ergon—energeia"

These categories thus raise discussion about the nature of scientific language and the language of literature. Among others, theoreticians of literature (Wellek and Warren, 1967: 45-47) and semioticians like Umberto Eco (cf. Zanganeh), discuss these problems. We can insert here the dichotomy taken from Coşeriu (via Humboldt – via Aristotle) *energeia-ergon.* Science (be it of nature or of literature) and art (or literature) can be understood in at least two instances: as activity (research, effects, mutations etc.) and as product (as a finished work, as "literature"). Moreover, the study of literature (in particular the history of literature) has to do with issues of succession, while the study of nature deals with matters of repetition (Xenopol, 1990). In Thibaudet's vision, we should talk about a chronological mode of reasoning and a logical one or, according to theoreticians of literature we should speak about the representative mode and the discursive mode. A final binary structure can be found in Dilthey, according to which natural sciences are based on

explanation, whereas humanistic sciences are based on understanding (cf. Dilthey).

It is often said that art represents the individual, while science strives for the universal. If this is true, the science of art should represent the universal in the individual. Nevertheless, these two categories have no value (truth value, knowledge-wise, or aesthetic) on their own, because their opposites are a *sine qua non* condition of their existence and mode of signification. In other words, art and science represent two ways of researching the track, the axis along which one can go from the individual to the universal, or which departs from the general (complex) in order to stop at the particular (simple) thing. We are speaking, therefore, about complementarity. On the other hand, Schiller says that science and art have the duty of speaking about beauty and truth – meaning about human values – their ultimate purpose being that of human happiness (Schiller, 1981).

Theory of Literature

Thus, the science of literature is what we generally call the theory of literature. Starting from the definitions of science, theory, art and literature, we will say that the theory of literature represents the study of literature on the basis of a system (of laws, principles, concepts, ideas etc.) inscribable in a certain theoretical model (or paradigm). The system of the theory of literature is a system based on a certain type of logic and rigor – one of its own, different from those of natural sciences. In other words, we may say that the system represents a "totality" and not a "conglomeration." (Brandi, 1985: 114-115)

Wellek and Warren talk about a three-layered system: structural layer, sign layer and value-driven layer. They are also called the sonorous structure of literature, the semantic and stylistic structure of literature (or material), and the axiological structure of literature (made up of images, metaphors, symbols and myths).

Unfortunately, they don't account for literature's referentiality or its pragmatic aspects (the relationships that exist between literature and its author or its readers or the relationship between the text and its referent). In this sense, Plett speaks about "the text" as indication (the first layer – structural and sonorous), as signal (the sign layer or the material structure), and about "the text" as having a referent. Referentiality and literary pragmatics are not actually something

which we would call immanent, because they are exterior in respect to the text. We now have the distinction "interiority" – "exteriority."

Summing up, we can observe that there are three literary dimensions: a semantic dimension of literature (its referentiality), a pragmatic dimension of literature (its relationships with the author and the readers) and a syntagmatic dimension of literature (its own interior relationships and structures).

The theory of literature should account for all these types of literary dimensions. Thus, we see that literature is prone to stratification and multi-dimensionality. These properties must be included in every definition of literature. Furthemore, by making an analogy we can say that what Austin called a "speech act" or "linguistc acts" can be seen, in literary studies, as a "literary act." This is a technique, a skill, which one can learn after one has invented it – it can be seen as the equivalent of what Aristotle called dynamis – a literary act is a work of art specific to its particular means of expression (the language/the idiom). That means that we can speak about a multi-dimensional activity of literature and a stratified product of literature, but it also means that we can speak of an active multi-dimensional theory of literature and a stratified theory of literature as a finished product.

Consequently, we understand literature as having several dimensions (each having its own system of stratification), but one can also understand it by dividing it into phases. Simplifying, we can speak of a multi-dimensional literary stratification and about its functions (phases – energeia, dynamis, ergon).

There is one last aspect which needs to be signalled out. That is what literature does, what it communicates (here, Jakobson could be useful). There are, as Burgos puts it (via Iser), three stages through which literature communicates its meanings, its reasoning: production (related to the author), determination (textual) and interpretation (related to the readers). (Burgos 1988: 15-16)

The division of literary studies is rather old (Thibaudet, 1966: 8-22), but well worth mentioning, because the distinction between literary criticism and literary history, shows that the theory of literature should encompass both of these types of research. This is why the theory of literature should account for the ways in which literary criticism and the history of literature can operate: meta-criticism and infra/meta-history. The most important thing is that the theory of literature itself also suffers from this sort of skepticism, obliging us to reconsider the ways in which it can actually function.

In a sense, by questioning itself, literary theory becomes – a theory of theory or meta-theory.

Comparative Literature

Adrian Marino speaks about literary criticism as being a synthesis of three types of processes: historical, theoretical and evaluative. In other words, in Marino's view, literature is a three-folded entity: structural, conceptual and terminological (Marino, 1998: 13).

One of the most important concepts promoted by the Romanian theoretician is the invariant. He also classifies these invariants: there are, in his view, anthropological invariants, theoretical-ideological invariants, literary-theoretical invariants, and literary invariants. (Marino, 1998: 74-75)

Marino's vision is important for several reasons: firstly, because it emphasizes the hermeneutical aspect of literary theory. Secondly, because he speaks about the necessity of installing a new theory of comparative literature and, last but not least, his vision is integrative, fluid, mobile – in one word, harmonious. For Henri Delacroix, the harmony of functions and relations of the elements of any system represents an indispensable conclusion for their correct functioning.

Similarly, Corin Braga argues that a theoretical and comparative method should be based on complementarity. This methodology should be constituted from a "complex and stratified" approach on three planes: metaphysical, psychological, and cultural. Summing up, we end up with metaphysical constants, antropological (and psychological) constants, cultural (literary) constants and, finally, paradigmatic or epistemological (theoretical and ideological) constants.

All the aspects of literature we have spoken about until now – its phases and inherent layers – depend on a dialectic of the new and the old. The old quarrel of the ancients with the moderns confirms this hypothesis. Theoreticians of literature, but others as well, speak about this break, about revolution as being the key to understanding this complex dynamic relationship.

Litvistics

We come to the conclusion that the majority of the aspects which we talked about are dependent on one thing: language. Linguistics is, in Coşeriu's view, the basis of each and every humanistic science.

"The epistemological edifice," as the author of one article expressed herself, consists in the dissociation of different types of sciences depending on the nature of their object, and the ideal of scientific-ness or objectivity of any science must differ according to its object of research (Georgeta Corniţ ă).

If the language is a cultural object, then the science of language, (*i.e.* linguistics) must adapt and form a theory which is specific to this object and, consequently, to possess a "characteristic means of interpretation, logic, and argument." Thus, this general science, which governs all human sciences, respects certain principles: the principle of objectivity, the principle of humanism (man as a free being in history), the principle of tradition, the principle of anti-dogmatism (this corresponds to the principle of totality we mentioned) and the principle of public utility. According to integral linguistics, the three instances of literature we spoke about (potential, process and product) are equivalent to the three planes of language: the universal, the historical, and the individual one. Language is defined as *logos semantikos* and its purposes serve different dimensions: apophantic, pragmatic, and poetic. Lolita Zagaevski and Oana Boc speak about similarities between Coşeriu's linguistics and poetics and about the influences which exist between modern poetics and linguistic theories (structuralist, post-structuralist etc.). In other words, linguistic theories offered the epistemological foundations of different literary poetics whose prime material is language. Coşeriu's integral linguistics is based, according to Oana Boc's suggestion, on language's function of signification, which can be regarded as the starting point of any poetics, because language as a dynamic process is placed under the general umbrella of creativity.

This is why we view literature as being something dependent on human language and creativity. We will call this being of literature inside language – litvistics (or literature). Literature borrows some of the aspects which, in Coşeriu□s view, describe language: its competences (sometimes if they are intentionally discarded, they produce literary effects), its contents, and, finally, its conformity value (which, says the literature in this domain, can be suspended in

at least 5 ways – producing different effects). According to the theory of integral linguistics, every linguistic phenomenon must satisfy a set of five fundamental rules or universals: creativity (energeia) means innovation, although not in a radical sense, because one needs to communicate. This brings us to the second universal: alterity – every linguistic act must be oriented towards another speaker (according to Coş eriu, this is the most important aspect). Semanticity means that language has its own meanings, its own contents which are defined by tradition. Historicity is the result between the combination of creativity and alterity. Materialism – language must be externalised and materialised by speaking or by writing (or any other means). However, we will not go into further details. Summing up, different ways of studying literature can be seen as different avatars, different types of approaches (even if they are historically or diachronically assumed) which have a correspondent in Coşeriu's theory.

The New Studies of Darwinian Literary Criticism

The last aspect of the paper refers to Darwinian literary criticism studies. On the one hand, "Literary Darwinists read books in search of innate patterns of human behaviour." This trend is different from those of the deconstructionists, or identity-seekers, because "its goal is to study literature through biology." Most importantly, they say that the truth of literature is derived from the laws of nature. Moreover, Jonathan Gotschall views literature as data: "fast, inexhaustible, cross-cultural and cheap."

On the other hand, literary Darwinism investigates the reasons why we read and write fiction. The answer is "that we inherit many of the predispositions we deem to be cultural through our genes." Unfortunately, there is a downside to this: "Literary Darwinism – like many offshoots of Darwinism – tends to find favour with those looking for universal explanations. Like Freudianism and Marxism, it has large-scale ambitions: to explain not just the workings of a particular text or author but of texts and authors over time and across cultures as well." But this is not necessarily a problem because this is what comparative literature is also after, for some time now. Edward O. Wilson, probably the most important figure in the field (besides Darwin), says that "We're talking about adding deep history, deep genetic history, to art criticism." Their limitations are obvious: "Tone, point of view, reliability of the narrator -- these are literary tropes that often elude Literary Darwinists," "Literary Darwinism is not

equally good at explaining everything. It is best on big social novels, on people behaving in groups."

It is easily observed that Literary Darwinism is good at explaining the point of literature. They have several answers: literature is seen as a defence against our imaginary, mental life which gives us the confidence and the power to understand life in all its complexity. Another answer views reading as a "form of fitness training, an exercise in 'what if' thinking." Another idea is that "literature began as religion or wish fulfilment: we ensure our success in the next hunt by recounting the triumph of the last one." Finally, writing is described as being a sex-display trait or a mechanism for social cohesion. Wilson, Steven Pinker and other cognitive psychologists believe that neurobiology could definitely help Literary Darwinism in becoming a fully acknowledged science.

In broad lines, art and creativity, as we have seen, are specific to the human subject who possesses that function of the un-created. In this respect, the Darwinian critics maintain more or less the same thing – the fact that art, language and creativity are characteristic human traits, traits which have helped us throughout time to evolve into what we are today. Creativity, seduction, and the idea of beauty are secondary products (bi-products) of the process of sexual selection by means of which man succeeds in arousing and maintaining interest. Denis Dutton asserts that we like symmetrical, well-done things, denoting intelligence, skills, careful planning and sometimes access to rare materials. This movement represents the genesis of a promising new field of knowledge, especially in light of the fact that it promises, or at least intends to unite two realities: the exploration of human nature through art (the artistic structures and mental processes used consciously or unconsciously by authors and critics when they read and write), as well as through science (by using the evolutionary theory).

Conclusions

This study wants to scrutinize the *status quo* of the humanities, its procedures and its methods. Certainly, there are, in the sciences, a certain set of principles which govern knowledge, but they are different from those which exist within the humanities – because they are not necessarily based upon experience, objectivity, measurement or verification. Science communicates the message x from A to B. Art implies an A which communicates an x, while B

interprets y. In the first case, the message is never fully transmitted – scientific revolutions are a proof of this – this is why we can say that the function of the message is metonimical, while the artistic message is always metaphorical. Scientific facts are always part of a single system of thought, while literary facts can always be inscribed into a multitude of systems.

We have seen the existence of a large number of invariants, constants or archetypes. These elements can be found inside or outside a literary piece. What we have tried to show is that these elements represent the building blocks of literary theory, because without them, the theoretical processes (generalisations, syntethis and abstractisation) would give birth to empty concepts. Vice-versa they would become blind processes. The sciences also use these types of processes. This allows us to say that those elements which are common to both domains (humanitites and sciences) represent the concrete results of the influences and relationships that exist between them. We will call these elements "tranzitive dominants," borrowing the term from Gheorghe Crăciun, because "reflexive dominants" are those elements (archetypes, etc.) which do not go beyond their specific domain, while transitive dominants are capable of transgressing several domains.

By doing this, we can actually see what we are dealing with. We have a concrete, precise object, which the theory of literature will investigate. Literature has a new exact definition, even if it is a dynamic one. This new theory has its own methodology. It is not a paradigm change, but a synthesis of many literary and non-literary paradigms. This is why this type of approach can be extrapolated to other human sciences.

By putting together traditional literary studies (represented by all the theories of literature, be they structuralist, formalist, etc. and the theory of comparative literature), with the "new" shift brought about by integral linguistics and the Darwinist literary studies, we install a new type of literary theory – The Theory of Integral Lituistics. The term integral is obviously borrowed from Coşeriu's theory, but it goes beyond it, representing a whole new level of thought and having a whole new perspective. We can maintain, by utilising Coşeriu's principles, the new Darwinist literary studies without discarding any literary tradition. This means that the new theory of integral lituistics could be one of the first social and human sciences which offer a clear explanation of literature, while tackling

general human (anthropological) aspects in respect to creativity and language.

On the whole, we strongly support embedding and substitution based on complementarity, but also, the lack of a fixed determination, as the only ways in which we can hope to systematically apply new notions, concepts and processes, which have nothing in common, except the fact that they have only one continuity – the lack of continuity, they are constantly variable.

The Theory of Integral Litvistics offers an interdisciplinary pattern which represents the most complete methodology of literary research. Mobility should not be interpreted as instability, because change is positive. Change is the only way in which we can hope to grow. By coupling it with some of the new types of approaches out there, like Morretti's endeavour, we could finally hope to construct a "serious," objective, epistemological foundation to human studies.

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Sherley Anne Williams Revealing Sites of Dissension and Encouraging Reconciliation in *Dessa Rose*

Ana-Maria Demetrian[1]

Abstract: *Dessa Rose* is a complex and powerful novel. It is at the same time a historical, political and universal story, which brings forward the idea that written and oral language have a liberating role and shows that some literacy can put a constraint on the individual. The book is written in resistance and response to the twentieth century America. Sherley Anne Williams reveals the injustices done to black people in general and black women in particular and seeks to offer a correct perspective on the reality of her time, offering us the true and harsh images of the painful African American life, a detailed psychological analysis of different feelings and behaviors, and a very real portion of what courage and love mean. Nevertheless, this story is not racist; nor does it encourage revenge. This is actually an optimistic book about reactions and actions which can ensure a good life, a bright future. The novel is full of useful lessons for all readers regardless of their race, sometimes even of their gender, of the space or the time they live in, and it implies that strength, communication and acceptance are the key elements that should govern our life.

Keywords: *neo-slave narrative, slavery, oppression, stereotypes, racism, gender, heroism, self-assertion, individuality.*

Dessa Rose is an account of slavery written in contemporary times. This neo-slave narrative reveals and focuses on the truth about the enslaved individual during a harsh time in the U.S. history. These contemporary interventions into the stories of slavery are imperatives given by the realities that the neo-slave narrative writers had to face in their daily lives. They must awaken the reader and trigger an alarm signal by re-articulating the community's historical memory, by repairing the inevitable inaccuracies and incompleteness of black history, by revising it, by shedding light on the person and not the institution, by recuperating the voice and the body lost in a simultaneous oppression of race and gender, and by recreating the unimaginable physical, spiritual, and emotional cruelty springing from racism, greed, and an acute desire to exercise power and authority. Nevertheless, "there [is] an absence of condemnation in [Williams'] work" (Artman) as Toni Morrison explains in an interview with Deborah Artman. Further on, it must be mentioned

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that even if the action is set over 150 years ago, Williams' *Dessa Rose* also touches upon many contemporary issues and some general aspects in a person's life.

The book has obviously valuable things to point out about past and present race relations like interracial relationships and honest, direct dialogue. It puts at the center two strong-willed, proud, intelligent and powerful women whose experiences can be viewed as useful lessons for all readers regardless of their race, sometimes even of their gender, of the space or the time they live in. It can indeed be said that having Sherely Anne Williams' "treasure of a book available again for new and more readers is not only necessary, it is imperative."[2] The novel has been highly acclaimed by critics who have written only favorable reviews in which *Dessa Rose* is characterized as "a deep, rich, compelling work,"[3] "a powerful story ...emotionally affecting and totally unforgettable,"[4] "absorbing, (…) true and brilliantly imagined."[5]

The fact that slavery, racism, and oppression are still of great interest for contemporary authors may come as a surprise for some readers but the idea is to understand and learn the lessons of the past in order to be able to deal with the present. Moreover history is strongly connected with life. The problems of the past are still present in today's America although some refuse to admit or see it. It is a well-known and proved thing that people rarely learn from history and thus the painful, harsh, and uncomfortable past experiences repeat themselves in the present under the same or slightly different circumstances. People fail to listen and be open-minded or they are too afraid to confront history and reality. The result is a never-ending suffering, springing from stereotypical thinking and behavior which, in their turn, entail hate. Bias is a human condition and the history and present of The United States and of the world, in general, is full of prejudice against people because of their race, physical appearance, religion, class, sexual orientation and others. The major progress of the twentieth century is indeed the outlawing of discrimination of all kinds, but reality of life shows us that hate and unequal treatment are a dreadful constant of our life. Furthermore, history is always going to be studied from all angles to keep the

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[2] Toni Morrison's words on the front cover of the novel.
[3] Alice Walker's words on the back cover of the book.
[4] A *New York Times* review quoted on the back cover of *Dessa Rose*.
[5] A *Newsday* review quoted on the back cover of Williams' neo-slavery narrative.

meanings of it as close to reality as humanly possible, and the best analysts will always be those that have been closer to past stories. When bias is the reason behind an unlawful act, it is considered a hate crime. Such eruptions of hate, once being described as Southern phenomena, are today reported also in the North and in the West. Officials and media acknowledge that nowadays hate wears even more faces than in the past, including rejection based on race. Even with a black president, America is not safe from racism. According to one of the American official sites[6] the result of the last presidential elections led to many racist revolts. The same source also asserts that every day blacks and whites become hate crime victims because of their race, religion, sexual inclinations. So it is a well-known fact that Americans are still an intolerant nation, as many other nations are. Consequently, the actuality of racism cannot and should not be questioned, but it should alarm the population. Moreover, many whites and even blacks think they know something about slavery, but few of them really do, because of the historical and social sources read or listened to.

In her neo-slave narrative, Sherley Anne Williams shows resistance to some texts on blackness calling "attention to how black stories are entered into the historical record" (Beaulieu, 1999: 30), insisting on the importance of an enslaved female voice to the historical and social record. Like all the contemporary authors dealing with slave narratives, she seeks to repair the inaccuracies of black history and of black stories, which have appeared out of the pen of white historians. She wants for the African Americans the opportunity of self-definition and self-representation in a still discriminatory society and, as a result, she is very concerned with the matters of black public voice. Her authorial intention to challenge the legitimacy of white social and discursive power over the slaves and the fugitives is openly stated. *Dessa Rose*'s subject neither takes slavery as its only subject, nor is it focused only on enslaved protagonists or blacks. Unlike the authors of slave narratives, she avoids placing the institution of slavery at the center of the story; she focuses on the individual integrating himself/herself into the family and the community, she brings out the female voice and gives love a vital importance in the characters' lives. Thus, Williams adds to the issues of literacy, identity, freedom, and sometimes family, the issue of love in all its forms – maternal love, man-woman love, community

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[6] www.teachingtolerance.org

or peer love. In addition to this, men's narratives no longer have exclusiveness, and the suffering, hurt mothers and the violated women are presented as counterparts of male heroes. Williams' text is written both in resistance to the whites' tendency to leave aside accuracy and write about bloody, violent acts, about sexually suggestive scenes, and to the their manner of filtering the historical information through their thinking, based on false ideas and false reasoning, ignoring the existence of gender differences in their accounts of African Americans' lives. Women must definitely be represented in a true light because they embody a simultaneity of oppressions, that of race and gender and can be thus characterized by a "double double consciousness" (Gallego, 2003: 33). Therefore, contrary to the dry history books, such novels – telling difficult stories, rooted in history – have the role of opening people's eyes and even make them feel uncomfortable, affecting them at an unexpected level most of the times.

So, in this analysis of Sherley Anne Williams' neo-slave narrative, we must first note the author's repulse to that literature and writing that maim African American history and life. In the "Author's Note," she admits "being outraged by a certain, critically acclaimed novel of the early seventies that travestied the as-told-to memoir of slave revolt leader Nat Turner" (Williams, 1986: 5). Williams speaks on behalf of all African Americans when she expresses her disappointment and pain caused by those texts that betray them. And she describes in appreciative words the black's manner of surviving by word of mouth – a process which has been made "a high art" (Williams, 1986: 8). At the same time, her choice of fighting and resisting, of making history with a pen in her hand attests to her appreciation of the written word too, because knowledge imparted in this way has the power to bring about progress, as long as it represents the truth. This tension between orality that liberates, working together with literacy that humanizes and literacy that misinforms, is indicative of the effect of double-consciousness. On the one hand, she privileges orality over literacy in her novel, and on the other. she puts all her hopes in the power of her text to enlighten readers. Furthermore, she believes in the honesty and relevancy of African American writing, but criticizes male authors for always placing men at the center of their works, siding in this way with white women, as they are wronged in the same way – minimization or indifference. Williams and Angela Davis agree on a need to re-evaluate "the historical significance of black enslaved

women" (Sievers, 1999: 92) because of "1950s and 60s white historical and sociological explanations of 'Negro pathology' (…), of the male-dominated Black Power and Black Aesthetics movements" (Sievers, 9). They clearly lead a debate on stereotypical thinking and conservative views, but this does not mean that she does not appreciate some of the ideas promoted by these movements such as black pride, self-esteem, assertion of black identity while entirely disapproving the encouragements concerning separatism.

A neo-slave narrative written by a female writer, *Dessa Rose* is a vessel for the recreation of African American history and for the fight for recuperating the voice and the body of the marginalized and/or the wronged. The main character, Dessa, uses her voice to liberate herself from the prescriptive pen of Nehemiah. Nehemiah is interested in Dessa and her story, but not to reveal or understand the truth, but rather to find more effective measures of control over black slaves. He ignores the fact that she is a human being with feelings and a mind of her own, an imprisoned person who needs justice to be done. For him, Dessa is a subject in the story he needs to write for himself and other white people in search of glory and control over the others. What is more, Nehemiah uses her and especially her words "in support of, rather than as a weapon against, the institution of slavery" (Sievers, 97), contrary to what an original slave narrative author would do.

The difference between what it is told by Dessa and what it is written by Nehemiah has many reasons: Nehemiah fails to understand her properly, and some of her "unfamiliar idiom and phrase" puzzle him and makes him lose "the tale in the welter of names the darky called" (Williams, 1986: 18); sometimes Nehemiah, fascinated by the stories, forgets to write and other times he deciphers Dessa's story from "the hastily scratched notes" (Williams, 1986: 18); and, in the end, he reconstructs her voice and her account "as though he remember[s] it word for word" (Williams, 1986: 18). This is obviously not accuracy, but an act of clear appropriation. Besides his stated intention of writing a book on slaves to help whites completely eradicate the roots of rebellion, besides his failure to accurately inscribe the slave's story because of his inability to read Dessa, Nehemiah's writing is wrong and evil because it contains all the stereotypes of the time about African Americans. Dessa's pertinent and self-determined questions "You think, (…) you think what I say now going to help peoples be happy in the life they sent? If that be true, (...) why I not be happy when I live it?" (Williams,

1986: 50) are relevant and trigger the reader's attention to the ideas stated above and, at the same time, show our protagonist's intelligence, proving that she is aware of the reality around her and understands more than she is expected to. Her inquisitive mind reveals her as a person actively involved in life and in taking control of her life. But Nehemiah fails to interpret the words he hears, as for him Dessa cannot possibly be able to think and react intelligently. This stereotypical thinking comes with a cost; he is outsmarted by the very person he considers unevolved just because she is black. For him, Dessa's function is clearly that of a "racial and sexual 'other,' who is necessary for the definition of an 'American identity,' but to whom the basic tenants of American citizenship do not apply" (Sievers, 98), as Sievers points out. Nehemiah describes blacks only in negative terms because for him the blackness of their skin brings them close or even makes them comparable with animals, evil, sin and is a visual hint to ugliness and misery. According to Nehemiah, Dessa is "the 'she-devil' (…) a wild and timorous animal finally brought to bay, moving quickly and clumsily to the farthest reaches of the cellar allowed by her chains," being "in a dangerously excitable state when first apprehended – biting, scratching, spitting, a wildcat – apparently unconcerned about the harm her actions might cause her unborn child" (Williams, 1986: 22-23); and "the stench of the root cellar" is "'composed' (…) 'almost equally of stale negro and whatever else had been stored there through the years'" (Williams, 1986: 23). It is thus clear that Williams' use of the white journalist and writer in her novel can be easily connected to her acute critique of William Tyson's *The Confessions of Nat Turner*, because Dessa's story, like that of Nat Turner, is reconstructed in somebody else's mind to sustain the political programs of the time rather than to reveal reality and write history. And, in addition to this, our author is evidently very much against stereotypical thinking and behavior, which usually seriously and negatively affects both the person who adopts it and the person against whom it is directed.

Nehemiah's stereotypical beliefs, his prejudiced attitude, are shown in his damaging white discourse. The author rejects them and dismisses them as evil with the help of Dessa Rose and her intuitive mind. The heroine manages to be strong in the face of injustice and inhumane treatment and to transform her conversations with Nehemiah into a "game" "playing on words" (Williams, 1986: 60) to mislead him. Such exercise of the mind is a proof of her intelligence and an assertion of her individuality and humanity. Deborah E.

McDowell speaks of Dessa's use of subversive language in her conversations with Nehemiah revealing "her acumen with language and her awareness of the necessity of surviving by wit and craft" (McDowell, Rampersad, 1987). As for Nehemiah's last entry and especially his last words in his writings – "But the slut will not escape me. Sly bitch, smile at me, pretend. She won't escape me" – they are another proof of a white American's corrupted understanding of the concept of freedom, as Sievers also notes in her analysis of the escape of Dessa from the white man's prison. An active listener or reader of the novel has also noted so far Williams' ability to blend oral and written discourses in such a way as to serve her purpose of uncovering life and history as it has been. Ashraf H.A. Rushdy is right in saying that our author is against that oppressive writing used "as the most significant medium within a political system which has 'betrayed' and endangered African American existence in the New World" and for "an emancipatory orality" (Rushdy, 1993), but she is also for African Americans' writing, which is another reliable tool for uncovering the dark and unspeakable parts of history and life.

But the novel is not only about history and about the past social and cultural constructs that have influenced America and continue to shape it. Williams' wonderful book is much more complex and larger in scope. It is crucial for those who seek to acquire a correct understanding of their past in order to go on into the future and have a better life. Still, existence cannot be reduced to a recounting of history and to an explanation of society's beliefs. Our writer knows this and, as a consequence, she brings to the reader's attention one of the most important human relationships that can deeply touch a human being, that of a love relationship. Such relationship acquires even greater significance when placed and read in the context of the twentieth century America. We can read about Dessa and Kaine's love from the very first pages of the novel. Dessa relives the intensity of their romance in a dream. Their love is emotionally deep; it is so much more than an ardent desire. Their affection is mutual; Kaine has chosen her – "Kaine (…) pick me out and ask me for his woman" (Williams, 1986: 19) – and she has also liked him physically – "his eyes did so sparkle (…) [had] the color of lemon tea and honey" (Williams, 1986: 13-14) – and emotionally because "this man sho know how to love" (Williams, 1986: 14). And "Nighttime was for holding, for simple caresses that eased tired limbs, for sleep," (Williams, 1986: 48) not necessarily for love

making, although this other kind of "love, her hand at his back, his mouth (…) his lips (…) on hers …." (Williams, 1986: 14) exists. The reader can only appreciate this "beautiful romance between two human beings of African descent" (Robinson, 2007). And what is more, their free choice of "each other as partners in a monogamous loving relationship" and the pride Dessa "feels at Kaine choosing her" (Beaulieu, 1999: 32), represent acts of self-determination and an assertion of freedom.

Nevertheless, they cannot ignore the reality of slavery, which makes them legally the property of others. Aware of the vulnerability of their love, Kaine tells Dessa to avoid becoming pregnant because having a child under such circumstances is inconceivable for him, as Dessa remembers: "'Maybe is a place with no whites, nigga can be free.' But he don't know where that is. He find it, he say we have us babies then" (Williams, 1986: 50). He affords to make plans – something totally denied to slaves – because they have their methods of avoiding pregnancy without their masters even suspecting anything, which can be viewed as a powerful act of revolt and an undermining of the white's unjust control and authority. So, Williams presents a love story and, at the same time, fights against the injustices of the time. But life or its hardships are by no means easy to avoid in such times. There is much physical and psychological pain which must be brought to light in order to offer the readers the complete picture.

Dehumanization and physical and emotional scarring are a cruel reality and a constant in the African Americans' lives. It is far worse though in the case of women. Trapped in an existence in which there is no future, they are always in fear of being whipped and receive other terrible physical and emotional punishments, like rape or having their children sold. Forced to live with physical and psychological marks, often exposed in public, many slave women think of nothing but flight. Moreover, these limitations placed on the African American romantic autonomy through sexuality, together with their exploitation as workers and as mothers, make the life of African American women totally unbearable, leading them to extreme gestures, such as abortion, infanticide, violence or, in the best case scenario, to a brave attempt of escaping despite all odds. A complete denial of their identity even that expressed through sexuality, of all forms of self-expression makes them stronger and more determined or pushes them to live a death-in-life or worse, to prefer physical death to a life of slavery. Therefore, more and more

women define and assert themselves by regendering themselves in a space of physical freedom. For instance, Dessa and her sister, Carrie Mae, manage to prove that, first of all, they are women with feelings and desires and they can become mothers, only by choice. Anne E. Goldman shows in "I Made the Ink" that the African American woman's double oppression is carried out more through her motherhood than through her womanhood, because the "woman's 'I' [can] only signify 'mother'" (Goldman, 1990: 314). Barbara Christian, too, speaks of the black women's sole function as being that of producing workers and of nurturing them until they, themselves, are equipped to become "producers" (Christian, 1985: 219) for society.

Taking into consideration everything mentioned above, it can be said that *Dessa Rose* is neither a merely romantic text, nor a dry story about the history of America. The novel represents a complete picture of real life, one that includes complex love relationships and the moving history of pain, of violence written on the black skin with the whip, and of the treatment of women in general. writing cannot be reduced to a string of conventional romantic love stories and historical episodes. The narrative treats with great interest the materiality of the world: work, money, social positions. The author does not limit her book to the life and history of black people; she also brings out yet another political issue which concerns white women from the South in the antebellum America. She cannot stay indifferent to the injustice done to them either.

Gender inequality in the antebellum America has little to do with race, and both black and white women find themselves in a subordinate position in society. According to the American culture, the place of Southern women is in the house and they must be endowed with moral qualities and should make themselves attractive for their husbands. Their most important roles are that of being good mothers and that of being good wives. They are physically and intellectually dependent on men, who are seen as the pillars of the house and of society, the ones strong enough to face the cruel and material world. For Williams "powerlessness as a result of one's gender identity is a stronger unifying force than race is a dividing one" (Beaulieu, 1999: 43). Through Dessa and Ruth and the bond that is created between them, the novel reverses the conventional expectation that a nineteenth century woman is powerless without a man in her life. Dessa and Ruth are two women and mothers who, in the absence of their husbands and with no family around to support

them, find the strength, mostly in their children, but also deep down in their souls, to ignore and defeat the forces of an oppressive society and to overcome their financial insecurity. They have the intelligence to beat white slaveholders and slave traders at their own game with their own weapons. Being aware that in the case of Bertie's return "She would have no more rights than they [blacks]" (Williams, 1986: 169), and realizing that the white woman is their only chance to freedom, the two women agree to participate together at a con scheme to raise money to improve their future. Their actions, seen by Goldman as being an indicative of "woman pride" and of "mother love," are meant to show them "victor over the 'power' and 'law' of the master" (Goldman, 1990: 15). But Dessa and Ruth's force of character and determination do not make them insensitive and incapable of recognizing love when they see it. Contrary to what slave narratives would present and to what is expected of a black text, the two women get a second chance for love. Even if they have been deeply hurt and find it difficult to open their hearts and are somehow scared to allow themselves to desire again, they accept to get involved into a romantic relationship. The difficulties and happenings Dessa and Harker and Ruth and Nathan live bring them closer to each other.

Dessa and Harker's relationship is based on mutual respect and recognition of the other person's individuality. Accepting and understanding each other's past experiences represents the beginning of a pure and warm relationship which evolves into a love relationship full of tenderness and caring, a dream relationship which can be easily described as the ideal bound between a woman and a man. To like a person who has many fears and weaknesses, and to show him/her that such fears and weaknesses are in reality part of her/his value is indeed true love and a lesson for everybody. Harker encourages Dessa into believing that she is beautiful despite of her scars, that she can awaken a man's passion and feel passion herself, and that the signs of the whip do not make her weak but are a proof of the strength she must have had at then and after – a strength which has helped her move forward and hope for the better. Dessa's words about her first lovemaking with Harker are revelatory:

> Harker was laying up there, naked as jaybird, calm as you please; his hands folded behind his head, his legs crossed at the ankle just like he was his own self's bed, in his self's cabin. "Dess?" Voice quiet as the night, "Dessa, you know I know how they whipped

you." His head was right by my leg and he turned and lifted my dress, kissed my thigh. Where his lips touched was like fire on fire and I trembled. "It ain't impaired you none at all," he said and kissed my leg again. "It only increase your value." (Williams, 1986: 191)

Such feelings are made to last and the end of the novel offers a perspective on their future together: "Harker… touch me – even now; sometime, just get close to me… (…) and never mock at me for my weakness, say I'm his weakness, too" (Williams, 1986: 235). Passion, love, appreciation, and inner peace characterize the present and clearly the future of this couple. So life is fair and rewards strong believers and fighters. The reader can see that there is nothing or no one that can oppose inner force, not even oppressive structures or the powerful. The more you desire something, the more the chances of a victory increase.

Ruth and Nathan live a similar intense and romantic love story, but in the end each goes on a separate way. It is not that theirs is not a serious relationship but it is of a different kind. They both find in each other the company, the support, and the affection needed in a tough period of their life. Ruth and Nathan's relationship is a simple, non-hierarchical white female/black male relationship based on mutual attraction, sympathy, and respect. Nathan really likes her for what she is; it is not only the satisfaction of being desired by a white woman. Nathan confesses to Dessa that he likes Ruth just as she is; for him her whiteness is a quality, is something appealing. Despite what his friends might think, he enjoys being with her for her, and not because this way he can have what white men have, although he recognizes that this is something that makes him feel good too: "I likes her cause she white; I likes you cause you got that old pretty red color under your skin. (…) If you mean that I'm getting something that the white man always kept for hisself, well, yes. *I likes that, too*" (Williams, 1986: 173). Ruth and Nathan's relationship is open, sincere, and non-oppressive: Ruth talks to Nathan about her husband and about her doubts and fears concerning their relationship; Nathan tells Ruth the truth about his first mistress and assures her that she is by far prettier; they both think of a plan to make some money for a better future. Moreover, Dessa's description of their closeness during the journey gives the reader an idea about the romanticism present in their passionate relationship: "I don't think Nathan and Miz Lady did more than hold hands or walk apart for a minute

throughout that whole journey" (Williams, 1986: 205). So, their love story is not only a representation of "free interracial and heterosexual desire," (Basu, 2002) but also a satisfying romantic relationship between two mature persons who never forget that there is something greater in scope than their relationship. In the end, given the circumstances and the time, each of them has to follow another route in life, which is the needed one.

Although in the end Ruth appears as a wise, sensible and mature person, she has not always been like this. In the beginning she does not know how to relate or build a healthy relationship with people of African descent. She has a stereotypical behavior and thinking, which bring only suffering and pain, and a feeling of alienation. Ruth cannot simply trust African Americans. Even if she has a good heart and she herself believes she is just and tolerant, she always controls the African Americans around her. Ruth is not motivated by politics, but by the induced belief that black people exaggerate or lie, and thus they cannot be trusted. An example of control narrative is represented by Dessa's case. When Ada and Harker say that Dessa "has been sold by a cruel master," Ruth immediately thinks that she "certainly acted mean enough to have been ruined by a cruel master – kicking and hitting at whoever got in her way the few times Rufel had seen her roused from stupor. [And] the girl's back was scarless and to hear Ada tell it, every runaway in the world was escaping from a 'cruel master'" (Williams, 1986: 91). Then, when Ada tells her story about the cruelty and evilness of her master who "lusted with her and then planned the seduction of Ada's daughter, Annabelle," (Basu, 2002: 51) his daughter too becomes indignant about this and feeds her feeling by reconstructing Ada's story: "No white man would do that" (Williams, 1986: 91). Ruth always seems to forget and fails to understand Dorcas' advice to "keep a lady tongue in [her] mouth" (Williams, 1986: 92), meaning that she should not pretend to be able to speak for a slave woman, and she also seems to forget how Bertie punishes their slaves and how excruciating their screams seem to her when she hears them. Not even when Nathan describes the tortures Dessa has endured does Ruth want to believe that this can be true. So Nathan receives the same treatment. At first, she is sure that he, like many other fugitive slaves, exaggerates, and that there is something behind their story. She cannot believe him until she has the proof in front of her eyes. Only when Ruth sees Dessa's scars, she understands the high level of inhumanity characterizing whites who whip slaves over their private

parts not to impair their value. The visual image of Dessa's scars, perceived as the writing of cruelty on one's body, is horrifying. Dessa's bottom is "so scarred that Rufel thought she must be wearing some sort of garment (…) The wench's loins [look] like a mutilated cat face" (Williams, 1986: 154). So, Ruth finally considers the suffering of slaves "How did they bear such pain? she wondered, thinking then of a branding iron searing tender flesh. Surely whipping was enough; there was nothing she had ever heard like the scream of a darky under the lash" (Williams, 1986: 138) and she does it out of a feeling of guilt for white crimes and tortures, as Mark B. McWilliams points out in "The Human Face of the Age: the Physical Cruelty of Slavery and the Modern American Novel." In the end, both women learn to listen to each other and reject their prescriptive roles. With their insistence on calling each other by their real name, that is Ruth, not Rufel, and Dessa, not Odessa, they "expose the cracks and contradictions of slavery" (McKible, 1994: 223) and open "a dialogue" between them resisting and opposing in this way the prescribed norms. When Rufel tells Dessa "My name Ruth … I ain't your mistress" and Dessa answers "my name Dessa, Dessa Rose. Ain't no O to it" (Williams, 1986: 232) the former "shatters her own representations of the past and the ideology informing it" (Williams, 1986: 57) and the latter cancels out the "Otherness" and "objectification," as well as "the zero of nonbeing or worthlessness," (Williams, 1986: 57) that "O" that Nehemiah has added to her name to assert his dominance and deny Dessa's individuality. And more importantly, at the very end Dessa, like Ruth, proves to have reached the maximum level of wisdom and to have acquired the power to detach herself from the context of her life and to judge people according to their actions and character, not to their race or personal choices. Her words about her feelings for Ruth are revelatory in this sense: "I wanted to hug Ruth. I didn't hold nothing against her, not 'mistress,' not Nathan, not skin." (Williams, 1986: 232-233)

This relationship between a black and a white woman and the love stories presented here have a crucial role in the novel, helping Williams in her fight against a perverted and oppressive system, which denies African Americans and sometimes Americans the basic human rights: to think and speak for themselves, to develop their own individuality and to choose freely in life. Moreover, these human interrelationships also help the readers to go beyond the level of history and politics and reach the level of universality. Nowadays, oppression can be related to economics, power, education, class, age

and even physical aspect. Another form of contemporary oppression is entailed by the fact that some men still think of women as weak and emotional human beings not capable of succeeding in all domains as they do, others still believe that a woman's place is only in the house near the children. This is why putting at the center of the novel two strong and determined women and presenting love relationships based on mutual respect, passion and love are ways of fighting for the right to a respectful place for women in society and for the equality between women and men; facts that can sometimes be part of our present day realities. If all these are true nowadays, then we have to know that one's life should represent only our beliefs and should not be shaped by the intersections with our relatives, our friends, the community, and the politics. There should be a measure in everything. It is true that we all need to pay attention to history and its lessons and participate in the construction of culture because one's identity is a story that stretches from the past to the present and into the future, that is structured by cultural elements such as race, gender, class, but it is also clear that we must first take into consideration our desires and the fact that we all have or should have a universe of our own, built in accordance with our needs and which should reflect our choices: a husband or wife, children raised properly, friends, community. Our universe should make us happy and not the others. By allowing cultural stereotypes and general stereotypical thinking to enter and govern our life, we choose willingly to become the victims of others. Stereotypes can affect the way we personally feel about ourselves and about the people surrounding us, and this perverts relationships irreversibly. Instead of making judgments based on our own mind and springing from our souls, our perceptions of the others can be wrongly shaped by stereotypes related to aspect, class, gender, religion, and so on. Engaging into a never ending exchange of stereotypes can hurt people and even transform us in victims.

Further on, it should be stressed that this is a novel that emphasizes the power and necessity of the written and oral history, presented by and through the words of those who have experienced it. History that is lived and experienced, then rendered through the filter of the heart and mind in the same measure is always more accurate than that encoded by somebody foreign to it. In addition to all this, Sherley Anne Williams teaches us that revenge is not the solution, because this would entail even more racism. She seems to urge us to find a way to respect each other, to find the human way to deal with reality and history. Cultivating the spirit of pride is important and

beneficial as long as it does not give rise to hate and destruction, because this means receiving the same thing back. She also tries to bridge the apparently unbridgeable gap between black-male and black female popular representations of motherhood, gender, family by implying that mothers should not be represented only in terms relating to nurturing and femininity, but also and especially in terms of humanity, and by showing that women are not necessarily weak when compared with men, who are considered strong and the pillars of the household or society. Roles can be easily reversed. This is evident in *Dessa Rose*, a novel which is not at all a female retaliation against whites or against men. Through the characters and their actions the author applauds assertion and self-determination in the protagonists who fight for a better life, despite stereotypical thinking. This wonderful story does more than to represent African American life and history; it reaches out to readers of all colors, of any gender, from any class, as it speaks about race, violence, women, mothers, and property. History told through stories in novels or in poems allows the reader to live it and thus to better understand its meaning. This is one of the best ways to transmit cultural memory and trauma across generational and spatial boundaries.

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Cultural Conflict – Empowerment and Disempowerment in Maxine Hong Kingston's *The Woman Warrior*

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Abstract: Maxine Hong Kingston's *The Woman Warrior* is the perfect example for describing the cultural conflict existing between immigrants and natives in the US, as well as the existence of opposing gender roles, which makes readers concentrate on the narrator's position, that of a woman, a fighter and a transgressor. *The Woman Warrior* presents the various ways in which the female characters develop and react within a patriarchal, male-dominated paradigm which is designed to both empower and disempower one another. Kingston's stories, mixed with part of her personal experience, along with myth and history, manage to illustrate the intersection of both gender and ethnicity, and also to project the social construction of what seem to be the gender roles. One cannot overlook the contrast between the Chinese and the American societies, which make the novel even more appealing and attractive. Viewing the different reactions, the novel takes the readers into a world which floats over the various cultural expectations and roles.

Keywords: *gender, woman, conflict, power, story*.

Maxine Hong Kingston's *The Woman Warrior* has been regarded from so many perspectives that have made room for all sorts of interpretations. There have been inquiries about several issues the author had desired to tackle in her works, such as identity, society and appurtenance to a community, wondering whether the novel is or not an autobiography and if so, what type exactly. Publishers and critics alike have had trouble deciding the best category for Kingston's work. Some ended up writing on the cover that it belongs to nonfiction/literature failing to clarify such issues, leading the readers to feel even more attraction related to the topic. So, we have been able to analyse her stand, leading to opinions they could project towards what she had written in the attempt to define certain female roles in society and deal with ethnicity in a personal manner.

Ever since the publication of *The Woman Warrior* there have always been questions regarding the authenticity and representation of the two cultures the author belonged to: the Chinese and the

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American. Always hinting at the autobiographical elements, the myths and legends that are present in the novel make the readers believe they are presented with a confessional autobiography. The manipulation of reality and imagination gives the incredible value of Kingston's work. The dilemma whether it is written from the Chinese point of view, or the American, if it is an autobiography or simply a story inherited from her mother has made people think more deeply about the message such a book could bring to its readers, both American and Chinese. Her Chinese origin and traditional themes were always confronted with her American imagination and way of telling the actual stories. "What enables the heroine to prevail at the end is not so much the resources inherent in the Chinese culture as the power of personal imagination to translate Asian inspirations into American opportunities." (Cheung, 1990: 143)

Kingston confesses that her growing up in a culture where one is constantly reminded that raising daughters is less profitable than raising geese, hinting at the fact that the young Chinese women belong to their future husbands is something which might be considered rather frightening and depressing. The patriarchal and somehow sexist Chinese society that she portrays is the reason why she feels torn between a world where women have more authority and pragmatism. such as the American one. and another in which every step they make is over-analysed by the community. The description that Brave Orchid, the protagonist's mother, gives regarding the way in which slave girls are sold in China along with cattle and fish, only creates insecurity for her daughter, who starts feeling afraid, wondering whether there might be a plan for her to be sold as well. So, she decides to further inquire and find out what happened to a slave her mother once bought, through her skill of bargaining, as she knew Brave Orchid would not miss an opportunity to tell one of her stories and highlight her own qualities:

> "How much money did you pay to buy her?" "One hundred and eighty dollars." "How much money did you pay the doctor and the hospital when I was born?" "Two hundred dollars." "Oh." "That's two hundred dollars American money." "Was the one hundred and eighty dollars American money?" "Fifty dollars. That's because she was sixteen years old. ...Babies were free. During the war, though, when you were born, many people gave older girls away for free. And here I was in the United States paying two hundred dollars for you." (Hong Kingston, 1981: 79)

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The remarks that Brave Orchid had, only made Maxine doubt herself more and brought upon a feeling of slight worthlessness which could be noticed in the need of reassurance that the author displayed for the readers. She found refuge in her writing, which gave her the power to fight back and keep her head high. Maxine's development into a writer transformed her not into the traditional type of warrior, but into one that could face her own fears and eventually fight back. Her talent of storytelling is enough to give her power over what she intends to state and lead to making a difference.

What could be regarded as ironic is the insistent way in which Maxine criticises her mother's way of telling stories, but her own is very much similar in content, style and structure, which makes many wonder if her presentation crosses the fine line between truth and reality. Taking into account that she had not been a very talkative girl and that her teachers had mainly complained about her inability to communicate at the level desired by the American school system she felt the need to have an achievement as an adult and prove herself.

When Maxine was a child and teenager she spoke in a quack voice that could not be easily perceived. Her shyness was overwhelming and her teachers believed she was unfit for the school system. This led her to lose control once, when another girl was silent like herself. An inner force drove her to treat the girl in such a way because she reminded Maxine so much of her own difficulties. Going to school meant leaving a safe environment where the Chinese tradition was respected and adapting to a new place where the norms were completely different and her inability to adapt just led to a wall of silence:

> When I first went to kindergarten and had to speak English for the first time, I became silent. A dumbness – a shame – still cracks my voice in two […] During the first silent year I spoke to no one at school, did not ask before going to the lavatory, and flunked kindergarten.... I enjoyed the silence. At first it did not occur to me that I was supposed to talk or to pass kindergarten […] It was when I found out I had to talk that school became a misery, that the silence became a misery. I did not speak and felt bad each time that I did not speak. (Kingston, 1981: 148-149)

Maxine exposes her parents' misunderstanding regarding the worries the American teachers had to what their daughter was concerned, she brings into question her parents' inability to relate to why a young woman should have a clear voice of her own, which

might give her power and self-esteem. While the Chinese heritage made her rather silent on the exterior, she was actually quite exuberant within. This passing of hers from silence to such eloquent expression may be considered a great achievement, as she breaks away from her mother's warning of not revealing the stories Maxine hears from her and she creates her own style and crosses certain boundaries. The taboos that hang over the author's head are countless and they force her to seek escape and writing then becomes her world; a world where creativity is set free and what she thinks and feels matters. The American influence can become more visible as her voice is shaped more clearly in her "alchemical imagination." The Chinese tradition of cutting the children's tongues was something that Maxine had presumably suffered herself and was intrigued why her mother had chosen to perform such an operation. Even though Brave Orchid's role was that of silencing Maxine, she was actually the one that encouraged her to follow her talent, releasing her power in a manner that would not suit the modern society:

> I cut it so that you would not be tongue-tied. Your tongue would be able to move in any language. You'll be able to speak languages that are completely different from one another. You'll be able to pronounce anything. Your frenum locked too tight to do those things, so I cut it. (Kingston, 1981: 148)

Brave Orchid is aware of the fact that her daughter should be able to develop as much fluency as possible in order to properly integrate and not be regarded as socially inferior. This "tightness" of the tongue is released in that moment when Maxine decides to blurt out one hundred things she had kept inside herself for years. Some of them were from so far back that she realised she had got over that state of mind only after uttering the words out loud. Her mother's initial disinterest in her confessions only made the young woman pick a side. "This outburst is an important breakthrough in that she is impelled to make a choice, and choosing to identify as injured outsider frees her to speak" (Hunt, 1985: 11). The praise for her origin is given in many ways, but this ability of releasing the worries that she had is generated by the importance of verbal imagination in the Chinese culture.

"The tongue that is cut loose remains with the narrator as a sign of her awareness that language is in fact a battleground. In the

narrator's case, the social standards of assessing language ability always fall short of her actual language ability" (Lim 2006: 62). By gaining confidence to express the stories she had inherited Maxine spoke about her mother and then moved on to her aunt. Her choice was that of marking the changes a new life can bring and the desire to reinvent oneself.

Brave Orchid had been left behind by her husband who moved to the U.S. in order to make money and maintain a certain level of comfort for his family. She went to medical school and became a respected female doctor. She fought the adversities that were brought upon her by studying for such a difficult career and when time went by she moved at her husband's side on another continent and completely changed her life. This is an example of sacrifice and endurance. Nevertheless, the author relates to her mother's sister, Moon Orchid, who has not the same strength and determination, and being more fragile she ends up insane and dead after moving to the U.S. This is the point the author wants to make, as she hints at the idea that not all women are as strong as her mother and that not all of them can take a stand for power. However, one cannot overlook the influence Brave Orchid had on her sister as she insisted on her pursuing her bigamous husband and reclaiming her role in the family. If the Chinese law defended the first wife and helped her reintegrate into the family after a period of absence this cannot be said about the American law, where no such thing is mentioned. So, the conclusion is that new situations require new solutions and a different type of attitude.

The best representation of bravery and strength was the story of the Chinese woman warrior, famous all over the world: Fa Mulan. By making the protagonist the one who impersonated the warrior, Kingston can make her own presumptions about all other type of details and can empower the character in any way she desires. Fa Mulan is deeply appreciated for her brave gesture of fighting the war and getting a tattoo with all the problems of the villagers she was fighting for adding to the sufferings she had to endure. Nevertheless, at her returning she has to subject to her husband's family. She followed the traditional way of handling family matters. However, Kingston's protagonist takes on the American attitude of being respected both in and outside the house. "Kingston has adapted the Chinese legend and the Chinese metaphor to life in America, evolving new models far removed from the original sources" (Cheung, 1990: 150). By telling the stories that Maxine hears from

her mother she releases both her talent, but also the Chinese heritage in a way that best suits herself. Brave Orchid's storytelling represented a sign of power for her young daughter leading her to believe in the impact may have on people.

> The swordswoman and I are not so dissimilar. May my people understand the resemblance soon so I can return to them. What we have in common are the words at our backs. […] The reporting is the vengeance – not the beheading, not the gutting, but the words. (Kingston, 1981:53)

The importance of Kingston's writing is that of challenging the now famous dismissal that the Chinese community did of women and giving a voice to them by shaping their destiny. "What the girl Kingston absorbs from the talk stories is not necessarily what Brave Orchid intends on a conscious level. Stories like that of the no-name Aunt, for instance, are clearly admonitory, illustrating what dire consequences await the female who is a sexual maverick" (Johnston, 1993: 138). The power "metamessages" Kingston receives from her mother make her break the rules and tell her aunt's story, breaking the stereotypes related to Chinese-American girls who are supposed to be passive and quiet.

Kingston not only breaks her mother's rule, but she has the courage to make a statement about her aunt, a woman whose name had intentionally been forgotten and who was sharply accused by the community. The no name aunt was given no other choice but to drown herself. After the community found out that the woman was pregnant while her husband was away in America her situation changed. She was believed to have broken several social rules which disturbed the ones around her. Kingston calls the aunt her forerunner and starts inventing several scenes that might have represented the script she had in mind for what had happened. The niece is troubling her mind trying to understand what has happened in those times and is led to admit that

> My aunt haunts me – her ghost drawn to me because now, after fifty years of neglect, I alone devote pages of paper to her, though not origamied into houses and clothes. I do not think she always means me well. I am telling on her, and she was a spite suicide, drowning herself in drinking water. The Chinese are always frightened of the drowned one […]. (Kingston, 1981: 22)

Chinese, as Kingston states, is the language of "impossible stories" releasing imagination and using metaphor and quite often paradox to make a point. What comes surprising to young Maxine is the way in which the stories are taken by the American Teacher Ghosts, as she calls them, and transformed into essays, which must follow rules and show cohesion, coherence and overall organization. Therefore, even though it may seem surprising, the Chinese culture is the one which releases her imagination and allows her to present the public with what she feels most comfortable in the way it suits her best. Nevertheless, the American system is the one which makes Maxine trust herself more, as the teachers confirm her being a suited candidate for a job related to science and mathematics. Even though these options do not appeal to her she feels the confidence to tell her mother she would prefer a position as a lumberjack or a reporter. The first choice was quite far from reality as her figure did not provide enough physical strength for such a job.

Kingston not only wants to give more confidence to the Chinese-American women, but she wants to give confidence to herself as well. By not following the rigorous steps of an autobiography the author can tackle with different versions of stories not claiming the fact that she is only telling or re-telling the truth. She alters the stories so that her purposes are reached. "By warming remembered, fragmentary, recounted stories in the caldron of her imagination, Kingston undermines the very notion of nonfiction as documented, eye-witness "truth" a notion identified with scientific, western, masculine rationalism" (Johnston, 1993: 139). Kingston's desire is that of empowering women that they can do whatever they desire, that the injustice some of them suffer due to abuse by being considered the weaker sex is not something they have to endure.

It has been proved once and again that women have a similar way of exposing personal experiences in a male dominated world. In Kingston's case her belonging to the marginal ethnic group even though her life had developed in the U.S. only made her question even more her family's culture who call people of her sex "maggots" "broom and dustpan," "slave."

> The core of the problem is that by being simultaneously insider (a person who identifies strongly with her cultural group) and outsider (deviant and rebel against that tradition), she cannot figure out from which perspective to speak. It is only through mastery of literary form and technique – through creating this autobiography out of

family stories, Chinese myths, and her own memories – that she is able to articulate her own ambivalence and hereby find an authentic voice. (Hunt, 1985: 6)

Kingston's most important achievement is finding a voice for herself and also women from a similar background, breaking a silence that besides alienation expresses lack of confidence and an inner rupture, leading to a healing process of re-finding themselves. Her work is regarded as both daring and worthy of admiration dealing with a topic that has haunted generations if immigrants.

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Violence and Conflict in the Young-Adult Science Fiction Literature

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Abstract: Some of the most powerful presentations of a future world are to be found in the young-adult science-fiction novels in which everything was related to the main conflict. The universe described is an antithesis of a utopian one, characterized by the presence of a totalitarian or authoritarian form of government, which leads to oppression and social control, the cause of violence. Because the forms of people's control are different, the forms of conflict and violence become different. There is the Big-Brother like control by the government, described in *The Hunger Games*. The bar codes represent instruments of control designed to contain the human genetic code along with other personal information as in *The Bar Code Tattoo*. Beauty is another instrument of uniformity, used by the dystopian government, the centre of society, described in the novel *The Uglies*. The conflict may be interior or exterior, or both, as it appears in *The Maze Runner*. Any form of control may generate all the possible forms of conflict and any form of conflict may generate all the possible forms of violence as it could be seen in the science fiction literature written for teenagers.

Keywords: *control, conflict, violence, Big-Brother, bar code, beauty, memory*.

The essay deals with the theme of violence and conflict in the contemporary dystopian American literature establishing a connection between the cause, featured in the different types of control in the dystopian society, and the effect seen in the characters' change or loss of identity which leads to conflict and, in the end, to violence. The selected texts are meant to support the development of the general theme. The study gives only one aspect of the theme in discussion. Its purpose is to analyse the connection between cause and effect already mentioned, as it is applied to the few dystopian societies described in the novels *The Uglies*, *The Bar Code Tattoo, The Hunger Games* and *The Maze Runner*.

Utopia versus Dystopia

Generally speaking, utopia represents the starting point of so many different standards of aspiration that there must be many

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theoretical paths leading to it. When referring to utopia there must be taken into consideration, at least, two perspectives. The first one represents a theoretical strategy that dominates the utopian thinking of some of the political programmes, among which, the well-known communist ideology. On the other hand, the second perspective is a literary strategy. Utopia represents the model, the framework that generates other models, such as anti-utopia or dystopia. Most of the times, utopia is described as a place where people are at liberty to join together in order to pursue and attempt to realize their own vision of the ideal community, but no one is free to impose his own utopian vision upon the others: "The utopian society is the society of utopianism" (Nozick, 1968: 312). The utopian space becomes the space for meta-utopia: the environment where the utopian experiments are to be tried out. Started as a dream, utopia proves to be a possible reality, but then the nightmare begins.[2] Thus, the framework model is surpassed by the other models. Most of the critics consider anti-utopia as the satire for utopia while dystopia becomes the negative version of the utopia itself. I consider dystopia more important than any other utopian model, because it questions the initial model. Even if it seems that dystopia tries to turn its model into the opposite, there are no antithetic breaks between utopia and dystopia. The relationship established between them is a complementary one, rather than an opposite one. Most of the times, the literary utopia started as a dream, as seen in *Brave New World* by Aldous Huxley or in *451 Fahrenheit* by Ray Bradbury, and then the dream is fulfilled, but in its nightmare version, which leads to the total compromise, turning the utopian dream into dystopia, or, as Krishan Kumar considers "dystopia is the alter-ego of utopia." (Kumar, 1987: 142)

In the twentieth century, dystopia surpasses the classical utopia, as most of the critics consider that dystopia is not a separation from utopia, but it is utopia itself in its applied version.[3] It does not represent a negation of utopia, but a tendency of making the virtual become the possible. Both dystopia and anti-utopia represent a continuation of the utopian genre, but at a different level. As a literary representation, dystopia is not a different genre, but a

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[2] The utopian dream changed into nightmare in both situations: as the communist ideology for reality and as the anti-utopia or dystopia for the fictional background.

[3] According to the critical tradition of the theories dealing with dystopian thinking written by Berdiaev, Popper, Kolakovski, Raymond Aron, Dahrendorf.

particular and distinguished way of expressing "the negative perspectives of the accomplished utopia" (Trousson, 1975: 245). Thus, dystopia became the step-sister of the older utopia or a "compromised utopia" (Baczko, 1971: 48).[4] In a metaphorical manner of speaking, dystopia could be considered the image of utopia reflected by the mirror, an image full of wrinkles and spots.

Violence and Conflict in the Young-Adult Science Fiction Literature

Generally speaking, the dystopian literature can be characterized as a particular background for alienation, revolution, psychological and scientific experiments, totalitarianism, anxiety, and so on. Similar to the utopian literature, the dystopian fiction can be characterized by fact that its main purpose is to express the antonymic binarity between the old and the new, between the present and the future, but also to introduce a new opposition between the normal and the abnormal. In order to develop the oppositions mentioned, dystopian literature uses mainly two literary strategies: *de-familiarization* and *the cognitive estrangement*. The first one was considered by Booker as the main literary strategy of this particular gender. Focusing on the imaginary models of possible societies, the dystopian fiction is able to offer a brand new perspective for most of the political and social problems that a real society may need to deal with (Booker, 1994: 3).[5] Life itself in such a society becomes un-familiar, the members of society and the members of the family, the space and the time, the person himself, all that was very common to a particular point changes into unrecognizable parts and aspects of a broken society. The second strategy of the dystopian literature is represented by *the cognitive estrangement*. The term was introduced by Darko Suvin and described by Dragan Kalic as the distortion of the common and familiar universe (Kalic, 1991: 125-133).[6] The new environment is nothing but a space full of abnormal aspects generating an abnormal context. Such a context may be considered as

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[4] According to Baczko's opinion, dystopia does not re-invent new formulas, but it stands for a more radical criticism of the present.
[5] The same technique of de-familiarization was analyzed by the Russian formalists. According to their theory, de-familiarization is a method of differentiation between the literary discourse and the non-literary discourse.
[6] In other words, the cognitive estrangement is meant to extract the common facts from their contexts and replaced them by the unfamiliar facts.

a dystopian representation of the utopian dream, in other words "dystopia is the gloomy paraphrase of utopia and the last refuge of utopian hope." (Klaié, 1993: 130)

The dystopian fiction portrays the conflict between the new type of society and the individual, seen as the person who fights against the new law, trying to find a meaning in the unfamiliar world. The entire dystopian literature is featured in such solitary characters and their stories. Unfortunately, most of these stories end up in failure proving the impossibility of opposing the system of control and oppression. Each hero that tries to escape the control imposed by the totalitarian and authoritarian government is rejected by the members of the entire society. Being recognized as a rebel, a pariah, an outcast, he cannot turn back, nor go farther. That is why, being trapped in his own attempt, in the end, he has to accept the new status and obey the new law.

The forms of control are very different in each of the selected novels. One of them is related to the new type of sensibility. In the future society, described in The *Uglies,* the new sensibility has become a political factor. According to Kant, there are pure forms of sensibility a priori, common to all human beings. This is the point where the primary distinction between beautiful and ugly is made. This opposition makes a distinction between what could violate the new form of sensibility and what could gratify it, in which case, the varieties of taste, affinity and predilection become the differentiation of an "original" basic form of sensibility on which modelling, restraining and repressing forces will operate. Thus, Kant's aesthetic theory leads to the most advanced notion regarding beauty, considering it the symbol of the moral perception of an individual (Marcuse, 1969: 40). The new sensibility is strictly related to the consciousness of a person and both need to be beautiful. Being beautiful means thinking beautifully. In the aesthetic theory, form and content influence each other, shape each other. In this new society, it is believed that improving the form/the exterior aspect means improving the content/the interior aspect. The final aim is to obtain a transformed content that could establish a new kind of relationship with the new society. The process of changing does not develop as expected and the one of the individuals manages to escape. It is Tally Youngblood, a sixteen young girl, living in the twenty-seventh century. By that time, a new type of society has been formed after a disastrous oil-bug was released upon the planet that killed ninety-eight per cent of the population. The new society is

governed according to three main values: sustainability, peace and equality. All the values are promoted by the use of The Surge. This is an extreme cosmetic surgery that all the citizens undergo at the age of sixteen. The aim of such a physical transformation is to obtain perfect citizens inside and outside. After the surgery, the pretties, as they are called, are given access to life in a better place, the New Pretty Town, where food, shelter and entertainment are provided by the government. Within the period after the surgery it is expected that everyone's beauty would inspire peace and equality among the citizens. Because of the post-surgery bad effects, some of the people try to avoid the surgery, but end in failure and even death. Tally is the one who escapes from the place where the authorities prepare the teenagers for the cosmetic surgery. She hides in a cave where she finds David and his family. Knowing that the operation is more than a cosmetic surgery, they plan to go back to Tally's city. Arriving there, they discover that all the citizens were turned beautiful. Having no other escape, Tally decides to become pretty and to take the cure as a willing subject. The final sentence of the novel consists of Tally's words: "I'm Tally Youngblood. Make me pretty."

Another character that has a similar story and is the main character of the novel *The Bar Code Tattoo*, is Kayla Marie Reed, who is also about to turn sixteen, the age when she can get a bar code tattoo. In her case, the bar code represents another type of control. Each individual is persuaded to accept the bar code to be imprinted on the skin, together with all the necessary information such as the bank account, the social security number, and the records of all the purchases. There are also other data stored into the bar code among which the genetic information which will make it difficult to become insured by the insurance companies or hired if one has a bad genetic history. Because of the possibility of killing her mother, Kayla becomes wanted by the Police and is forced to go on the run. She is heading to the Adirondack Mountains, where the code is not required. There she meets other people who are against the tattoo. They succeed in making an organization whose aim is to make the tattoo a personal option. After a while, it becomes illegal not to have the tattoo on the skin and the government even gives a law in this sense. At this moment, Kayla begins to have her doubts that her attempt to oppose the government will remain successful or not. In her case the bar code, a simple number, takes over the entire society, and the human beings are nothing more than products among other products.

So far, there were the beauty and the genetic code the instruments that could generate the conflict between the human being and the new type of society. In the next two examples the heroes are mere pawns in a game in which they are forced to take part.

In *The Hunger Games*, the two heroes, Katnis and Peeta, are selected to participate in the annual games, a televised event which was created as a punishment for a previous rebellion against the government, now called the Capitol. At this event all the participants must fight to the death in on outdoor arena which is also controlled by the government. The winner is declared the only participant that manages to survive the so called game. At the end of the game the two heroes remain alive and they decide to kill themselves in order to determine the government to declare them both the winners. Even if they win the game, their perspectives upon life are changed completely because of the choices they were forced to take.

The decision to kill the other participants in order to promote their own survival transforms their perception of right and wrong. At the final point of the game they understand that it is only a matter of time till the government is declared the winner upon their lives. In this case, the government represents the Big-Brother-like control introduced in the dystopian literature by George Orwell. This time, this type of control is featured both through the mandatory viewing of the annual games by all the citizens and through the actions of the nation's police force, ironically called the Peacemakers. If in the novel *1984* the Big-Brother is the main instrument of domination, encouraging the main character to betray his family and friends, even his girl-friend and, in the end, himself, in the case of *The Hunger Games* the Big-Brother-like control represents the same instrument of domination, but for an entire nation, encouraging a compliance among the citizens under the pretext of preventing another rebellion by forcing everyone to watch the sacrifice of the child participants.

The last example selected is the novel *The Maze Runner*. Here, the main character, Thomas, is also about sixteen, as all the other heroes presented in this essay. One day, he wakes up in a pitch black elevator called the Box. He is not able to remember anything but his first name. His mind is empty. When the doors of the elevator open, he is immediately surrounded by other kinds who welcome him to what they call the Glade. It is a large expanse surrounded by stone walls hundreds of feet high that move every night. The Glade is also surrounded by a huge maze. Like in the previous example the heroes are placed in a controlled space. Katnis and Peeta are left in a limited

space which changes its shape according to the will of the Capitol, Thomas and his friends need to discover the Glade as an alternative universe also controlled by a government. But the government does not control only the space but also the children's minds. The gladers, as they call themselves, have studied the maze for two years and sketched all the changes and patterns of the wall movements. Their attempt to escape the glade is stopped from time to time by the grievers, machine-like animals that function as policemen. Finally they escape using one of the buttons found in the glade. Outside everything is changed: the sun flaring so large burned the satellites and caused the death of thousands of people. But the game of escaping the maze is continued with another game. They are taken into a dormitory where they fall asleep waiting to see what tomorrow will be like. Tomorrow will come only to let them see that they are only subjects forced to play a game with several levels without knowing that and, even more, without any memory left. The novel ends with these words: "I think we'd all agree the Trail was a success, twenty survivors; all well qualified for our planned endeavour. The subjects will be allowed to a full night sleep before stage two is implemented."

In all these four cases, the heroes are observed in their attempt to oppose the oppression but, in the process, they lost themselves because they lost their identity. Each of them has a model in mind, a subjective representation of the exterior world. When the inner representation is impossible to recognize outside the mind, then the identity of the character begins to be destroyed. The mental representation of reality must contain images close or similar to reality. When the changes in the outside world are accelerated, that determines each one to re-evaluate the environment at every moment. This is the beginning of the process of de-familiarization. Each of these heroes relates to the outside world, creating an identity that should correspond to reality and also to the inner image of reality. Changing the society and also the entire environment, introducing new laws that do not correspond to the individual reality means to impose the control and the domination.

All these main characters become pariah because they refuse to become parts of the changing that re-shapes their minds. The price they have to pay is to lose their identity. The personal pronoun in the Nominative is the first one that was dropped. The first person is sometimes replaced by the third person, showing that the personal identity does not count anymore, that one could easily be replaced by

the other without any disturbances, as it could be noticed in *The Maze Runner*. Most of the characters ask questions about themselves as if they do not remember who they are: Who am I? Who I was? The very few explanations are just like the answer given by one of the policeman in *The Bar Code Tattoo*: this person is just a product. Without identity, each one is forced to adopt the new ideology as theirs knowing that it will never correspond to their own ideology. Thus, they are plunged into frustration and then into hate. They begin hating the outside world, then some of them will hate the others and, in the end, they will hate themselves. This is the point where all were defeated.

There is no escape in the dystopian world. The human beings are mere subjects of psychological analysis, of controlled games, of obedience and slavery. The new society does not offer new means of communication but only partial images of what reality is supposed to be. The individual is asked not to create his personal identity, but to adopt the given one, changing entirely the perception of the new world. (Toffler, 1983: 525)

Conclusion

The four cases that were studied present four types of control: the aesthetic, the genetic code, the Big-Brother-like control and the forced loss of memory. Beauty, considered an instrument of uniformity, was used in order to eliminate any personal will and desire. The bar code containing all the information about any individual was meant to transform the individuals into unimportant replaceable products. The games are used as instruments of domination in both cases: *The Hunger Games* and *The Maze Runner*.

All the means of control generate all the possible forms of conflict: with the outside world, found in all the analysed texts, with the others as in *The Hunger Games*, and with oneself, developed in all the novels described in the essay. Besides, any form of conflict can generate all the possible forms of violence: violence against the others, violence against each other and violence against one's own identity as an individual.

In a future world, violence and conflict are linked together but they are only effects of a more disastrous cause – namely the loss of identity, which was also the effect of another cause – the control by the dystopian government upon the individual.

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Conflictual Representations of America

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Abstract: Stephen Crane belongs to the first modernist authors who introduce the major themes relating to the destiny of man in the new and challenging American universe. His stories portray the conflict between the protagonists (who remain anonymous, fulfilling at the same time the role of the narrator) and a decadent, even degraded society which attempts at slowly destroying them. Alienation, a deep feeling of isolation and eventually exile and death are portrayed in these narratives. Naturalism combines with symbolical modernist concepts like experiencing the crossing of the limit or deliberately retreating from a conventional system in order to acquire a new and fresh vision.

Keywords: *solitude, alienation, decadence, exile, limit*.

Much of the American literature at the beginning of the 20th century is influenced by the changes taking place at the level of the literary concepts and the general trend of culture which modernism presupposes. Stephen Crane's works oscillate between the radical realism at the end of the 19th century, illustrated by naturalism, and the modernist experiment which will characterize the 20th century. They both introduce the values and traditions of the American past. Standing out as an anti-Emerson author, Crane deliberately decides to portray the hidden side of human nature, which manifests itself in limit situations. Like a true modernist author, Crane speculates on the position of man in the community and the conflict it brings. The modern concept of solitude introduces the idea of man trying to find his place in the new universe opening before him. After several attempts to get along with society, the protagonist ends up rejecting all social values, as he is seized by disappointment and contempt towards it. The second frontier implies the idea of abandoning one's own values, moral principles and ideals, and becoming part of the anonymous crowd in the newly enriched towns. Different from the first frontier which brought satisfaction and personal accomplishment for the traveler, despite the difficulties of the road, the second frontier just puts to test the new comers and seldom gives them the answers they were looking for. The waves of colonizers discovered that the American land of plenty was just an illusion and that the American

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dream had no equivalent in reality. Deconstructing the American dream is one of Crane's main themes, which is present in almost all his works.

Naturalism came then as the most appropriate literary trend which could express the disappointment of the migrants. Crane chose to depict the difficult conditions of life faced by the travelers, rendering them not only in vivid images, but also in the coarse language used at the time. Yet, as a true modernist author he left a trace of hope for the characters, though many of them die in the pursuit of happiness. Solitude characterizes the modern man who is aware of his special place in the world and the different fate awaiting him in a hostile society. The stories of Crane narrate about the man's struggle to assert himself and to show that, although traditions are reconsidered and rewritten, personal accomplishment is still possible.

One of them is the short story *The Open Boat*, published at the turn of the century in 1898. It is a story based on Crane's own experience of surviving a shipwreck on the coast of Florida. The story presents the destiny of several men having escaped a similar shipwreck and who are floating on the sea hoping to be saved. Apparently, it is a story about surviving at sea, with a happy end, as the men are eventually saved and get safely on shore, but it is, in fact, a story about man's confrontation with his own nature and the limit of existence. It can be analyzed as a separate text narrating a single event or it can be seen in the larger context of the American settlement and evolution. As in the case of many of Crane's works, it is a general picture of human features and concepts, such as solidarity, survival and the conflict between man and nature. The story begins *in medias res* after the shipwreck:

> None of them knew the color of the sky. Their eyes glanced level, and were fastened upon the waves that swept toward them. These waves were of the hue of slate, save for the tops, which were of foaming white, and all of the men knew the colors of the sea. (Crane, 1993: 560)

The group of survivors is made of types, representing different features of human nature. They all live in a limit situation due to which they feel linked to each other. A possible interpretation of the story may be given by analyzing man's conflict with his limits. The men in the boat share the same experience of loss and decadence characteristic for the exiled or the one having lost their ideals and

purposes in life. They are wanderers on the high seas, looking for a solid point from where to begin a new existence. Fighting the limit is a dangerous game during which man has to use all his powers in order to prevail. It is a thin line between sanity and insanity. Symbolically speaking, the limit identifies with the exploration of the unknown, of the dark side of human nature. The limit is characteristic for any boundary or frontier that can restrict human experience. In Crane's text the limit is the boat itself, which is the stage on which the action takes place. In limit situations, when identity is challenged and remodeled according to new principles, the surroundings in which the individual evolves are significant. In Crane's story the symbolical world of death and regeneration dominates the human and attempts to shape it in its way. "A seat in this boat was not unlike a seat upon a bucking broncho, and by the same token a broncho is not much smaller. The craft pranced and reared and plunged like an animal. As each wave came, and she rose for it, she seemed like a horse making at a fence outrageously high" (Crane, 1993: 560). Yet, the fight for survival does not exclude the spiritual value of discovering the ultimate reason for existence, which is the fact that life prevails even in the most difficult situations. "The manner of the boat's scramble over these walls of water is a mystic thing, and moreover, at the top of them the foam was racing down from the summit of each wave requiring a new leap, and a leap from the air." (Crane, 1993: 560)

The protagonists of the story have therefore two crucial missions: to survive and to tame the wild boat. The story proposes a pattern of initiation, which anticipates the postmodern trend of deconstruction. Originating in Emerson's philosophy about the transcendence of the limit, the deconstruction theory comes with a new way of interpreting reality and the literary work. Its basic concept is that the centre of authority, governing the world and giving it unity and stability, disappears, leaving instead a number of margins which offer the reader various perspectives on the same thing.

Plurality of vision is a main concept of postmodernism by which human perspective is enriched and the interpretation becomes more challenging than before. In Crane's story the conflict is between the common situation the protagonists go through and the various images they construct of reality. Each of them has its own story, its own way of understanding the misfortune they share. Thus, one of them becomes the potential narrator of the same event by providing his own subjective interpretation of the story. One of the examples is

the illusion the cook and the correspondent have about the house of refuge as a salvation for the shipwrecked. Their contradictory opinions exemplify the permanent change of the margins in the perspective on facts. Each of the protagonists symbolically stands for his own world. "They were a captain, an oiler, a cook, and a correspondent, and they were friends – friends in a more curiously iron-bound degree than may be common."(Crane, 1993: 563)

They all experience the crossing of the limit and eventually prevail by enduring the voyage on the sea. Crane uses a modernist technique, which was introduced in France by symbolist poetry. One can have a genuine vision about the world only after one succeeds in getting out of the system which limits and dominates at the same time. Getting out of the system means denying the norms and conventions of traditional life, and replacing them with a personal philosophy of liberty. Once man is out of the system, he can freely see and assimilate the surroundings. Liberty of the spirit coincides with the denial of the limit and the creation of a new cosmos where only the rules of the self apply. Though Crane does not accept Emerson's theory on vision, it can be found in this perspective. Emerson considers that once man can leave behind social conventions, he can freely unify with nature and successively with the divinity. Getting out of the system means purifying your vision so that you can become as transparent as the universal eye. In a limit situation, like the one in *The Open Boat,* each of the protagonists experiences the return to his self and the search for an identity which until then seemed quite unimportant. Vision, in this case, acquires new features. It is not merely the capacity of seeing, though watching the surroundings is crucial for the men in the boat, as they look continuously for a lighthouse. It means analyzing their own selves, and discovering potentialities they never thought of before. Starting with the simple act of rowing, they learn a moral lesson of survival and of understanding. Thus, one can call the text a dystopia, later turned into a utopia by the salvation of the men.

The limit can be conquered by accepting one's own identity and sharing one's weaknesses with the others. The text is an initiation story, different from the traditional ones, as it displays the stages of an initiation in the conflicting human nature and its response to unexpected challenges. Getting out of the system presupposes a strong will to denythe old values, since man stands alone before an invisible authority and in an inscrutable universe. Strong moral will helps Crane's protagonists to survive, but at the cost of losing all

illusions and previous dreams. In modernism the characters are solitary because they become aware that society is unable to understand their high ideals and hopes. Epiphanies or moments of being, to quote Joyce, are obtained in limit situations only by those who prove that they deserve them. Like in any story of initiation, the protagonist (in this case the correspondent) has his own moments of doubt, which can be fatal for salvation. His attempt to drown is counterbalanced by the only thing which could stop him: the love for life. "If I am going to be drowned – if I am going to be drowned – if I am going to be drowned, why, in the name of the seven mad gods who rule the sea, was I allowed to come thus far and contemplate sand and trees?"(Crane, 1993: 565)

Crossing the limit can imply at the same time a fight with the shadow. The dark side of human nature manifests when reason is abandoned, even for a short period of time. Doubts can generate this state of mind as the dark side can tempt man into self-destruction. Any journey of initiation involves tests which can be illuminating or harmful. In the first case the consequence is finding the answer, while in the second it brings only decay and ultimately death. In Crane's story the correspondent has the hallucination of the soldier of the Legion who lay dying in Algiers. Paradoxically, this is the epiphany for the character because, by feeling pity for the soldier, he discovers that his own wish of drowning is not a solution for his case. Once he gets out of the system, he can interpret not only his own thoughts, but he has a holistic view on the destiny of mankind. The solution is to find moral support in the presence of the other members of the improvised crew. Crane unveils Emerson's influence considering that, while being in the middle of people equal in thoughts and feelings, anyone can rely on the community formed around him. In this perspective Crane's story reminds of the founders of the American colonies who, once they understood that unity meant power, survived the difficult crossing of the Atlantic and the settlement in the New World. Just like in the historical moment, landing is seen as a step into the Promised Land as the last haven of stability for the travelers. The consequence of the voyage is the protagonists' spiritual growth and gaining of wisdom. Crossing the limit implies a transformation, a change from simple spectators to actors on the stage of the world. "When night came, the white waves paced to and fro in the moonlight, and the wind brought the sound of the great sea's voice to the men on the shore, and they felt that they could then be interpreters." (Crane, 1993: 575)

A quite different perspective is offered by another short story by Crane, namely *The Blue Hotel*. The narrative takes place in the late 1890's in Nebraska in winter. The blue hotel is one of the marvels in the town Fort Romper and it is owned by a man called Scully. It is situated near the train station, being painted in the strange shade of heron blue. "The Palace Hotel at Fort Romper was painted a light blue, a shade that is on the legs of a kind of heron, causing the bird to declare its position against any background" (Crane, 1993: 556). The landscape surrounding the hotel is a waste land, a desolation anticipating the tragic events which are to follow. Finding the road in such a place equals with a symbolic suicide, an initiation in the dark hidden secrets of the human soul and with a physical and spiritual exile. "The Palace Hotel was always screaming and howling in a way that made the dazzling winter landscape of Nebraska to seem only a gray swampish hush. It stood alone on the prairie, and when the snow was falling, the town two hundred yards away was not visible" (Crane, 1993: 556). Solitude takes the form of a concrete isolation from reality in accordance with the depressing feeling which characterizes the place. Alienation is an extreme manifestation of loneliness and disappointment in the capacity of man to prevail. The characters in Crane's story experience it in the extreme.

The story centers around three men, a cowboy, an eastern salesman and a Swede, though some think he is a Dutch. Like in *The Open Boat* the story is narrated by one of the characters, the salesman, called the Easterner, as the group forms an image of the world. Irony and deconstruction are present more in it as the story has a tragic ending and a bitter conclusion. The story has the pattern of a reversed initiation, because the victim of the masquerade already knows about the destiny waiting for him. The story can be decoded at the level of symbolical concepts and literary constructions.

The Swede, who is the anonymous protagonist of the story, comes to Nebraska in order to make a living, but he discovers that he enters another dimension, a labyrinth out of which he cannot escape. His darkest fear, the fact that he will be killed, haunts him and eventually comes true. The irony of the story is actually a satire as the innocent man becomes a victim of his own ideas. The conflict is between his expectations about the American west, which he presumably got from his readings, and the reality, which proves to be much inferior to his dreams. The source of drama in this story is the difference between the mental projections of man about a certain place or situation and the actual representation of it. The Swede is

caught in the trap of his own illusions, created by a scholarly reading of the west. The surroundings, including the town and the blue hotel itself, take the form of a nightmare, a shadowy and dark rendering of his dreams. Destiny plays an important role in the story. By coming to Nebraska, the Swede enters a dimension that he both hates and needs in order to accomplish his wishes and discover the true image of the west. He has the courage to enter this dangerous space for him, and even to ask questions about the nature of the surroundings. Like a true modern character, he prefers solitude and he does not trust the company of the other travelers staying at the blue hotel.

Crane creates an absurd atmosphere similar to the modernist theatrical works of Becket, for instance. Almost all the characters in the story have no name and they have an artificial identity, which makes them similar to some puppets used by an invisible destiny. They use clichés, stereotypical gestures and absurd motivations for their decisions. The game of cards they play is a grotesque rendering of the real games played by the colonists of the west. "Johnnie, son of Scully, in a tone which defined his opinion of his ability as a card-player, challenged the old farmer of both gray and sandy whiskers to a game of High-Five" (Crane, 1993: 558). Later when a new game started the Swede was invited to take part in it himself, and his attitude betrays the tension and fear inspired by the place: "He strode towards the men nervously, as if he expected to be assaulted. Finally, seated, he gazed from face to face and laughed shrilly. This laugh was so strange that the Easterner looked up quickly, the cowboy sat intent and with his mouth open, and Johnnie paused, holding the cards with still lingers." (Crane, 1993: 556)

The character's artificial nature unveils a loss of identity and an existential drama which slowly starts affecting the basic features of human behavior. Different from *The Open Boat* in which the characters have the chance to get out of the system and contemplate it, the ones in *The Blue Hotel* are prisoners of a suffocating space which acts like a devouring source of energy. As the Swede and the other people at the hotel are types or literary projections of an ideal, one could call the story a palimpsest at the level of such symbolical themes. At the same time the text displays the features of a dystopia as the once famous fascination for the American west can no longer be found. Behind Crane's story one can read the traveling diaries of the colonizers which are tragically projected in the land of exile. In actual America space was perceived as the land of tests, explorations and personal achievements. Legends and local myths appeared due to

such endeavors. In Crane's story space is claustrophobic because it is represented by an old hotel, ironically painted in blue, the color of hope. It resembles the mental constructions out of which hallucinations and nightmares come. Claustrophobic space matches a claustrophobic mind, as the Swede is a prisoner of his own mental fears. The absurd relies on the mental frame of the characters and not on exterior situations.

Crane anticipates postmodern literature when he introduces the theme of man caught in an imaginary universe where he is author, pseudo-narrator and character. The others are like actors playing an already established role. The blue hotel is the best hotel in town, having the best reputation. Actually, it is like a cursed world, a house of damnation obliging the people staying there to obey its own rules. The feeling of the absurd is completed by a feeling of seclusion. The house itself is a character with a will of its own, as the inhabitants are deeply and definitely affected by it. "Any room can present a tragic front; any room can be comic. This little den was now hideous as a torture-chamber" (Crane, 1993: 557). The behavior of the men who decide to have a fight in the snow after the game broke up on the accusation of cheating implies a complete loss of control and a growing madness seizing the characters. It is a grotesque fight, revealing the brute side of human nature. Actually, one can say that many instances of the story seem to be parody-like, as in a sort of a cultural deconstruction of the old traditions and conventions.

Reminding of Poe's claustrophobic spaces, the hotel is a mental projection turned into reality. The narrator is obviously touched by the strange events in the story, but he is an unreliable narrator, as it is through his eyes that we see the whole story. Subjectivity is a key-concept of modernism together with the first person point of view. As the story develops, one perceives very clearly the differences between characters: the ones adapted to the environment and the ones still unfamiliar to it. The locals are already part of the landscape, as if the surroundings have replaced the human part of their soul. The fight in the hotel, which according to Scully is a very respectable place ("A guest under my roof has sacred privileges"), reveals the falsity and the degradation accompanying the murder in the story. The conclusions are skeptical and the tone is bitterly sad. The setting of the fight identifies with the decay and the tragic circumstances characterizing the episode. "The entire prelude had in it a tragedy greater than the tragedy of action, and this aspect was accentuated by the long, mellow cry of the blizzard, as it sped

the tumbling and wailing flakes into the black abyss of the south"
(Crane, 1993: 558). Despite the sad story the imagery is quite
beautiful and it appeases the tension created by the narrative.

The loss of identity does not only imply a deep existential
trauma, it also involves a lack of hope for the future. Even the
cowboy, who is supposed to be the hero of the land, is incapable to
escape and change the principles of the game. He leaves the next
morning after the murder and when in the end he is asked to give his
own opinion, he simply takes care of his meal. The dystopia involves
a negative palimpsest, a reversed version of the old tales mirroring a
decadent view on human nature. The absurd is completed by the
concept of the grotesque understood in its connotation of imposture,
hypocrisy, lack of honesty in people and the world. The toppling of
values causes a fall in the depth of human nature, being identified to
the house, which closes down on people like a cage.

During the night some of the characters play a game of cards
meant to make them pass the time more easily. Usually, a game
presupposes certain rules which must be obeyed. In the traditional
American west such games were confrontations of will and special
skills needed to win the game. Many of them involved life and death
situations. In Crane's story the players act like destroyers of the
innocent victim attracted by the evil nature of the environment to
obey their rules. The game acquires an existential meaning too.
Because of it the fight will start and the Swede will run away only to
be killed in a nearby bar by a villain who will only take three years
for his murder. Reconsideration of the old values and traditions is
specific for modernism, involving a critical perspective on human
nature and existence. Like in the absurd literature later, the
protagonist (in this case the Easterner) waits for an answer that never
comes, yet he is subject to all manifestations of decadence in the
people and the world around. Thus, *The Blue Hotel* is not only a
palimpsest of the old stories, but an anticipation of the future
modernist tales. The bitter awareness of the evil hidden in human
nature is one of the concepts of the story. He is deeply traumatized by
the verdict and the feeling of guilt pursuing him everywhere:

> We, five of us, have collaborated in the murder of this Swede.
> Usually there are from a dozen to forty women really involved in
> every murder, but in this case it seems to be only five men – you, I,
> Johnnie, old Scully, and that fool of an unfortunate gambler came

merely as a culmination, the apex of a human movement, and gets all the punishment. (Crane, 1993: 559)

Conflict is rendered by the discrepancy between the mental projections about the west, and the real drama occurring at the blue hotel. The bitter message of the story is the fact that the civilizing dream is only an illusion, just like the American dream of success is unreal too. The destiny of the Swede, trapped in the middle of his ideals and fears, stands for the impossibility of the modern man to find a connection with reality. The protagonist is confronted with the destructive role of society which, instead of being a shelter and a recipient of moral values, becomes the opponent, trying to catch him in its web. The anti-hero principle applies both in the case of the Swede and that of the cowboy, both representing failures in the portrayal of a character which could have gathered around it the meaning of the story. Traditionally speaking, the hero is the character attracting or distancing the reader from the narrative. It can confer it credibility and moral meaning. The cowboy and the other characters are existential anti-heroes in whatever they do or say. Language as a cliché adds to the artificiality of existence in the claustrophobic space. The loss/lack of meaning entraps the character in a decadent world. In early modernism the protagonist undergoes an existential drama which paradoxically is exterior to him.

In both tales the protagonists have to do their best in order to transform their fate in a better one, but they cannot interfere with it. While in *The Open Boat* the characters escape due to solidarity and a new vision acquired by getting out of the system, in *The Blue Hotel* salvation is not possible because freedom does not exist. Once they stop at the train station and they enter the hotel, they are caught in the web of fatality. In Crane's stories the world is in conflict with the characters which have to pursue their dreams as well as they can. Achievement and personal fulfillment elude the protagonist which takes his own solitary road when confronted with a failing American dream.

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Negotiations of Meaning in the Romanian Versions of Jane Austen's Novel *Pride and Prejudice*

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Abstract: The paper proposes an instance of Austen's reception in the Romanian culture. Although most of her literary production not only was translated into Romanian, but it has also recorded several versions in this language, the current research focuses on "Pride and Prejudice," Austen's most popular novel. The approach begins with a review of Austen's novels translated into Romanian, intended to outline her (more or less conflictual) "site" in our culture. It then considers only the Romanian earliest and last versions of the above-mentioned novel, in an attempt at identifying instances of meaning negotiations, as well as their translator's solutions.

Keywords: *equivalence, explicitation, deletion, losses/gains in translation*.

Introduction

The last decade has revealed an increasing interest in the in-depth study of translations, which have been interpreted from a wide range of angles. No matter whether the perspective of such translation studies has focused on aspects of the history of translations within different cultures or on aspects regarding theoretical approaches reflected in the quality of translations as final products intended for a readership more or less familiar with the culture of the source text, the framework of translation studies has expanded considerable. To this phenomenon have contributed not only single-author volumes (Baker, 1992, Venuti, 1995) or academic journals (*Istanbul University Journal of Translation Studies*) but also (online) conference proceedings volumes. In line with this literature, the paper was so devised as to search into the evolution of translation quality in the particular case of the subsequent Romanian versions of one and the same source text, i.e., Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*. Jane Austen was selected for this purpose for the simple reason that very many of her novels have been translated into Romanian since 1968.

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Although the current approach falls within descriptive translation studies, its main objective is that of pinpointing instances of target text improvement which indicate the translator's negotiating process.

Negotiation and/in translation

Etymologically, *negotiation* comes from the Latin *negotiare* where it meant "to transact business." Besides the Latin meanings which have become part of the present-day English vocabulary, this language also records *negotiation* to mean, among other things "the successful completion of a difficult trip or other activity" (LDELC[2] 1992: 890); this makes it applicable to the field of translation studies. For, even if performing a task on their own, "[…] translators do indeed negotiate with their clients, texts, and sometimes with their authors or other translators" (Pym, 1993: 29). As the majority of the meanings suggest it, negotiation is "a form of decision making when people are interdependent" (Brett and Gelfand, 2006: 175). And indeed, it is true: the translation process will not actually involve the presence of two parties who have to consider the four steps applicable in the negotiation process, and which are mentioned in the specialist literature. Nevertheless, an analogy is operable at the level of each negotiation step also valid within the framework of the translation process. Both the negotiator and the translator have to consider nearly the same steps in their activity, as in table 1, below.

Negotiator	Translator
(1) preparation of the strategy	(1) preparation of the translation strategy
(2) exchange information	(2) exchange information/personal documentation
(3) opening and making concessions	(3) opening and making concessions to word meanings and interpretations
(4) closing and getting commitment	(4) closing and getting commitment

Table 1. An analogy of the negotiator's and the translator's tasks.

Without any personal claim of originality, our perspective relies on Pym's viewpoint recorded in the specialist literature as early as 1993, and quoted in the foregoing, and on the worldwide acknowledged contribution of Eco (2004), who considered the

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[2] LDELC = Longman Dictionary of English Language and Culture.

translation process as an instance of negotiation. It is beyond any doubt that "[…] in an attempt to recreate in the translation the same effect as was intended in the original, […] it is the translator who ultimately negotiates a solution" (Eco, 2004:56).

A critical eye might see that it is more a speculation rather than a fact that negotiation has anything to do with the process of translation, but professional translators will certainly have quite the opposite attitude and think that opening and making concessions to word meanings and interpretations, as well as closing and getting commitment, do make translating a process similar to negotiating.

Jane Austen's novels in Romanian

Romanian inquisitive readers began indulging themselves in admiring Jane Austen's literature in Romania as early as 1968, when a first translation of *Pride and Prejudice* appeared under the aegis of a publishing house[3] whose main object was that of popularizing universal literature. All her novels have been translated ever since 1968, and the latest Romanian version of *Pride and Prejudice* was published in 2012. The annex to this paper presents the chronology of Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* in Romanian.

Although the latest version pulished in 2012 by Casa Cărții in Oradea is by far the most impressive of them all, particularly due to the translator's personal documentation, interventions and annotations, it has been expressly waived from the focus of this study, for it deserves an in-depth analysis and well-sustained commentaries, in a further approach.

The preface to the first edition acknowledges that out of Austen's novels, *Pride and Prejudice* "has always been considered the most outstanding although refined admirers tend to appreciate more Mansfield Park which succeedes to the former or even Emma. Nonetheless, *Pride and Prejudice* is a perfectly balanced work including all the elements which are peculiar to the concept and making of a novel" (Teodorescu, 1968: 12). In addition, Austen is presented as the author who "creates the type of dramatic novel which is somewhat limited in space and variety but compensated through the overlapping of several plans, through the creation of

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[3] *Editura pentru literatură universală* or E.L.U. was a publishing house founded by the commuist regime in Bucharest, in 1951. It constituted the foundation on which *Editura Univers* was built and further developed into the main promoter of universal masterpieces in literature translated into Romanian.

several compositional symmetries which open perspectives and particularly through the use of the author's time and options as a fourth dimension" (Teodorescu, 1968: 12). The numerous Romanian versions to this novel also indicate its popularity in the Romanian culture, to which serials or movies based on it have contributed immensely.

Data collection, corpus and method

To assess the qualitative improvement of several subsequent Romanian translations of the novel *Pride and Prejudice*, our analysis adopted the atomistic perspective described by Gerzymisch-Arbogast (2006). This perspective which views only individual components of a text as they are put together like in a Lego game to form a text in the target language, enabled us to examine the value of words/idioms at sentence level.

The corpus was extracted further to the parallel readings of *Mîndrie şi prejudecată* translated by Ana Almăgeanu, with the first edition published in 1968 and a second in 1969 and *Mândrie şi prejudecată* translated by Corina Ungureanu and published in 2011. The selection of the samples was performed with an end to creating a consistent material which could provide relevant in determining whether there is any noticeable progress in the translation process. The next step was the matching of the 28 TL excerpts with their 14 SL pairs, stage which revealed other translational aspects. Since the object of the current analysis is merely the lexical level, the only criterion underlying our findings is the recording of elements of interest as the novel story unfolds to the reader. By and all, our corpus illustrates translational inadvertencies (a) at the level of words and/or collocations, (b) Romanian miswordings resulting from language contamination or even from some errors as well as (c) TL text fragments which actually do not exist in the SL text, but which were intorduced for stylistic purposes, I think.

Results and commentary

The presentation of our research results will have a three-excerpt pattern, with a similar structure, i.e. (a) the source text, (b) the 1968/9 Roumanian translation and (c) the 2011 Roumanian translation; for practical reasons, only the page number will be bracketed. Although much of the 1968 Roumanian version is to be

noticed when reading the 2011 version, there still are some particulars which make the object of the current discussion.

On the choice of words

The most numerous excerpts of the paper corpus illustrate the same feature, i.e. the misinspired selection of the TL word to use in one situation or another. Thus, the examples below bring forward six illustrative cases:

> 1(a) "I was *never more annoyed*[1]! The *insipidity*[2] and yet the *noise*[3]; the *nothingness*[4] and yet the *self-importance*[5] of all these people! What would I give to hear your *strictures*[6] on them!" (p. 19)
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> 1(b) "Nu m-am plictisit *niciodată atât*[1]! Şi toţi aceşti oameni *insipizi*[2] şi totuşi *zgomotoşi*[3], *mărunţi*[4] şi totuşi *plini de ei*[5]! Ce n-aş da să aud *sarcasmele*[6] dumneavoastră la adresa lor." (p. 39)
>
> 1(c) "Nu m-am plictisit niciodată atât *de tare*[1]! Toţi aceşti oameni *anoşti*[2] şi totuşi *zgomotoşi*[3], *mărunţi*[4] şi totuşi *plini de ei*[5]! Ce n-aş da să aud *ironiile*[6] dumneavoastră la adresa lor." (p. 33)

The use of the adverbs *niciodată atât*[1] in 1 (b) as a solution for *never more* is ungrammatical in the literary language, considered by the specialists to be the most correct use of the Romanian language, or the standard language. The completion in 1(c) gives a degree of correctness and orality to the dialogue, but *N-am fost niciodată aşa/atât de plictisită* would have been both grammatical and fit to the whole dialogue. Equally, I think, the two nouns, *the insipidity*[2] and *the noise*[3] were preferred to what the translators took to be *the insipid and the noisy people*, in the speaker's attempt to avoid naming people names. The nouns may as well refer to the atmosphere, in general. The use of abstractions continues with [4] and [5] which are, this time, textually related to people. Both Romanian versions disregard the preference of the source text culture, who declines a critical attitude and makes an option for generalizations. All these SL nouns which actually distance the possible superiority the speaker might feel in relation to the members of the society she is now part of have become epithets in Romanian.

The transformation which is syntactically less important, is, nevertheless translationally indicative of the text stylistics. The

recourse to the equivalent *anost* in 1(c)[2] is more felicitous than *insipid* in 1(b)[2] for the former is used to qualify monotonous and boring people (NDULR,[4] 2006: 76)[5] while the latter is figuratively used with reference to people who lack good taste or vividness (NDULR, 2006: 610), which is actually not the case. We consider it to be a felicitous choice because the antithetic text which parallels those people's nothingness with their self-importance suggests the use of a term involving the opposite of *noise*. In spite of this improvement, the translator seems to have ignored the second half of this exclamatory sentence and disregards the other antitheses created by the association between *nothingness* and *self-importance*. The Romanian adjective *mărunți* means something very small, yet something, but the source text compares self-importance with nothingness and not with littleness, which is a good equivalent for *mărunți*. I consider that *neînsemnat* (which literally means "of no sign," of no importance or nothing) would have been a better choice since it is more suggestive to put *nothingness* instead of littleness in parallel with *self-importance*.

Strictures in 1(a)[6] accounted for "as something that restains or limits" (WEUDEL, 1996: 1883)[6] was also rendered differently, i.e. through *sarcasme* and *ironii*. I should indicate the good option for *sarcasme* (i.e. biting irony, cf NDULR, 2006: 1256), which is stronger and represents a better equivalent than *ironie* (which suggests something the speakers say "in words which are opposite of what they have in mind," NDULR, 2006: 627).

Unlike the first set of examples, the rest of them rarely refer to more than one instance of uninspired lexical choice. Thus, in what follows there only one term to consider:

> 2(a) "While they were dressing, he came two or three times to their different doors, to recommend their being quick, as Lady Catherine *very much objected*[1] to be kept waiting for dinner." (p. 110)
>
> 2(b) "În timp ce se schimbau, veni de două-trei ori la ușile camerelor lor, recomandându-le să se grăbească, deoarece lady Catherine *se enerva grozav*[1], dacă trebuia să aștepte

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[4] NDULR = *Noul dicționar universal al limbii române*.

[5] All the Romanian dictionary entries referred to from now on are the author's own translations into English.

[6] WEUDEL = *Webster's Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary of the English Language*.

peste ora ei de prânz."(p. 155)

2(c) "În timp ce se schimbau, veni de două-trei ori la uşile camerelor lor, recomandându-le să se grăbească, deoarece lady Catherine *se enerva grozav*[1], dacă trebuia să aştepte peste ora ei de prânz." (p. 182)

The use of the adverb *grozav* in 2(b)[1] and 2(c)[1] is an instance of misfit association with the verb *a se enerva*; even if as an adjective, *grozav* conveys negative meanings (something which causes extreme fear or terror , an adjective derived from the noun *groază*, cf. NUDLR, 2006: 547). As an adverb, *grozav* behaves like a contronym, for it may convey opposite meanings. Thus, it is used not only in a positive context but also with a positive extraordinary, remarkable, exceptional (NUDLR, 2006: 547). Since in this context *grozav* is used adverbially, it can hardly collocate with the Romanian reflexive verb *a se enerva*. Actually, the source text uses the neutral verb *to object* which could have been very simply translated as *obiecta cu insistenţă/ insistent/cu tărie/vehement*.

Closely related to *grozav* is the adverb *îngrozitor*. Stemming from the same noun the latter adverb may be used as a quantifier to suggest *a large/high amount of* or something extremely + adjective. But, in examples 2 above, it can hardly be used as a quantifier associated with *prost crescut/ill-educated* for people are either well- or ill-educated with no gradability in between.

The adverb *abominably* in the adjectival phrase *abominably rude* in 3(a)[1] may be turned *into îngrozitor de nepoliticoasă*, where *nepolitiocasă* is our suggested equivalent for *rude*, instead of *prost-crescută*, which translates the English ill-educated. The 2011 translator's negotiation with the source text is hardly observable in 3(c)[1].

3(a) "She is *abominably rude*[1] to keep Charlotte out of doors in all this wind." (p. 109)
3(b) "Este *îngrozitor de prost-crescută*[1], o ţine pe Charlotte afară pe vîntul ăsta." (p. 153)
3(c) "Este *îngrozitor de prost-crescută*[1]…" (p. 180)

On the other hand, examples 4 show an instance of text distortion in that an affirmation in the SL text becomes a negation in the TL text. Thus, in one of their conversations, Darcy confesses to Elisabeth that he knew the letter he had written certainly would give her pains, but nevertheless, he felt it as a must to express himself. In

the Romanian versions Darcy's urge turned into a lack of necessity: *dar nu era necesar s-o fac*. This translational distortion might well be repaired by just two modifications, i.e. a substitution and an omission. The meaning-for-meaning translation of the modal verb *must* suggesting deduction, which is in this contextually obvious, could have been rendered by the adverb *sigur/sure* instead of *trebuia*. The Romanian modal verb suggests necessity or strong obligation and it is a more appropriate equivalent for *had to* than for the deductive *must*. Equally, the use of the adversative *dar/but* in tight relation with *nu era necesar* makes the Romanian versions sound illogical; the simple omission of the negation *nu* would have spared the TL text from this awkward wording.

> 4(a) "'I knew,' said he, 'that what I wrote *must*[1] give you pain, but *it was necessary*[2]'" (p. 248)
>
> 4(b) "Știam, spuse el că ceea ce am scris *trebuia*[1] să vă mâhnească, dar *nu era necesar*[2] s-o fac." (p. 330)
>
> 4(c) "Știam, spuse el că ceea ce am scris *trebuia*[1] să vă mâhnească, dar *nu era necesar*[2] s-o fac." (p. 407)

Another awkward choice in the first Romanian version of *Pride and Prejudice* is the use of the verb *a desfide*, in 5(b)[1]. This verb, which has the same etymological root both in English (cf. O.D.E.E., 1996: 252)[7] and Romanian (cf. NDULR, 2006: 363), i.e. the Latin *diffidere*, has come down to be used in present-day Romanian with three meanings: "(1) to dare somebody to an action or to prove a thing which is actually impossible to perform; (2) to let somebody know s/he is unable to do; (3) to face something which is hayardous, such as death," which are different from its English usage.

In turn, the 5(c) version is not only friendlier but it is also more appropriate for the conversational context into which the Romanian translators transformed this excerpt of the novel free indirect style.

> 5(b) "On approaching them soon afterwards, though without seeming to to have any intention of speaking, Miss Lucas *defied*[1] her friend to mention such a subject to him, which immediately provoking Elisabeth to do it, she turned to him and said…" (p. 17)
>
> 5(b) "*Te desfid*[1] să deschizi un asemenea subiect față de domnul

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[7] O.D.E.E. = *Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology*.

Darcy. Aceasta fu o provocare pentru Elisabeth, care se întoarse către el şi spuse: ...''(p. 37)

5(c) ''Puţin mai târziu, după ce dânsul se apropia de ele, fără să aibă însă aerul că doreşte să participe la conversaţie, domnişoara Lucas îi spuse prietenei sale:
N*u te sfătuiesc*[1] să deschizi un asemenea subiect faţă de domnul Darcy. Aceasta fu o provocare pentru Elisabeth, care se întoarse către el şi spuse: ...'' (p. 29)

Under the same subtitle of wrong choice of words, there belong the excerpts 6(b) and 6(c), where the illustration refers to a subject predicate discord:

6(a) "I have been meditating on the very great pleasure which *a pair of fine eyes* in the face of a pretty woman *can bestow*[1]." (p. 19)

6(b) "Meditam la marea plăcere pe care ţi-o *poate da doi ochi frumoşi* pe chipul unei femei drăguţe[1]." (p. 39)

6(c) "Meditam la marea plăcere pe care ţi-o *pot da doi ochi frumoşi* de pe chipul unei femei drăguţe[1]."(p. 33)

The noun phrase playing the subject "*a pair of fine eyes* in the face of a pretty woman" can bestow "very great pleasure," which is the direct object to the ditransitive verb *to bestow*. While the 6(b)[1] seems to accept "the very great pleasure" to be subject and translates the predicate in the third person singular, the 6(c) version, with the predicate in the third person in the plural, is the correct solution; the verb *a da* is also a ditransitive verb which allows for such a version.

Gains in translation

Two instances of translator intervention were recorded where they bring new elements in the TL text, without distorting it. Thus, excerpt 7, in the source language is a bit less poetic than those in the two target texts: *my mind is more agreeably engaged* became *luneca pe un făgaş mult mai plăcut*, which, in a way represents rather a distortion of the source text than an explicitation. *Făgaş* suggests a pre-determined way or road to follow and not the independent use of one's own imagination; *more agreeably engaged* does not necessarily mean that somebody else decided what road "my mind" should take, but simply that it was engaged into something "my very own mind" considered to be more agreeable.

7(a) "Your conjecture is totally wrong, I assure you. My mind was *more agreeably engaged.* [1] " (p. 19)

7(b) "Presupunerea dumneavoastră este total greşită, vă asigur. Gândul meu *luneca pe un făgaş mult mai plăcut.* [1]" (p. 39)

7(c) "Presupunerea dumneavoastră este total greşită, vă asigur. Gândul meu *luneca pe un făgaş mult mai plăcut.* [1]" (p. 33)

The TL excerpts 8(b) and (c) below illustrate an adverbial misplacement as well as a Romanian version which is more elaborate than the original. *Just*[1], the time indicator is misplaced in (b), where it is used as a place indicator pointing to the fact that Miss Long had visited that very place. The (c) version amends this misplacement and turns *just* into what it actually is in the original text, i.e. a time indicator, thus preserving the meaning the word assumes in the SL text and implicitely avoiding a translational distortion.

As for the translation gains, the two versions in set 8 below introduce an idiomatic structure, *de-a fir-a păr/down to the smallest detail*. The simple equivalence of the original text would have been less incentive to the Romanian reader *şi mi-a povestit totul despre asta*. Nevertheless, the translator's intervention with this idiom not only nourishes the ladies' propensity for the smallest detail in any story but it also adds a special kind of naturalness and flavour to this peculiar conversation.

8(a) "'But it is,' returned she; 'for Miss Long *has just been*[1] here, and she *told me all about it*[2]." (p. 3)

8(b) "Dar a fost, îi replică ea; căci doamna Long a trecut *tocmai*[1] pe aici şi *mi-a povestit totul de-a fir-a păr*[2]." (p. 19)

8(c) "Dar a fost, îi replică ea; căci doamna Long, care *tocmai*[1] a trecut pe aici, *mi-a povestit totul de-a fir-a păr*[2]." (p. 5)

The gains in translation are quite rare, but they nevertheless do exist and highligh the translator's negotiation with the text.

Losses in translation

Where there is a negotiation, at the same time, there may be some gain and some loss. Two excerpts were translated with some losses, and they are presented in sets 9 and 10.

Thus, *for the gentleman himself* in 9(a)[1] is rendered by two solutions, 9(b)[1] and 9(c)[1]. While the former, 9(b)[1] is

grammatically incomplete for the unstressed personal pronoun *îl*, required by the verb *a privi* was omitted, the latter is grammatically correct. It is true, the verb *a privi* is mainly used to express intended or volitional physical perception (as the Romanian pair to the verb *to look at*), but with the insertion of an unstressed personal pronoun right ahead of it, its meaning will change into *to be concerned*.

Equally, we consider 9(c)[2] to provide a better Romanian solution for 9(a)[2], unlike 9(b)[2] where the gentleman expresses his feelings by embarrassement, 9(c)[2] shows himself *to feel* embarrassed. The introduction of the amplifier *mai ales*[3] particularly after the conjunction *ci/but* is not arguably chosen for the adversative syntactic relationship is clearly and sufficinetly emphasized by the use of *ci*.

The existence of *mai ales*[3] would require a continuation to the sentence to include the other number in the equation of the comparative pattern, *ci mai ales printr-o ... ... decât prin*, which does not exist in the SL text. Finally, (a)[3] was interpreted to be *o tăcere plină de resentiment* and *o tăcere plină de subînțeles*, respectively. While *resentiment* means "a feeling of hostility towards someone; an urge against someone (springing from an older discontent); desire to take revenge; hatred; envy; grudge against" (NDULR, 2006: 1213), *subînțeles* is defined to mean or to refer to (1) something which is infered from an affirmation, a statement, a context, etc. or to a (2) "hidden meaning" (NDULR, 2006: 1417). I consider that the subtlety of the latter solution is preferable to the openness, harshness or directness of the former.

> 9(a) "*As for the gentleman himself*[1], his feelings were chiefly expressed, not by *embarrassment or dejection*[2], or by trying to avoid her, but by *stiffen of manner and resentful silence*[3]." (p. 80)
>
> 9(b) "*Cât privește pe domnul Collins*[1], el *nu-și exprima sentimentele printr-o jenă sau deprimare*[2], sau prin vreo încercare de a o evita pe Elisabeth, ci *mai ales*[3] printr-o *atitudine înțepată și o tăcere plină de resentiment*[4]." (p. 117)
>
> 9(c) "*În ceea ce-l privește pe domnul Collins*[1], el *nu-și exprima sentimentele arătându-se jenat ori deprimat*[2], sau prin vreo încercare de a o evita pe Elisabeth, ci *mai ales*[3] printr-o *atitudine înțepată și o tăcere plină de subînțeles*[4]." (p. 132)

The syntagm *a truth universally acknowledged* was given two lexically and stylistically different versions, a word-for-word

translation in (b) [1] and a more elaborate version which is meaningfully similar to the one in (c) [1], but which is stylistically richer, i.e. *a truth acknowledged by everyody*. This version may be more appealing to the reader who may share the same opinion.

> 10(a) "It is *a truth universally acknowledged*[1], that *a single man*[2] in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife. (p. 3)
> 10(b) "Este un *adevăr universal recunoscut*[1] că un *burlac*[2], posesor al unei averi frumoase, are nevoie de o nevastă. (p. 19)
> 10(c) "Este un *adevăr recunoscut de toată lumea*[1] acela că unui *burlac*[2], pe deasupra şi posesor al unei frumoase averi, îi trebuie neapărat o nevastă. (p. 5)

The use of the word *burlac/bachellor* hardly fits the Romanian text since this word is more frequent in the spoken language than in the written language. If we associate the epoch when the novel was written with the Romanian language used with reference to the same time interval as well as the same language traditions, a more inspired choice would have translated *cavaler* for *single man* since either solution focuses on one semantic feature, a man who is not married. Actually, *cavaler* is a word which is meaningfully richer and which is also associated with generosity, nobility and kindness (Ciorănescu, 2002: 161) unlike *burlac*, which is a rather obscure term even in Russian, its language of origin (Ciorănescu, 2002: 126).

Although the two sets of examples hardly affect the Romanian versions, they still indicate translational progress, 10(c).

Language contact

In 1967-8, when the first translation of the novel was performed, english was no so influential upon Romanian as it has come to be in the last fifteen years or so. Nevertheless, the phenomenon of language contact did affect the translator; this is obvious in the sets of examples 11(b) and (c),12(b) and (c), 13 (b) and (c) as well as 14(b) and (c).

> 11(a) "Can there be *any other opinion*[1] on the subject?" (p. 82)
> 11(b) "Mai poate exista şi *o a doua părere*[1] în chestiunea aceasta?" (p. 120)

11(c) "Mai poate exista *o altă părere*[1] în chestiunea aceasta?" (p. 136)

The English noun phrase any other opinion playing the role of a direct object, was rendered in 11(b) [1], *o a doua părere* and in 11(c) [1] *o altă părere*, respectively. The 11(b) [1] version would have been perfect if the SL text had read … *a second opinion* to restrict the speaker's hint to the existence of just one alternative, i.e. the first or the second opinion on the subject. Thus, we acknowledge the word-for-word translation to be the better choice.

The examples which follow, 12(b) and 12(c) reflect no progress in the translation prrocess for either version shows the same ambiguous wording involved by the verb *a merita*. Although in Romanian this verb may be used both transitively and intransitively (cf. NDULR, 2006: 804), the textual intransitive meaning still remains ambiguous. A backtranslation exercise would certainly bring forward "What did you say of me that was not worth saying?" instead of "…that I did not deserve" for the Romanian *care să nu fi meritat* is an instance of incomplete predication suggesting rather the meaning of *something to be worthy of* than that *of somebody to be entitled to*. Therefore, a processed version should have come with a completion to the initial solution, such as *care să nu fi meritat a-mi fi adresat* or more elaborately, *Ce vorbe ați spus despre mine pe care eu nu le-aş fi meritat?* Or *Ce ați spus despre mine şi eu să nu fi meritat?* Probably the length of the sentence might be an explanation accounting for the waiving of the incomplete predication of the meaning in the TL text.

12(a) "What did you say of me that *I* did *not deserve*[1]?" (p. 147)
12(b) "Ce ați spus despre mine care să *nu fi meritat*[1]?" (p. 329)
12(c) "Ce ați spus despre mine care să *nu fi meritat*[1]?" (p. 406)

The following two sets of examples, 13 and 14 illustrate two instances of language contamination or calqued translation. 13 (b) [1] is so slightly different from 13 (c) [1] that except the use of comas, no other improvement occurred in the 2011 version as compared with the 1968 one. *To be very far from expecting* would be more convenient and language-specifically translated as *a nu se aştepta nici pe departe* rather than *a fi foarte departe de a se aştepta*. *A fi departe de* suggests in Romanian space and spaciality and not an abstraction, which is obvious in the SL text. Thus, 13(c) [1] would have sounded perfect in the form *desigur, nu mă aşteptam nici pe*

departe …

13(a) "I *was certainly very far from from expecting*[1] them to make so strong an impression." (p. 147)

13(b) "*Eram desigur foarte departe de a mă aştepta*[1] ca vorbele mele să facă o impresie atât de puternică." (p. 330)

13(c) "*Eram, desigur, foarte departe de a mă aştepta*[1] ca vorbele mele să facă o impresie atât de puternică." (p. 406)

The same lack of progress or less implication on the part of the translator in the negotiation process is noticeable in the final set of examples, below:

14(a) "I assure you that *I have been* most heartily *ashamed*[1] of it." (p. 248)

14(b) "Vă asigur că *e mult de cînd mă simt*[1] ruşinată până în adâncul inimii din cauza lor." (p. 330)

14(c) "Vă asigur că *e mult de când mă simt*[1] ruşinată până în adâncul inimii din cauza lor." (p. 406)

The use of the English present perfect continuous to suggest the retrospective character of the situation was accounted for by the introduction of a time clause in the Romanian versions *e mult de cînd* (or *it has been long since*), which, obviously is not part of the SL text. Although there is no Romanian corresponding tense for the English pattern, the recourse to the adverbial de multă vreme could have properly suggested the retrospective view of the English perfective pattern. So, I am convinced that 14(d), Vă asigur că *mă simt de mult(ă vreme)* ruşinată, would not only have avoided this English influence upon the Romanian version but it would also have been a better solution for the use of the meaning-for-meaning translating strategy applicable in this case.

Final remarks

To explore the Romanian translations made to Jane Austen's novels is both a rewarding and a profitable exercise. It is rewarding for it provides a wealth of research material with 31 different versions to one incomplete and six complete novels out of which two were published posthumously. It is a profitable exercise in that it invites to a thorough analysis of both the source and the target texts. That *Pride and Prejudice* was translated into six versions indicates

not only the readers' interest in the novel, but also its success in Romania.

On the other hand, the translation growth in number of versions might incent the analyst to envisage a possible growth in quality as well. Starting from the hypothesis that new translated versions of one and the same source text may reveal some translational headway, the earliest and the latest similarly structured versions were comparatively examined. As the method underlying our translational analysis considers the atomistic perspective, the selection of the word which best suits the Romanian context was the main concern of the current approach.

Our data show that in the largest majority of the cases, the translators did their best to find and use the most appropriate lexical equivalent in the TL to convey the SL message. Nevertheless, several misappropriations are also obvious and they make the object of the section dealing with the choice of words.

Accepting translating to be a negotiation process, the gains in the sets of excerpts 7 (b)/(c) and 8 (b)/(c) and the losses in sets of excerpts 9 (b)/(c) and 10 (b)/ (c) were also considered. Although in 1968 when Pride and Prejudice was first translated into Romanian, English hardly exercised an influence upon Romanian, a few examples of language inference were still recorded (in the sets of examples from 11(b)/(c) to 14(b)/(c).

Our textual analysis revealed an astounding fact: an overwhelming percentage of the 1968 translation is also noticeable in the 2011 version. All things considered, the question which rises is whether this is actually a case of negotiation or it is merely another instance of plagiarism, but this time in translation and not in a special kind of research. Even if plagiarism is a matter of debate, it has not been yet considered in the case of translations; in addition to that, it is beyond the aim of the current study.

Nevertheless, the modifications constituting the object of our commentary show a certain increase in the quality of the TL text. The 2011 translator does negotiate meaning, but this is evident in extremely few instances. All in all, the 2011 version shows inspiredly selected solutions which implicitly point to a better use of the Romanian vocabulary.

Annex. A chronology of Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* translated into Romanian

1968 – *Mîndrie şi prejudecată,* Bucureşti: E.L.U.
1969 – *Mîndrie şi prejudecată,* Bucureşti: E.L.U.
1992 – *Mândrie şi prejudecată,* Bucureşti: Garamond.
1998 – *Mândrie şi prejudecată,* Bucureşti: RAO.
2004 – *Mândrie şi prejudecată,* Bucureşti: Leda.
2006 – *Mândrie şi prejudecată*, Cluj-Napoca: Maxim Brit.
2007 – *Mândrie şi prejudecată*, 2nd edition, Bucureşti: Leda.
2011 – *Mândrie şi prejudecată,* Bucureşti: Adevărul Holding.
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Self-Mirroring in "The Oval Portrait"

Mihaela Prioteasa[1]

Abstract: In many of Edgar Allan Poe's short-stories the conflict between remembrance and forgetting can be found mainly because of the collision between his obsessively rendered ideas of the death of beauty and the beauty of death. There is no doubt that in his exploratory journeys of uncovering the horrific, dark and ghastly regions of the human imagination, death plays a pivotal part but the death-of-a-beautiful-woman motif offers numerous sources for his fixation with cadaverous females and mournful men and explains his fascination for beauty as well. "The Oval Portrait" describes the act of dying as a process of transposition between life and art as the portrait of the woman encapsulates her "immortal beauty" before it can disappear in old age and memory. The tale nonetheless points out to Poe's antithetic nature: he is drawn back to reality from time to time but he always plunges back into the imaginary. The conflict of genders appears when the wife's dislike of the painter's art eventually comes into collision with his love for the painting and just as art and aesthetics are intrinsically connected the act of self-mirroring emerges from the tale, connecting the fate of the protagonist to a female.

Keywords: *collision, self-mirroring, death, beauty, the death-of-a-beautiful-woman motif, transposition.*

Poe – The Translator

Among the large variety of narrative frames, a work is simply introduced within another of the same genre: a play within a play, a tale within a tale, a painting within a painting but more difficult to express by the creators of narrative voices within voices and texts within texts is a hybrid sort – within a novel a play is inserted, within a play a tale or within a tale or a poem a painting, real or imaginary, thus becoming the visual developing object verbally recounted in the text. In "The Oval Portrait" (1842) Poe translated the painting into words, the painter in the tale translated the live girl into death and the dead painting into life, offering vivacity to his text by describing the life-draining of another act:

> The complex tale tells both loss and gain, as a gradual owning and disowning are worked out, through the roles of the painting and narrating subjects and their painted object, whose own subject loses, one after the other, her tongue, her reality, and her life, in

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order to gain the "lifelikeliness" bestowed upon her in translation, by the very act of possession and dispossession. Around a picture included in a text, the metaphor of circumscription can work itself out fittingly. To write about or around a text-to circumscribe it-is to frame its likeness. It is at once set in relation to the other pictures in the place in which it is found and "insulated," as Poe would have it, and Ortega after him, comparing as he does in *Meditaciones del marco* the frame to an isolating border. Texts translated or shifted sideways may be considered, to that extent, resketched or reframed, reset in a new isolation that may be the life or the death of the picture. (Caws, 1983)

The central character of a work of art generally represents the author and this is also the case in Poe's "The Oval Portrait." The similarities are obvious: the protagonist is an artist devoted to his work, who marries a very obedient and sometimes neglected young girl (Virginia was aged fourteen at marriage and she encouraged and understood Poe's career); the wife gets very sick and dies without her husband's noticing the severity of the situation until it is too late.[2] Moreover the story was published three months after Virginia's coughing blood episode (April, 1842) and seems in direct connection with the events in Poe's life, standing for his own guilt in front of Virginia's fatal destiny.

In a Gothic castle – "one of those piles of commingled gloom and grandeur which have so long frowned among the Appennines, not less in fact than in the fancy of Mrs. Radcliffe" (Poe, 2005: 85) – in an apartment with walls adorned with "with tapestry and bedecked with manifold and multiform armorial trophies, together with an unusually great number of very spirited modern paintings in frames of rich golden arabesque," (Poe, 2005: 85) a "desperately wounded" feverish man seeks refuge. He asks his servant to close the shutters and throw open the heavy black velvet curtains around his bed while contemplating the pictures in the room and reading from a small volume found on his pillow which tells their histories.

Displeased with the position of the candelabrum at his bedside that impedes him from reading properly, he adjusts its position and observes that the beam of light falls in a dark niche on the portrait of a maiden that looks so alive and has such an "absolute

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[2] "Six years ago, a wife, whom I loved as no man ever loved before, ruptured a blood-vessel in singing. Her life was despaired of. I took leave of her forever and underwent all the agonies of her death." – Letter to George Eveleth.

lifelikeness of expression" that if it had not been for its vignetting technique and its "oval, richly gilded and filigreed in Moresque" (Poe, 2005: 86) frame, he would have mistaken it for the maiden herself. He puts the candelabrum back in its place, casting the portrait back into the shadow and begins to read the story of the painting that fascinated him, encapsulated in "vague and quaint words" (Poe, 2005: 87) within the written text:

> The narration has then two levels of discourse and two styles: the "ordinary" or extraordinary style of Poe, and this inserted "other style," for tale and portrait, thus set. From this told story and its heavy frame, there is no exit, nor from the bed, nor from the castle. (Caws, 1983)

The volume offers a brief report of a painter "wild with the ardor of his work" who tried so hard to idealize the image of his young obedient wife through portraiture that he did not observe her precarious health and when finishing his masterpiece he noticed that he had killed his subject.

Reading the Painted Image

"The Oval Portrait," one of the last doubling tales ("Morella," "The Fall of the House of Usher," "Mystification," (1837) "William Wilson") forces a confined emphasis on the reading of its inserted and main object, the reader's focal point being trained just like the narrator's, within a range that narrows progressively and moves from the obscure corridors to the shadowy room and ends in the dark-curtained bed. The last position gives a contemplating point of the young bride's portrait upon the wall and also provides the instrument placed there "by chance" through which the portrait is explained:

> this written counterpart to the visual object determines a simultaneous parallel reading between the portrait, which catches the light, and its own verbal enlightenment, the text in the volume. What the picture pictures is in fact loss, while it seems to have life, and because of that the painter of the elaborately framed portrait is the lady's husband, so loving and so much an artist that his admiring brush has stripped the real bride of her life's blood to place the colour on the canvas, life upon the wall, and death within his bed. The inserted tale ends there, with no return to the outside frame for the narrator, as if the recounted drama of the exchange of

life for truth in representation were in fact to operate in much the same way within the text of the tale itself. (Caws, 1983)

The tale presents a condensed allegory of death, life and art – an opposition between living beauty and its artistic representation. In this regard Poe's story is reminiscent of John Keats' "Ode on a Grecian Urn" (1819) paralleling the coldness of the urn with human warmth. According to J. Gerald Kennedy in *Poe, Death and the Life of Writing*:

> the interest of "The Oval Portrait" does not lie in its metaphorizing of aesthetic theory; rather, it resides in the tortured relationship limned by the tale: between the painter and his young bride, between the woman and her painted likeness, between the haunting portrait and the wounded narrator, and between the "quaint" anecdote in the art book and the narrator's truncated story. Each pairing figures an opposition between life and art, between one who gazes and one who is gazed at; more revealingly, each implies a relationship between translator and text or between text and translation. The painter translates his wife in a double sense – into a visual icon and into a lifeless model. (Kennedy, 1987:61)

Like all processes of translation this case deals with duplication and eradication, which both mirrors the original and annihilates it sacrificing the letter of the primary text in order to reconstruct it in another language. The subject of the painter, his young bride and the artistic manifestation possess the fatality of translation, as the painting is alive because of the wife's death and she "lives on" inside the painting.

Another governing image in Poe is the doubling and splitting of body and shadow. The act of doubling, of reflection – reminding of the Narcissus myth – could be interpreted as distorting and subverting reality rather than reflecting it iconically:

> The attempt to divide a mutually constitutive opposition and completely separate the opposing terms from each other always turns into a splitting/doubling, as if one tried to separate the north and south poles of a bar magnet by sawing the bar in half, only to find that instead of separating the poles one had produced two new bar magnets, each with its own north and south poles. Or to phrase it another way, the splitting of a mutually constitutive opposition is like the dividing of an amoeba: halving is doubling. ... It is this simultaneous internal splitting/external doubling that renders the

notion of a limit problematic in a mutually constitutive opposition. For example, in the opposition between body and shadow, there is an essential (that is, original) uncertainty as to whether the dividing line between the two should be interpreted as an internal or an external limit, whether the line should be read metonymically (as the internal boundary between two halves of a whole – splitting) or metaphorically (as the external boundary between two similar wholes – doubling). (Irwin, 1983: 156)

Transposition d'Art

The narrator transposes the painting into writing, a text that is removed from its original – he speaks about the effect of the painting and its "true secret," its "lifelikeliness" but the reader is not as "confounded, subdued, and appalled" (Poe, 2005: 87) as the narrator:

> The portrait, I have already said, was that of a young girl. It was a mere head and shoulders, done in what is technically termed a *vignette* manner; much in the style of the favorite heads of Sully. The arms, the bosom, and even the ends of the radiant hair melted imperceptibly into the vague yet deep shadow which formed the back-ground of the whole. The frame was oval, richly gilded and filigreed in *Moresque*. As a thing of art nothing could be more admirable than the painting itself. But it could have been neither the execution of the work, nor the immortal beauty of the countenance, which had so suddenly and so vehemently moved me. (Poe, 2005: 86)

In order to strengthen the effect lost in his own translation, the narrator provides a new perspective, the historical version found in the volume of art criticism that offers an explanation for the initial translation – from bride to portrait –acting as an intermediary between the work of art and the original subject:

> She was a maiden of rarest beauty, and not more lovely than full of glee. And evil was the hour when she saw, and loved, and wedded the painter. He, passionate, studious, austere, and having already a bride in his Art; she a maiden of rarest beauty, and not more lovely than full of glee; all light and smiles, and frolicsome as the young fawn; loving and cherishing all things; hating only the Art which was her rival; dreading only the pallet and brushes and other untoward instruments which deprived her of the countenance of her lover. (Poe, 2005: 87)

The metaphor from the final sentence of "The Oval Portrait" goes to the edge of metaphysics, forcing the reader to reflect upon the idea that the human subject is a perpetual text marked for translation. The short sentence "She was dead" closes not only the woman's life but also the critical note from the volume and the narrative itself. This abrupt ending may give way to the idea that the catafalque-like bed may be the site of the narrator's mortal translation that sees a mirroring of his own decline in the story of the artist and his bride. The narrator's "gaze" at "the immortal beauty of countenance" (Poe, 2005: 86) repeats the artist's final horror:

> And he would not see that the tints which he spread upon the canvas were drawn from the cheeks of her who sate beside him. And when many weeks bad passed, and but little remained to do, save one brush upon the mouth and one tint upon the eye, the spirit of the lady again flickered up as the flame within the socket of the lamp. And then the brush was given, and then the tint was placed; and, for one moment, the painter stood entranced before the work which he had wrought; but in the next, while he yet gazed, he grew tremulous and very pallid, and aghast, and crying with a loud voice, 'This is indeed Life itself!' turned suddenly to regard his beloved: – She was dead! (Poe, 2005: 87-88)

The realization that the portrait has a "life itself" and not the actual death of the woman is what makes the painter and the narrator alike to grow pale. The painter becomes aware of the autonomy of the work he had created and that it had gained an independent life more real than that of the original due to its draining the vitality of the subject like a parasite. The painting is a dreadful double of the young wife and its "lifelikeliness:"

> simultaneously signifies an immortality and a fatality: while the beauty of the portrait will endure, its living counterpart will not; the woman resemble the sign of herself less and less until she is at last translated into a corpse. In this case the portrait conveys the same inevitable message of time and mortality which every photograph of a human subject bears. This is the shocking truth that appalls the painter and the narrator; this is the discovery which the final sentence of "The Oval Portrait" serves to confirm. (Kennedy, 1987: 63)

The Death of Beauty and the Beauty of Death

"The Oval Portrait" is obviously part of a group of tales that characterise "portraits" of doomed beautiful women and that obsessively render the same idea again and again (the death of beauty and the beauty of death) showing Poe's suggestion that the fate of the narrator is in one way or another linked with that of a female. The death-of-a-beautiful-woman motif can be explained by Poe's biography that offers plentiful sources for his fixation with cadaverous women and mournful men.

In an early poem often termed autobiographical Poe betrays an entirely conventional Romantic attitude:

> For, being an idle boy lang syne,
> Who read Anacreon, and drank wine,
> I early found Anacreon rhymes
> Were almost passionate sometimes –
> And by strange alchemy of brain
> His pleasures always turn'd to pain –
> His naivete to wild desire –
> His wit to love – his wine to fire –
> And so, being young and dipt in folly
> I fell in love with melancholy,
> And used to throw my earthly rest
> And quiet all away in jest –
> I could not love except where Death
> Was mingling his with Beauty's breath –
> Or Hymen, Time, and Destiny,
> Were stalking between her and me.[3]

Mario Praz in *The Romantic Agony* notes: "To such an extent were Beauty and Death looked upon as sisters by the Romantics that they became fused into a sort of two-faced herm, filled with corruption and melancholy and fatal in its beauty of which the more bitter the taste, the more abundant the enjoyment." (Praz, 1970: 31)

In an epoch of the cult of mourning and death Poe's poetic treatment of the dying women seems to indicate that he believed in the common view that death intensified female beauty and led to purification and argued that the death of a beautiful woman was the most poetical of all topics as it merged the essential elements of

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[3] "Romance," 1829.

desire: irresistible loveliness and the impossibility of its recovery. In Poe's view the death of a beautiful woman is the ultimate paradox of the human condition. The apparently eternal beauty of a woman transformed by disease into a ghastly parody, turning desire into loathing and love into disgust, becomes a sign of the dying woman's fate, a spectacle both irresistible and unendurable:

> He feels it in the beauty of woman – in the grace of her step – in the lustre of her eye – in the melody of her voice – in the soft laughter – in the sigh – in the harmony of the rustling of her robes. He deeply feels it in her winning endearments – in her burning enthusiasms – in her gentle charities – in her meek and devotional enthusiasms – but above all – ah, for above all – he kneels to it – he worships it in the faith, in the purity, in the strength, in the altogether divine majesty – of her *love*. (Poe, 2009: 196)

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Pamela: or Novel Revisited. Rewriting in the 18th Century

Aloisia Şorop[1]

Abstract: Samuel Richardson's novel *Pamela: or Virtue rewarded* was not only one of the most widely-read novels in the 18th century, but also one of the most frequently imitated and satirized works. The paper explores the types of conflict that Fielding's and Haywood's rewritings develop with Richardson's text, while also trying to highlight the domains of negotiation their parodies cover.

Keywords: *parody, virtue, desecration, marriage, rewriting*.

Hypergamy, that is marrying into a superior social class, had been a major subject of interest to women long before Samuel Richardson published his best-seller *Pamela: or Virtue Rewarded* in 1740. The fact had more gratifying consequences in fiction, rather than in reality, and reflected the 18th century women's aspirations of hitting a double target: a decent husband and a social/financial position. Considered from this perspective, acquiring a legal husband when legitimate marriages co-existed with "marriages of mutual consent by word of mouth and secret marriages performed by an ordained minister" (Watt, 2001: 149) was a genuinely difficult, sometimes disheartening, task.

Pamela enjoyed enormous success mainly with female readers and its tremendous appeal can be attributed today to the change in outlook on such matters as 'the moral and psychological roles of the sexes' in the 18th century (Watt, 2001: 154). As Ian Watt rightly observed (Watt, 2001: 156) Puritanism had already denounced all extra-marital affairs as utterly sinful and a secular revival of Puritanism now proclaimed virtuous all forms of resistance to natural drives of both men and women. Virtue defined its domain as strictly sexual and it pre-eminently referred to women while chastity emerged as "the" virtue. (Watt, 2001: 156)

Richardson's novel not only preached sexual abstinence before marriage on the part of women, but also set the standard for the ideal type of heroine that dominated English literature until the turn of the 20th century: the submissive, fragile, sexually

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inexperienced young girl who falls in love with her husband only after their wedding ceremony (Watt, 2001: 161). Richardson even wrote in an article for *The Rambler* in 1751 that it was improper for a woman to fall in love with her suitor before he proposed to her (Watt, 2001: 167). When Pamela felt attracted to her master and finally accepted to marry him in spite of all the harassment she had been put through, she bemused her readers and invited licentious interpretations of her behaviour.

Because of the novel's all too moral message, counter-reactions appeared before long. After *Pamela* enjoyed a huge success and came to be recommended to young women as a guide to protect their innocence before marriage, there were written subversive parodies ridiculing its theme and undermining its hypocritical prudish message. Two of them have arrested our attention: Eliza Haywood's novel *Anti-Pamela or Feign'd Innocence Detected* published in 1741, and the short novel or pamphlet, as it was often considered, *An Apology for the Life of Mrs. Shamela Andrews* written by Henry Fielding but signed Conny Keyber, published the same year. A more ambitious parody of *Pamela* was written one year later, in 1742, by the same Henry Fielding, namely *Joseph Andrews, or The History of the Adventures of Joseph Andrews and of his Friend Mr. Abraham Adams*, but our study does not include it.

Both Eliza Haywood and Henry Fielding were known for their wit and humour, both had proved their skill at writing drama before they chose fiction. Both works are satirical rewritings of Richardson's novel meant to turn *Pamela*'s series of sufferings and ordeals into ridicule with the final aim of desecrating the notion of "virtue" that Richardson's novel praised so highly.

The habit of rewriting was not new in the 18th century and parody was one of the best equipped modes of writing when the authors' intentions were to expose folly or vices. Parody's definition, according to Simon Dentith, covers both intertextuality and satirical rewriting: "Parody includes any cultural practice which provides a relatively polemical allusive imitation of another cultural production or practice" (Dentith, 2000: 9). Gerard Genette, cited by the same author, made a distinction between the different forms of intertextual approach to texts and distinguished parody from travesty by insisting on the playfulness of parody and the satirical note of the latter (Dentith, 2000:11). In Genette's terms, then, *Shamela* ranks rather as a travesty than as a parody (Dentith, 2000: 13). But Dentith sticks to his definition of parody and considers *Shamela* to be a full-fledged

parody of Richardson's novel, in which Fielding reworks on such issues as prudish sexuality and innocence and twists them into matters of "prurience" and "hypocrisy" (Dentith, 2000: 61). Moreover, Professor Dentith considers parody to lie at the core of the novel as a literary genre and it is owing to his desire to satirize *Pamela* that Fielding took to writing prose, excelling at the parodic one. (Dentith, 2000: 59-60)

The two works that openly attacked Pamela's long (32 letters) display of virtue present a story almost identical to, in the case of Fielding, or slightly different from, in the case of Haywood, *Pamela*'s plot, aiming to reverse values and, ultimately, alter the perception of the book. The heroine, whose name is suggestively changed into Shamela and Syrena Tricksy, respectively, is the embodiment of what antipamelists cried out: a hypocrite who uses her charms and simulated innocence to lure a nobleman into marriage.

One first observation is that the parodies are significantly shorter, Fielding's novel even earning the label of a pamphlet, as I have mentioned. The shorter the rewriting, the more poignant the satire: because Fielding's irony goes beyond the heroine and her sufferings, it actually enters the text and fragments it, extracting only those pieces that are more liable to literary derision.

There are some patterns, apart from the epistolary form of the novel, that the two parodies retain. One is the relationship between daughter and parents. In *Pamela*, the young maid's parents are the recipients of her letters and the depository of her confessions, implicitly. It is for them, too, that she writes the long diary (an uninterrupted series of letters, in fact) while she is kept a prisoner by Mr. B_____ at Lincolnshire Estate. She turns to them for counsel because they represent the *centrum mundi* of the Augustan patriarchal society and, as such, radiate the ideology of socially acceptable manners and code of behaviour. They act as her distant supporters in her struggle to keep her innocence, and represent in her eyes an unyielding link to the 18th century moral code.

Though their letters are signed together, it is her father who answers Pamela's missives, and his views reflect the Polonius type of advice: a worldly, experienced form of warning against evil and the shapes it can take. Actually, in Letter II, after Pamela informs them about the young gentleman's kind words and gifts to her, her parents express their concern that their naïve daughter might "reward him with that jewel, your virtue, which no riches, nor favour, nor any

thing in this life, can make up to you." (5). Their parental anxiety acquires an alarmingly tragic note when they declare "we had rather see you all covered with rags, and even follow you to the churchyard, than have it said, a child of ours preferred any worldly conveniences to her virtue." (6) The parents have from the start outlined a very strict course of behaviour for their inexperienced daughter and instilled into her mind, like a Puritan punishing God, that virginity is worthier than life. The closing formulas of their letters have also a strong impact on the young girl's mind as they combine their (sweet) love with their (freezing) circumspection: "Your careful, but loving, Father and Mother," "Your truly loving, but careful, Father and Mother."

Occasionally, Pamela writes to her mother, but there is no clear evidence why she would evade her father. All her closing words mirror her obedience to all parental advice: "Your dutiful daughter," "Your honest daughter." Perusing them one can sense a crescendo in the girl's concern and fright as she can no longer manage the situation she finds herself in. From "Your most dutiful daughter" Pamela passes to "Your afflicted daughter," "Your poor honest daughter," "Your distressed daughter."

At the end of the book, when Pamela can finally rejoice over the happy ending of her turmoil, with the prospect of a happy life of plenty and reciprocated love, she resumes her diary in a letter-like manner and addresses her 'Honoured Father and Mother'. She ends her entry with "Forgive your impatient daughter… [who] desires to be Ever most dutifully yours." She may have learnt a few things about human psychology and behaviour but remains the same submissive daughter, even in happiness and fulfilment. Pamela is the epitome of the role women had to fulfil in the Augustan Age and throughout the Victorian era: a sweet, modest and pure creature who complies with masculine authority and accepts being assigned the role of an object in the righteous world of men.

But the social stage displayed more than one view. There were voices that rose against "the double standard" that Richardson's novel extolled in a society which tended to be highly permissive with men but preferred to characterize female behaviour in terms of "modesty, purity, delicacy." Laetitia Pilkington, a then famous author of *Memoirs*, asked the right question in her work "Is it not monstrous that our seducers should be our accusers?" (Watt, 2001: 157) setting the tone for acid comments on Richardson's novel.

The two parodies of *Pamela* present a totally different type of heroine against a quasi-similar backdrop. Shamela and Syrena Tricksy stand for the ruthless, scheming, immoral seductress who spares none of the tricks she learned from her mother to subdue men and drag them into dishonorable marriages or signed agreements that place the mistress under financial protection in exchange for sexual favours. Both *Anti-Pamela or Feign'd Innocence Detected* and *An Apology for the Life of Mrs. Shamela Andrews* copy Richardson's epistolary mode and the two young women are in regular correspondence with their mothers. The fact that the figure of the father is missing apparently justifies the girls' debasement. A girl would not get that corrupt if her father would watch her pace! "Like mother, like daughter" applies to these young women under the strict control of their mothers, who, in both cases, are ideal (i.e.efficient) distant masters that manipulate the girls into disgracing and dishonorable behaviour and continuously remind them of the "guiding principles" in a woman's life: deceive men and get as much profit from them as you can.

There is nothing of Pamela's moral convulsions and physical torment caused by Mr. B_____'s harassment in these parodies. On the contrary, the prurient heroines are in a perpetual quest of frivolous situations that would later embarrass or put the gentlemen into a discomforting moral position.Their main weapon is affected prudery, their worst enemy, the faintest attachment to the guy. Syrena's mother instructs her in one of her first letters: "…I hope you do not stand in need of any caution against indulging a secret inclination for him; for if it once comes to that, you are ruined!" (Haywood and Fielding, 2004: 8)

The girls are educated to hit the jackpot by feining modesty and bringing the issue of virtue as supreme in their relationships with men. They, too, admit chastity is a major quality but they scheme to wholly benefit from it. They are not afraid of losing their innocence, they are afraid of losing it to the wrong person. One may say they are the masterminds of a well-plotted attack on men's virtue (i.e.finances). Shamela writes to her mother; "I thought once of making a little fortune by my person. I now intend to make a great one by my virtue." (Lockwood, 2007: 22)

At the end of his novel, Richardson intervenes in the text as an intermediary that presents the reader with Pamela's correspondence to her parents. As usual with the then authorial voice, he couldn't help being didactic in tone and advised "YOUTH of

BOTH SEXES" to read the novel and pay due attention to its moral teaching.

Unlike *Pamela*, the parodies are expressively addressed to men in an attempt to caution them against their worst enemies. They are the exact opposites of *Pamela*, they are like letters of parenting guidance for young gentlemen in distress, affliction and danger of losing their…virtue, namely reputation and income. Conny Keyber, aka Henry Fielding, had a sentence printed right above his name on the front page which reads "Necessary to be had in all Families." It is also interesting to note that Eliza Haywood, a feminist writer who vigorously attacked male authority and deplored the situation of women in her age, writes on the very first page "Publish'd as a necessary Caution to all Young Gentlemen" and gives as a Motto some lines from *The Fair Penitent*, a very popular play at the time

> Fatally fair they are, and in their Smiles
> The Graces, little Loves, and young Desires inhabit;
> But all that gaze upon them are undone;
> For they are false, luxurious in their Appetites,
> And all the Heaven they hope for is Variety.
> One Lover to another still succeeds;
> Another, and another after that,
> And the last Food is welcome as the former;
> Till having lov'd his Hour out, he gives his Place,
> And mingles with the Herd that went before him. (Haywood and Fielding, 2004: 51)

Fielding's novel is grand in scope for it boasts of presenting the genuinely true story of the woman who falsified her name from Shamela into Pamela and distorted the events that led to her infamous marriage to Mr. Booby, a nobleman of means. The book is thus repeatedly claims to shed light on the real facts presented with such "fake" dignity and "foul" pathos by Richardson in his novel and belittle or even annul the effect it may have had on the readers'mind. *Shamela* grows as a satire of both Richardson and his fiction. Though also composed as a series of letters exchanged among Shamela, her mother, Mr. Booby and Parson Williams, Shamela's former lover, the introductory ones are written by some parson Tickletext who sends parson Oliver *Pamela: or Virtue Rewarded*, the most beautiful and enlightening book that he has read, apart from the Bible. And he describes the spell the book works upon him: "If I lay the book down it comes after me. When it has dwelt all day long upon my ear, it

takes possession all night of the fancy" (Lockwood, 2007: 2). To his great surprize, parson Tickletext receives in exchange a bunch of letters from parson Oliver, which, the latter claims, reveal the whole story underlying *Pamela* and the genuine character of the heroes involved. Which explains the change in perspective and the humorous turn the story takes.

Fielding, as I mentioned before, is not satisfied only to change the characters' names and nature, but he also works on the general impression his account gives by compressing scenes and reducing the length of letters. As Thomas Lockwood observed Fielding makes great use of "contemptuous abbreviation," a form of *bathos* that he skillfully manipulates to undermine the highly emotional tone and didactic topic in Richardson's work. By being rapid and abrupt in recounting her adventures, Shamela gives the readers the impresssion that she, too, has read *Pamela* and is now hurriedly summarizing its plot with some modifications, here and there, which, as Lockwood rightly observes, is "part of the joke." (Lockwood, 2007: 41)

Having a keen eye for drama, Fielding knows how to rewrite Richardson's novel literally under the form of a script. He generally follows the plot sequence, but cuts scenes and leaves aside details that are not eye-catching and do not serve his immediate purpose. Moreover the dialogue rendered in Shamela's letters is very juicy, to put it mildly, and he was, evidently, criticized for his licentiousnes, which, again, is a direct attack at Pamela's language and general tone. (Pamela's discourse was improved by Richardson over the successive printings, so that she might appear less rude and uneducated).

Fielding does further confront Richardson directly when, at the end of the book, he presents Shamela amused and flattered to become the subject matter of a novel in which both herself and the course of her life would be crassly altered to befit the sensibility of readers:

> The strangest Fancy hath enter'd into my Booby's Head, that can be imagined. He is resolved to have a Book made about him and me; he proposed it to Mr. Williams, and offered him a Reward for his Pains; but he says he never writ any thing of that kind, but will recommend my Husband, when he comes to Town, to a Parson who does that Sort of Business for Folks, one who can make my Husband, and me, and Parson Williams, to be all great People; for he can make black white, it seems. Well, but they say my Name is to be altered, Mr. Williams, says the first Syllabub hath too comical a Sound, so it is to be changed into Pamela; I own I can't imagine

what can be said; for to be sure I shan't confess any of my Secrets to them, and so I whispered Parson Williams about that, who answered me, I need not give my self any Trouble; for the Gentleman who writes Lives, never asked more than a few Names of his Customers, and that he made all the rest out of his own Head; you mistake, Child, said he, if you apprehend any Truths are to be delivered. So far on the contrary, if you had not been acquainted with the Name, you would not have known it to be your own History. I have seen a Piece of his Performance, where the Person, whose Life was written, could he have risen from the Dead again, would not have even suspected he had been aimed at, unless by the Title of the Book, which was superscribed with his Name. Well, all these Matters are strange to me, yet I can't help laughing, to think I shall see my self in a printed Book (Lockwood, 2007: 43).

Eliza Haywood's *Anti-Pamela or Feign'd Innocence Detected* has a very direct reference to *Pamela* in its title but an indirect approach in its content. The heroine's name, Syrena Tricksy, spells from the beginning the young woman' main features: prurience and guile. Syrena is genuinely "antipamelian," if one may say so, in the sense that she openly expresses her vile aims in her letters to her "mamma" and her modesty and innocence are but affectations meant to deceive her victims. As she is true to herself in her letters and they are unquestionably confessions to her best friend and adviser, the letters testify to her psychology in a most revealing manner. The reader is thus in a position to perceive her inner motives and judge her strategy. But her adventures are of a different kind from Pamela's and her story is far from describing in minute detail a long and tiresome courtship that eventually ends in happy marriage. Her feats involve skilled stratagems of beguiling and ruining men, while some of her victims retort in the same manner and deceive Syrena in their turn.

Syrena is more of a Moll-Flanders type of heroine, without the latter's intelligence and sympathetic support of her author to overcome adversities and reach the status she so long craved and fought for. The end of Haywood's book finds Syrena a debased woman that passed through all phases of degradation, abortion and imprisonment included. The author, who, in accordance with the authoring codes of the age, was a visible and audible presence throughout the novel, characterizes her as wicked, vicious, infamous and criminal. It is obvious that Haywood did not in the least approve of her behaviour and did not for a minute empathize with her. The

punishment inflicted on Syrena was meant not so much to improve her character but rather to spare the others her vilain stratagems. She is sent to the farther part of Wales under surveillance and "made a thousand vows never to return to London any more" (Haywood and Fielding, 2004: 170). This last phase of her "fall from grace," her actual banishment to an isolated area places her again in close vecinity, fictionally speaking, to Moll Flanders, who also left for the New World. Are they fallen angels who seek salvation in a purer place far from the corruption that infests urban locations in 18th century England? Or are they new Eves that are driven away from the sunlit Paradise to expiate sins that are inherent to their beings, socially and financially programmed to doom by birth? Being a parodic character, Syrena was not meant for sympathetic understanding.

The last sentence in the novel is ambiguous and leaves room for hope for poor Syrena Tricksy: "she was sent under the Conduct of an old Servant of one of her Kinsmen to Wales, where what befel her, must be the Subject of future Entertainment" (Haywood and Fielding, 2004: 172). Our entertainment, her entertainment? The author does not tell. But if there is entertainment, it cannot be too tragical, we presume.

Anti-Pamela or Feign'd Innocence Detected' was written when Eliza Haywood had already gained some sort of reputation both as a woman with a scandalous behaviour and as an author of erotic works. Her best known novel was published in installments between 1719 and 1720 and is called *Love in Excess; Or, The Fatal Enquiry.* It, paradoxically, dealt with similar situations presented in *Pamela*: women not allowed to express their feelings and domineering males that resort to rape to solve problems of the heart.. Moreover, in this earlier book Haywood is sympathetic with the "fallen women," a trend that will be followed by other writers.

What both Haywood and Fielding found interesting as a literary figure was "the coquette," a perverse creature whose life is based on lies and who indulges in harvesting male hearts but is not touched by passion for any suitor (Hodgson Anderson, 2009: 30). Because, if for one second so, she would simply cease to exist. The definition also matches Belinda, Alexander Pope's *Rape of the Lock* magnetic heroine. Both Shamela and Syrena fall into this category, with no compassion on the part of their authors. Though Shamela has (apparently) reformed at the end of the book, Syrena is left in a limbo where her future/reformation is problematic and hard to forsee.

Written only one year after Richardson's *Pamela*, Fielding's and Haywood's rewritings were spontaneous rejoinders, parodic replies to a book that was perceived too serious and grave not to cry for satire. Like all intertextual writings they enter into conflict with the *hypotext* (Genette's definition) because they aimed to undermine the moral and highly didactic message of *Pamela* and, consequently, reversed the whole "righteous" process of mass-moralizing that it inaugurated.

Henry Fielding, a more biting satirist that Haywood, goes into the details of the text and reworks scenes, attitudes, words with a view of desecrating whatever is so pompously described as definitely "white" and "black" in *Pamela*. His approach is all the more subversive as he also tackles issues of authorship and the whole idea of verisimilitude in the case of life writing. Moreover he will return to Pamela and her story of mocked innocence in another novel, *Joseph Andrews*, in which he derisively hints at Pamela's situation by presenting a reversed one: the man (Pamela's fictional brother) is shy and prudish and women sexually harass him.

It is also worth noting that both Fielding and Haywood are now considered to have substantially contributed to the development of the English novel by this very parodic approach. Fielding's *Shamela* is distinctly noted for its ironic distance from what Dentith describes as Richardson's "bourgeois romance:" "Fielding's activity as a novelist, then, is founded upon his parodic distance from the work of Richardson, which, as far as *Pamela* is concerned, we can describe as providing a kind of bourgeois romance…" (Dentith, 2000: 62) And the critic further highlights the importance parody had in the 18th century disputes on such controversial matters as "ethics, class and sexuality."

Eliza Haywood, on the other hand, has also been largely reconsidered. Paula R. Backscheider cites in her introduction Margaret Doody' remark that Haywood "established the seduction novel as a minor genre in English fiction, and it is to that genre that Richardson's work ultimately belongs" (Backscheider, 1999: XXIX), reversing the importance of authors and the relevance of their work for the English novel. In the same vein, another critic, Katherine S. Green, is quoted, who also values Haywood's parody from a perspective that, paradoxically, changes roles and positions of power (fictionally speaking): "The question of influence... is as appropriately posed in relation to Haywood's on Richardson as to Richardson's on Haywood." (Backscheider, 1999: XXIX)

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Contending Nations and Notions of Cultural Identity in Kazuo Ishiguro's *When We Were Orphans*

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Abstract: The present paper focuses on the discourses of cultural conflict and reconciliation, of the war and peace of civilizations in Kazuo Ishiguro's novel *When We Were Orphans*. It highlights the tension between nationalism and internationalism, underlying most of Ishiguro's novels, and the ways in which it is set up only to be eventually resolved in the dawning possibility of intercultural reconciliation and harmonization. The paper's main argument is that, in Ishiguro's writing, the mindscape of monologic cultural identity is constantly counterposed by the transcendence of cultural boundaries, brought about by an enlightened awareness and acceptance of otherness, and sustained by the dialogical discourse of our shared humanity and humanistic values.

Keywords: *war, peace, imperialism, nationalism, internationalism*.

Ishiguro's novels address a cross-cultural, trans-national sensibility, projecting a vision of human condition in its universal essentials. His characters share the inherently human vulnerability to the sweep of historical change. Marred by sheer contingency or self-complacency, they elude the pitfalls of "emotional arena" by the delusion of personal agency. The protagonists epitomise the plight of individuals trying to make sense of their place in the larger scheme of things when public history impinges on private destiny. The chaos of embattled civilizations scrambles and hybridizes their culturally idiosyncratic sensibilities into the human contemplation of pain, loss, defeat and the unabated wish for survival. Geographical boundaries melt into the levelling geography of the human soul.

When We Were Orphans (2000) is Ishiguro's only novel where the vagaries of the self are mapped out not on a monochromatic vignette of Japan or England, but in the hybridized space of cultural intersection. Set alternatively in England and in the interstitial universe of the International Settlement of Shanghai, the novel explores the shifting worldviews of foreigners abroad and their construction of *otherness*. It also engages with the European presence in the Far East in the first half of the twentieth century.

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Christopher Banks, the novel's orphaned, displaced narrator, is an Englishman born in Shanghai and brought up in England. A reputable detective and London socialite, he starts his narrative in the inter-war period. He becomes increasingly unsettled by the memory of his enchanted childhood back East, disrupted by the sudden disappearance of his parents. He returns to Shanghai on a self-assumed diplomatic mission meant at alleviating the Sino-Japanese war. In Shanghai, this turns into the fantasy of a detective mission of rescuing his parents, in fact a re-enactment of a childhood game he used to play. While the threat of war is looming large over Europe and Asia, the protagonist seeks refuge in the memory of the International Bund of his childhood and its utopian image of intercultural coexistence.

Part Two of Banks' confessional narrative, dated *London, 15th May 1931*, is a compelling evocation of the child's enlightened a-cultural perspective. The Edenic innocence of the children's play is set in stark contrast with the corrosive antagonisms of the adult world. In portraying the friendship between Christopher and the Japanese boy Akira, Ishiguro creates a Utopia of cultural harmony. The children's innocence of difference emerges as a state of grace, which, unlike childhood, can be recovered to redeem the warring world.

At first, their relationship seems oblivious of their difference, although they are aware of belonging to an insulated international diaspora. They are also aware of the foreignness lying outside the Bund, which they construe as an alien, squalid space, populated by a lesser humanity, monstrously imagined. Their hyperbolized "othering" of the Chinese is fuelled by the forbidding accounts of the parents:

> I for one was absolutely forbidden to enter the Chinese areas of the city, and as far as I know, Akira's parents were no less strict on the matter. Out there, we were told, lay all manner of diseases, filth and evil men…no wonder then that my friend's claim to have undertaken a number of secret forays into such area made an impression on me…the truth concerning the Chinese districts, he told me, was far worse even than the rumours. There were no proper buildings, just shack upon shack built I great proximity to one another… There were, moreover, dead bodies piled up everywhere, flies buzzing all over them…On one occasion, Akira… had seen a man – some powerful warlord, he supposed – being transported on a sedan chair, accompanied by a giant carrying a

sword. The warlord was pointing to whomever he pleased and the giant would then proceed to lop his or her head off. (Ishiguro, 2000: 54)

Nor is the friendship between Christopher and Akira impervious to the prejudices of the adult world. Despite their initial unconcern with race, culture or nationality, they discover the mythology of national identity. Akira's growing sensitivity to cultural difference parallels the escalation of Japanese nationalism. He glimpses his parents' anxiety about the challenge of bringing up their son according to the Japanese canon of cultural authenticity. So he develops an original, if empirically observant, theory about his parents', and, by extension, his nation's heightened sense of the essence of national identity. When Christopher wonders about the causes of his parents' spells of silence, Akira knowingly explains the source of their frustration, through a comically occult notion of the chain of national-cultural being:

> "I know why they stop… Christopher. You not enough Englishman… It same for me… Mother and Father, they stop talk. Because I not enough Japanese." ...My parents stopped talking to one another, he told me, whenever they became deeply unhappy with my behaviour – and in my case, this was on account of my not behaving sufficiently like an Englishman… For his part, he always knew when he had let down his Japanese blood, and it never came as a surprise to him to discover that his parents had ceased talking to one another… He was referring to moments that disappointed our parents so deeply they were unable even to scold us. "Mother and father so very very disappoint," he said quietly. "So they stop talk." (Ishiguro, 2000: 73)

There is a delicate balance here between the subdued comicalness of the child's rationalisation of his parents' worries about returning to Japan and the graver undertones of his perfect grasp on the temporal and spatial anchoring of nationhood in a narrative of identity which denies change. Akira uses an inspired conceit to convince his friend of the overwhelming responsibility of holding together the temporal immutability of the national being and perpetuating its cultural legacy. His metaphor illustrates the interlocking of individual and collective agency in the survival not only of the national body, but of the world itself. It sanctions the concept of individual duty imbuing all of Ishiguro's "zealots," but

this time the irony gives way to the gravity of an axiomatic truth. Akira's metaphor of nationalism also lends itself to the more encompassing scope of the novel's thesis – our shared duty to hold the world together:

> Then he sat up and pointed to one of the slatted sun-blinds at the moment hanging partially down over the window. We children, he said, were like the twine that kept the slats held together. A Japanese monk had once told him this. We often failed to realize it, but it was we children who bound not only a family, but the whole world together. If we did not do our part, the slats would fall and scatter over the floor. (Ishiguro, 2000: 73)

The second half of the novel, with its nightmarish lapse into the absurdity of war, is a harrowing illustration of Akira's parable. When individual nations fail to do their part in strengthening their twine, the slats of the world "fall and scatter" into the abyss of atrocity. Though Akira's parable refers to the cohesion of national identity, Ishiguro turns it into an extended metaphor for global identity sharing the heritage of world civilisation.

A central trope in the novel is the notion of cultural mongrelism, construed as the key to the world's salvation. Mongrelized individuals and communities would transcend the divisions of a historicist vision and forge a conflict-free cultural synthesis. Mongrelism would imply a return to the innocence of pre-Fall humanity, untainted by the knowledge of good and evil, self and other, to a state of grace in which humanity cannot become estranged from itself. This utopia is briefly, yet passionately sketched by Uncle Phillip, Christopher's mother's ally in her campaign against the opium trade in China. Made alert by Akira to the purported consequences of his failing Englishness, Christopher confides his apprehensions to Philip. Himself an eclectic personality, Philip answers the boy's quandary by a utopian vision of the world-redeeming force of hybridity:

> Now why would you want to become more English than you are, Puffin? ...Who says you're not sufficiently English already? ...Well, it's true, out here you're growing up with a lot of different sorts about you. Chinese, French, Germans, Americans, what have you. It'd be no wonder if you grew up a bit of a mongrel… But that's no bad thing. You know what I think, Puffin? I think it would be no bad thing if boys like you *all* grew up with a bit of everything. We

might all treat each other a good deal better then. Be less of these wars for one thing. Oh yes. Perhaps one day, all these conflicts will end, and it won't be because of great statesmen or churches or organizations like this one. It'll be because people have changed. They'll be like you, Puffin. More a mixture. So why not become a mongrel? It's healthy. (Ishiguro, 2000: 76)

Philip depicts what today's globalizing discourse designates as multiculturalism, unity in diversity or the global village. He articulates a deeply humane creed that salvation resides in integrative pluralism. It exposes the pernicious ideologies of difference, of "us" and "them." His argument is, however, thrown off balance by Christopher's objection that "Like that blind there… if the twine broke. Everything might scatter" (Ishiguro, 2000: 76). Faced with such a counterargument, the man is forced to ponder the weight of our instinctual clannishness and need for a defining sense of belonging. Unable to settle the matter of purism versus pluralism, Philip's wisdom dissolves into *aporia*: "Everything might scatter. You might be right. I suppose it's something we can't easily get away from. People need to feel they belong. To a nation, to a race. Otherwise, who knows what might happen? This civilization of ours, perhaps it'll just collapse. And everything scatter, as you put it" (Ishiguro, 2000: 76-7). The gradation in the markers of modality – can't, might, will – suggests his yielding to the possibility and ultimate inevitability of disorder.

The novel's symbolism warns against myths of purity, thus echoing Rushdie's celebration of pluralist harmony. When the need to belong is perverted by nationalistic excess, claims of racial superiority and hegemonic pretensions, it can only lead to the hypertrophied nationalisms responsible for World War II. Banks' narrative advances into darker considerations of evil. Its chronology parallels the pre-war escalation of conflict. The instances of evil recall what Orwell called "the intoxicating orthodoxies contending for our souls," the nationalisms scattering the world's "slats," which not even the children's "twine" can hold together.

However, unlike adults, they have the maturity to admit to wrongness and overcome the discontents of wounded pride. Banks remembers being baffled by Akira's "endless harping on the achievements of the Japanese" on Japan becoming a "great, great country just like England, [...his...] arguments about who cried easiest, the Japanese or the English" (Ishiguro, 2000: 78). This

competitive nationalism perplexes the child's integrative logic. Christopher has the wisdom not to indulge in such disputes, casting a lenient eye on his friend's excesses:

> I put Akira's obsession with the prowess of his race down to the fact that he was due to start school in Japan that coming autumn… But as the summer drew on, Akira appeared to convince himself about the superiority of every aspect of life in Japan… I in turn grew so weary of his persistent boasting about all things Japanese that by the late summer I was actually looking forward to being rid of him. (Ishiguro, 2000: 78-9)

For a child, direct experience is a more reliable guide than ideology. Ironically, Akira is forced to qualify his claims by the very ostracism of his Japanese peers. During his brief exile to Japan, he is rejected on account of his pervasive cultural impurity: "I surmised that he had been mercilessly ostracized for his 'foreignness'; […] The thought that he might have to return again to Japan was one that haunted my friend." (Ishiguro, 2000: 89)

Akira discovers, as does Christopher, that nationhood is not always the equivalent of home, that conforming to a nationality construct can often be uncomfortable. Mongrelised by the Bund's multicultural makeup, Akira and Christopher contemplate freely the larger horizons beyond national consciousness, happy to be citizens "of the floating world," with Shanghai as the home of their innocent freedom. They transcend the childlike competitiveness and hegemonic race of the adult world by fairly recognizing the other's superiority on one count or another, thus steering clear of an "unbalanced friendship." Their brotherhood is sealed by a solemn oath never to leave Shanghai. Akira even grows to regard going to Japan as banishment for misbehaviour: "'I don't ever want to live in Japan.' And because this was what I always said when he made this statement, I echoed: 'And I don't ever want to go to England.'" (Ishiguro, 2000: 89-99)

Banks' memory of the two children of different races and nationalities, bound together by a dream of fighting evil, inspired by their Chinese hero, "the legendary Inspector Kung," becomes for him an epiphany to live by. It is also the central conceit of the novel's vision of good – a hybridized humanity bound in loyalty to the common mission of redeeming a conflict-ridden world.

Banks displaces his private dream of rescuing his parents onto a public mission of saving the world from disaster. Conflating the notions of personal and public duty, he grows to believe that the humanity's fate rests in his hands. He feels that the menace of impending danger originates in his failing to accomplish his self-assigned mission to fight evil. Given the geographical displacements riddling his biography, Banks takes it on him to alleviate the conflict brewing in the Far East. He begins to detect blameful allusions everywhere. A rising sense of guilt impels him to shoulder what amounts to a world-saving duty that begins and ends in Shanghai, while everyone urges him face up to his task:

> You know better than everyone that the eye of the storm is to be found not in Europe, but in the Far East. In Shanghai, to be exact…what was once just a local problem has been allowed to fester and grow. To spread its poison over the years further across the world, right through our civilisation. (Ishiguro, 2000: 137-8).

As he displaces his guilt and motivations onto the public realm, amplifying it to global proportions, Banks mixes personal, social, political and metaphysical visions of evil which expand out onto the fabulous, mythical, archetypal dimension of the collective imagination. Occult visions of his heroic duty are glimpsed in the others' urges for immediate action:

> [...] without a doubt, he looked accusingly straight into my eyes – 'if I was a greater man, then I tell you, sir, I'd hesitate no longer. I'd go to its heart…The heart of the serpent. I'd go to it. Why waste precious time wrestling with its many heads? I'd go this day to where the heart of the serpent lies and slay the thing once and for all before…' (Ishiguro, 2000: 136)

In this arcane parable, Bank discerns the accusation that, having been distracted by the myriad heads of evil, he has never aimed for the serpent's heart – which implies his failure to save his parents. He embarks on a re-enactment of his childhood game, now an enterprise of epic proportions, ironically subverted by the somewhat naïve heroics of a latter-day mythical dragon-slayer. "Surely the time has come for me to go out there myself, to Shanghai, to go there and – after all these years – 'slay the serpent.'" (Ishiguro, 2000: 143)

He finds the city in shambles, under the siege of Japanese imperialism. Reason fails, as does the mission of diplomacy to

"organize, confer." Get the greatest men from the greatest nations to put their heads together and talk." (Ishiguro, 2000: 43) The ultimate impotency of appeasement politics to alleviate the outbreak of irrationality is acknowledged with a resigned defeatism: "But there'll always be evil lurking around the corner for us" (Ishiguro, 2000: 43). This also prefigures Banks' epic confrontation with evil. As he becomes embroiled in the dystopian reality of the Sino-Japanese war, the spatial and temporal contours of past and present blur in a surreal battlefield of cultures and nationalisms.

The image of the crumbling Shanghai of 1937, the meaninglessness of Banks' gestures at salvaging a world in ruins and the collapse of narrative logicality effectively convey the sense of historical absurdity. Crude naturalism mixes with absurd juxtapositions and incongruities. Lewis considers that the pulverisation of logic and causality also epitomises the hero's "movement from fully rounded character to fractured self" (Lewis, 2000: 148). Banks' impression of the city suggests a shattered humanity, fallen to atavistic practices:

> [...] people here seem determined at every opportunity to block one's view…all the national groups that make up the community here, – English, Chinese, French, American, Japanese, Russian – subscribe to this practice with equal zeal. [...] it appears to be quite permissible here to employ rough shoves to get people out of one's way… I have already witnessed… refined ladies at society gatherings giving the most peremptory pushes. (Ishiguro, 2000: 153-4)

The image of the mob striving for space and vision, as if incapable of seeing its way out of its defining egotism, yields an almost Swiftian view of human nature. It portrays a crepuscular world in pursuit of self-gratification, feasting and whiling away its fall from grace. The city's cosmopolitan enclave seems oblivious to the surrounding pandemonium – the Chinese civil war between the Reds and the governmental forces of Chiang Kai-shek is regarded as "a matter between the Chinese" (Ishiguro, 2000: 157), while the inroads of Japanese imperialism into China elicit no reaction. Banks himself, engrossed in the intricacies of his multi-stranded case, seems unheeding of the chaos. He responds by a callous remark, which parodies the English penchant for calm understatement: "So that's the war. Most interesting. Are there many casualties, do you suppose?"

(Ishiguro, 2000: 161) Others sound like eager commentators of a sporting match:

> "Plenty of death over there in Chapei. But the Japs will have it in a few more days and it'll go quite again." "Wouldn't be so sure," someone else said. "The Kuomintang's surprised anyone so far, and my bet is they'll keep doing so. I'd bet on them holding out a good while yet." Then everybody around me seemed to start arguing at once. A few days, a few weeks, what difference did it make? The Chinese would have to surrender sooner or later, so why did they not do so now? (Ishiguro, 2000: 161)

Strangely enough, the community is ready to credit Banks with the crucial role in averting the crisis and '"accept [his] notion that the resolution of the mystery will help avert major world catastrophe." (Wong, 2000: 81)

Most of the narrative sequences replicate the twisted logic of a dream, with outlandish, far-fetched developments, such as Banks' unfailing belief in his world-saving mission, confused with that of finding his parents, or his reunion with Akira. The dreamscape combines the unnerving mystery of the detective story with the feel of a Kafkaesque universe of toppling incongruities and incomprehension. The ensuing mood reflects not only Banks' disturbed sense of reality, but also the surreal eventuality of the times. The orphaned hero's forlornness becomes a metaphor for an orphaned humanity. The character's longing for parental nurture and protection is displaced onto the despondency of an equally parentless world.

At times, Banks recognizes the face of evil in scenes of inaction and indifference. The lucidity of his vision is ironically undermined by the impassioned overtones of self-righteous idealism. Evil originates in the community's abandonment of duty, as the diaspora of the Bund indulges in hedonistic pursuits and vested interests. This Babel of Eurasians and Europeans, reminiscent of Naipaul's "unnatural bringing together of peoples" is his held together by the complicity of corruption. Banks chastises their indifferent, uncaring self-indulgence, in which he recognizes the complicit denial his mother used to campaign against:

> As the dancers proceeded with their floor show, the room seemed to lose all interest in the battle across the water. It was as though for these people, one entertainment had finished and another had

begun. I felt, not for the first time since arriving in Shanghai, a wave of revulsion towards them [...] What has quietly shocked me [...] is the refusal of everyone here to acknowledge their drastic culpability. [...] throughout all my dealings with these citizens, high and low, I have not witnessed – not once – anything that could pass for honest shame. Here, in other words, at the heart of the maelström threatening to suck in the whole of the civilised world, is apathetic conspiracy of denial: a denial of responsibility which has turned in on itself and gone sour, manifesting itself in the sort of pompous defensiveness I have encountered so often. And here they now were, the so-called elite of Shanghai, treating with such contempt the suffering of their Chinese neighbours across the canal. (Ishiguro, 2000: 162)

While following a lead that might bring him to the house where his parents are supposed to be held captive, he gets caught in the fighting. The experience acquires the gravity of a rite of passage. Banks has an insight into the hybrid heart of good and evil when, advancing through the ghastly labyrinth of the warren, he comes across Akira.

Somewhat contrived and melodramatic, their reunion is symbolically charged. In the midst of horror, they regain hope, just as once the fatherless child's fear of evil was dissipated by the comforting presence of his friend. Trapped in the otherworldly war scene of Chapei's warren, he can once more lean on Akira. The subterraneous chaos of destruction and abysmal human suffering is symbolic of a descent into hell. The crude naturalism of the details, centred on imagery of death, displaces the real onto the realm of the surreal. The alienating, desensitizing reality of hatred and indiscriminate killing is heightened by Akira's unrecognizing aggressiveness when Christopher saves him from the retaliating rage of a Chinese family: "I not know. You pig…if you cut string, I kill you. You warn, okay English?" (Ishiguro, 2000: 250)

Dream and reality become indistinguishable. Banks resumes the childhood fantasy of their heroic rescue mission. He tries to convince the hostile Chinese of the goodness of the enemy soldier in front of them, and the unreality of his perception is at odds with their palpable reality of fear and death. For them, Akira is punishable because "Him. Japanese soldier. He kill Aunt Yun…He kill and steal" (Ishiguro, 2000: 251). Christopher is unable to grasp the obvious implications of Akira's presence or question his motives. "You've made a mistake. This is a good man. My friend. *Friend…*

he's not your enemy… He's a friend. He's going to help me. *Help me solve the case*" (Ishiguro, 2000: 250-1). Oblivious to the contending realities and incongruities of the situation, Banks is projected back into the timeless reality of his long-standing fantasy: "You know, old chap, for a time, I was thinking I'd have to go into that house alone…But now, the two of us together, we'll do it, we'll manage the thing for sure" (Ishiguro, 2000: 252). Overwhelmed by nostalgia for their lost home, they relive the dream of sharing their haven for ever. Akira's loyalties are absurdly contradictory. Avowedly fighting for his country, he evokes the Shanghai Bund as his "home village:"

> "Which home village is this?" I asked. "Home village. Where I born." "You mean the Settlement?" "Okay. Yes. Settlement. International Settlement. My home village." "Yes," I said. "I suppose it's my home village too…I'll tell you an odd thing, Akira [...] All those years I've lived in England, I've never really felt at home there. The International Settlement. That will always be my home." (Ishiguro, 2000: 256)

Prompted by his friend, Banks articulates the sense of displacement he has ignored all his life. His elusive sense of home is replaced by the certainty of recognition, even if, as Akira points out, their rediscovered home is on the brink of extinction. Their home continues to exist not in the disintegrating actuality of the place, but in the epiphany of their communion. "'But International Settlement...,'Akira shook his head. 'Very fragile. Tomorrow, next day…' 'I know what you mean,' I said. 'And when we were children, it seemed so solid to us. But as you put it just now. It's our home village. The only one we have'" (Ishiguro, 2000: 256). The wisdom of their homely childhood is recovered in their recognition of a home they are about to lose. Consolation springs from their childlike knowledge of goodness. They recover the past in the terrible expiation of their present experience of evil. Being orphaned is equated with forgetting the feel of goodness and innocence:

> "Those are good memories." "Yes. Very good memories." "Those were splendid days," I said. "We didn't know it then… just how splendid they were. Children never do… When we were boys, we lived in a good world… these children we've been coming across, what a terrible thing for them to learn so early how ghastly things really are." (Ishiguro, 2000: 262)

Akira dreads to think of his child facing this ghastly discovery alone, so he asks Banks to look after his orphaned son:

> "You tell him. I die for country. Tell him, be good to mother. Protect. And build good world... My son… Five years old. In Japan. He know nothing, nothing. He think world is good place. Kind people. His toys. His mother, father…When my boy. He discover world is not good. I wish… I wish I with him. To help him. When he discover." (Ishiguro, 2000: 262-3)

Braving it out, Christopher dismisses nostalgia, invoking the redeeming challenge of the present: "Now we're grown, we can at last put things right… And all this about how good the world looked when we were boys… it's a lot of nonsense in a way. It's just that the adults led us on. One mustn't get too nostalgic over childhood" (Ishiguro, 2000: 263). But Akira corrects his friend's flimsiness. He envisions the cycle of innocence and experience as the interplay of remembering, learning and teaching memory's lessons. The "twine" holding the world together means perpetuating the memory of good so as to counter the knowledge of wickedness. The duty of parents is to perpetuate childhood's perennial legacy – "build good world." The remembrance of innocence is an exorcism of evil and a pre-requisite for bettering things. He iterates the wonder of remembered goodness like the incantation of a magic spell: "Nos-tal-gic. It is good to be nos-tal-gic. Very important...Important. Very important. When we nostalgic, we remember. A world better than this world we discover when we grow. We remember and wish good world come back again. So very important." (Ishiguro, 2000: 263)

In Akira's philosophy, life and the world are eternally renewed through the memory of childhood. Their epiphany is the shielding promise of good amidst a hallucinatory abyss of human cruelty, misery and death. Wails of agony rise in an indiscriminate chorus of suffering, where there are no victims or victimizers, no Japanese or Chinese, just people faced with the incomprehensible. Banks is alerted to the unifying, hybridising sound of human fragility. The artificial demarcations of friend and enemy, self and other, familiar and alien, nationality, race or faith are erased in the levelling reality of pain, where all are orphaned souls:

> It was a long, thin sound, like an animal's call in the wild, but ended in a full-throated cry. Next came shrieking and sobbing, and then the wounded man began to shout out actual phrases. He

> sounded remarkably like the dying Japanese soldier I had listened to earlier… I assumed this must be the same man… when I realised he was shouting in Mandarin, not Japanese. The realization that these were two different men rather chilled me. So identical were their pitiful whimpers, the way their screams gave way to desperate entreaties, then returned to screams, that the notion came to me this was what each of us would go through on our way to death – that these terrible noises were as universal as the crying of new-born babies. (Ishiguro, 2000: 258-9)

The passage resonates with T.S. Eliot's ironic intimation of humanity's ultimate vulnerability to their own frailty: "*This is the way the world ends/ Not with a bang but a whimper.*" (*The Hollow Men*)

Like two archetypal survivors of the world's scattering, the two friends are bound in the knowledge of evil, with the shield of friendship as their only defence. The word 'friend' is reiterated countless times, and Akira decides to protect Christopher by teaching him the Japanese word "tomodachi." They enter the house holding hands and discover not Christopher's parents, but a harrowing image of the agonizing world. Their past roles are reversed, as Akira tries to dispel Christopher's illusion about finding his parents. Engulfed in his childish scenario, Christopher fuses past and present in the exhilarating anticipation of discovery. Tellingly, he is led into the house by a distressed Chinese girl pleading for help, another orphan of the world. As Banks takes in the crude details of the carnage, his emotions, ranging from disappointment to selfish relief, reflect the desensitising experience of war. He records the scene with the emotional numbness of a detective's gaze, lapsing for a moment into his habitual professional gestures. The world's scattered slats are mapped out on the dismembered human body. The pictorial overstatement of the naturalistic scene is in fact heightened by the understatement of emotion:

> Near the back, over by a wall, was the body of a woman who might have been the young girl's mother… There was a shocked expression on her face. One arm had been torn off at the elbow, and she was now pointing the stump up to the sky, perhaps to indicate the direction from which the shell had come. A few yards away in the debris, an old lady was also gaping up at the hole in the ceiling. One side of her face was charred… closest to where we were standing… lay a boy… One of his legs had been blown off at the

> hip, from where surprisingly long entrails, like the decorative tails of a kite, had unfurled over the matting… In the centre of the wreckage… the little girl had knelt down beside an injured dog lying on its side and was gently caressing his fur. The dog's tail moved weakly in response. As we stood watching her, she glanced up and said something, her voice remaining quite calm and steady... "I think she say we help dog," said Akira. "Yes, she say we help dog." Then suddenly he began to giggle helplessly. The young girl spoke again... Then she brought her face down close to the dog's and continued to pass her hand gently over its fur. (Ishiguro, 2000: 270-1)

The surreal images of lifeless bodies and life going on, of despair and hope, cruelty and tenderness blend in an epiphany of the world's duality, perpetually poised between denial and promise, extinction and survival. The scene captures a cathartic awareness of the tragic sublimity of human history. Yet, the child's forlornness in a wasteland of destruction is an icon of humanity's guilt, in which the two men recognize their failure to keep the "twine" intact. The boys' imaginary rescue mission is displaced onto the failed mission of adulthood, while the promise of the child's survival dissolves into the adults' helplessness before the extremity of suffering. Akira actually breaks down, while Banks tries to recover from the hallucinatory confusion of past and present self-awareness. At least, unlike the little girl, they are not alone when they discover the world to be a bad place. But their awakening is no less traumatic. It echoes with the paralyzing knowledge evoked by Eliot: "After such knowledge, what forgiveness?... / Neither fear nor courage saves us… / These tears are shaken from the wrath bearing tree." (*Gerontion*)

The value of Banks' quest resides in his connecting the broken twine of identity by recovering his past. Once again, Banks is brutally separated from his friend. Japanese soldiers bring them back to safety but Akira is taken away under charges of treason. The Japanese colonel epitomises the desensitising force of nationalistic orthodoxy. The hybridising, cathartic experience of sheer human compassion is annihilated by the cynical wisdom of his warning: "It is not wise to become too sentimental" (Ishiguro, 2000: 277). In order not to harm Akira, Banks denies having known him. "I thought he was a friend of mine from my childhood. But now, I'm not so certain. I'm beginning to see now, many things aren't as I supposed" (Ishiguro, 2000: 277). The colonel's sympathetic comment reinforces the pervasive symbolism of the novel. "Our childhood seems so far

away now. All this… so much suffering. One of our Japanese poets, a court lady many years ago, wrote of how sad this was. She wrote of how our childhood becomes like a foreign country once we have grown" (Ishiguro, 2000: 277). Banks counters this idea by confessing to the opposite experience: "it's hardly a foreign land to me. In many ways, it's where I've continued to live all my life. It's only now I've started to make my journey from it." (Ishiguro, 2000: 277)

Banks rejoices in this new awareness of his wholeness, regained as his past and present selves cohere. Barry Lewis concludes: "Ishiguro's novel is partly about how 'our childhood becomes like a foreign land once we have grown.' […] But it is also equally about how childhood can persist through to maturity, when it colours the search for somewhere to belong, to be included" (Lewis, 2000: 151). Banks understands that home is a state of mind. Unhomely at times, home is the hybrid world of light and shadow, innocence and guilt, loftiness and abjection. The world's contours and colourings are constantly reshaped on the palimpsest of history. The inner incongruities of the Japanese officer epitomise the human potential for flight and fall, beauty and ugliness, civilization and barbarism:

> "England is a splendid country," Colonel Hasegawa was saying. "Calm, dignified. Beautiful green fields. I still dream of it. and your literature. Dickens, Thackeray. Wuthering Heights. I am especially fond of your Dickens… I am very fond of music. In particular Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Brahms, Chopin also. The third sonata is marvellous." "A cultured man like you, Colonel," I remarked, "must regret all this. I mean all this carnage caused by your country's invasion of China." …he smiled calmly and said: "It is regrettable, I agree. But if Japan is to become a great nation, like yours, Mr Banks, it is necessary. Just as it once was for England." (Ishiguro, 2000: 276-278)

The colonel's rationalisation of horror ends with an irony intended to curtail any self-righteous indictment on the Englishman's part. After all, earthly grandeur is built on misery and the symbiosis of virtue and sin.

The novel's thesis is contained in the central metaphor of an orphaned humanity, whose children are all alone in their discovery of the world. No parents can spare them the pain of search and discovery. The only consolation in this quest is that of holding someone's hand. Of all the "orphans" populating Ishiguro's novels,

Banks is the only one who shares his creator's dialogical imagination and hybridity of spirit. Their real home remains halfway between East and West, reality and imagination, actuality and fantasy. Ishiguro construes hybridity as a state of grace, a metaphorical childhood of the spirit. The children's transnational communion points symbolically to the bicultural authorial self. In its archetypal patterning of home-leaving and homecoming, departure and return, *When We Were Orphans* illustrates the hybrid wholeness of global identity reconciled with its hybrid histories of conflict and reconciliation, discords and harmonies.

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India – Kashmira: The Case Study of a Nomad Woman's Self Discovery Journey in Conflicting Cultures

Codruţa Mirela Stănişoară[1]

Abstract: India Kashmira is a key character in Salman Rushdie's *Shalimar the Clown,* his third novel dealing with the process of globalization from the political, cultural and historical points of view. She is the feminine hybrid of several conflicting cultures: Kashmir on her biological mother's side, Europe / America on her father's side and British on her adoptive mother's side. According to a concept developed by Deleuze and Guattari, she is no longer a migrant, but a nomad who, as Rushdie himself affirms, "finds out who she really is and what happened in her life" after a self-discovery journey which keeps her moving from West to East and back in order to recuperate her history. She finally realizes that her place is in a site of multiculturalism. Her trails may leave the readers opened to the idea that both ethnic and political conflicts are possible to be reconciled in the age of globalization.

Keywords: *globalization, conflict, reconciliation, woman nomad, self-discovery*.

"I am being rowed through the Paradise on a river of Hell" are the first lines from *The Country without a Post Office* by Agha Shahid Ali, the famous Kashmiri – American poet whose experience of 'multiple exile' is spiritually very close to India Kashmira's journey from west to east and back. From the very beginning Salman Rushdie traces the coordinates of his Nomad heroine's journey, from the city of fallen angels, Los Angeles, symbolically assigned to "lost angels" to Kashmir, her "Lost Paradise" and back to Mullholand Drive in USA, a kind of "Paradise Regained," a patchwork in which she is trapped under the nets of multiculturalism and globalization. In order to escape she has to take up a journey of self-discovery by rowing on the waters of Hell, troubled waters of conflicts: political, social, religious and cultural. Its borders are in permanent conflict: between East and West, Kashmiri and Pakistan, Hindu and Muslim, love and hate, national and personal history.

Salman Rushdie's novel is read in this vision starting from the forewords he quotes from the famous poet.

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The novel starts from the regional conflict in Kashmir under the title of the first book "India," it climbs a spiral of rising conflicts and it ends up in a riot death fight in which "India" symbolically disappears in the final book, "Kashmira." The last lines confirm India's symbolic death: "There was no India. There was only Kashmira" (Rushdie, 398). India Kashmira is the name of the female character, a matrix of the site of multiculturalism. She is the feminine hybrid of several conflicting cultures deeply rooted in a global geography which sways the reader from Los Angeles, USA, in the early 1990s goes back to Kashmir, India, then back in time to her father's origins to pre-war Strasbourg, and then back to the South Asia continent, in the 1960's to witness the atrocities of the Indian Pakistan war over Kashmir, the rise of the Islamist insurgency, the spreading of terrorism and the sexual scandal involving the American ambassador to India, Max Ophuls. It finally goes back to Los Angeles. Between India and Kashmira which are the two first names of one and the same person, the author imagines an odyssey of her divided self in her relation with the territory(ies) she inhabits. India and Kashmira are also the names of two different territories divided by their histories and cultures.

India is the name given to her by an adoptive mother after the country where the plot starts: Max Ophuls becomes the American ambassador to India, he falls in love with Boonyi Kaul Noman, the wife of Noman Sher Noman, Shalimar the Clown, a village boy of Pachigam, Kashmir, who, in order to revenge because the Ambassador has seduced and stolen his wife, becomes a world terrorist. Under the cover of "a Romeo and Juliet reinvented love story for the geopolitical age" (*The Miami Herald*), Salman Rushdie tries to demonstrate the point that it can be no separation between the individual moving in history and the historical forces which act upon him.

However "She did not like this name. People were never called Australia, were they, or Uganda or Ingushetia or Peru" (Rushdie, 2006: 9). She rejects her name as being "exoticist," "colonial," "suggesting the appropriation of a reality that was not hers to own, […] she didn't feel like an India, even if her color was rich and high and her long hair lustrous and black. She didn't want to be vast or subcontinental or excessive or vulgar or explosive or crowded or ancient or noisy or mystical or in any way Third World." (Rushdie, 2006: 7)

In India's descriptions of her physical portrait, Salman Rushidie subtly implies her initial rejection of any recognizable similarities with a possible cross cultural past experience in her life. She can't explain her name because she can't identify her real self yet, and from here her almost permanent unrest manifested through a state of "awake ness:" "At twenty-four the ambassador daughter slept badly through the warm, unsurprising nights. She woke up frequently and even when sleep did come her body was rarely at rest" […] (Rushdie, 2006: 35). At times she cried out in a language she did not speak. "Until her father's death, the first moment of truth in her life "she was not an easy woman to sleep with" (Rushdie, 2006: 35). The state is similar to that of a larva enclosed in a shell of unrecognizable self.

Moreover what Rushdie wants to imply is her rejection of an important multifaceted issue in his book, that of globalization. Initially it is given a negative connotation because India's father seduced Boonyi, while her Kashmiri mother is symbolic of America's cultural and economic neoimperialism in Third World countries, Max being America's representative as its ambassador in India, another negative connotation added to her name. The first face Rushdie looks through in his novel is expanded all over the first book: globalization is an evil which may destroy individual identities.

India's childhood and early adolescence is subjugated not only by a British offensive mother (Rushdie's description of her being an ironical allusion to the British imperialism), but also by a political father whose" bedtime stories […] were not stories exactly. They were homilies such as Sun Tzu the philosopher of war might have delivered to his offspring" (Rushdie, 2006: 67). His stories of politics and power might have also been imprinted in her warlike spirit in which she was to be trained into by others or by herself all her lifetime. Her memories of boxing and bow shooting brought anger and revolt within her tormented self and transformed her into a kind of warrior in quest of revenge and power. An Excalibur spirit – "The dreams came to her still as they had come to her child-self: visions of battle and victory. In sleep she tossed and turned and fought the war he had lodged within her. This was the inheritance she was sure of, her warrior future, her body like his body, her mind like his mind." (Rushdie, 2006: 89)

In fact Rushdie makes a point again: the American spirit of interventionism in the Third World affects people's nature, deforms their habits, instills in their children's lives. In his attempt "to reduce

global events to individual lives, to marry macro-social political conflicts to personal stories" (*The Houston Chronicle*), Salman Rushdie uses the story of Olga Volga, India's neighbour, the only woman accepted for confessions (an allusion to tolerance) in order to reiterate the issue of multiculturalism in its place of invention, America. She is "the last surviving descendant of the legendary potato witches of Astrakhan" (Rushdie, 2006: 232) a shadow of tolerance in which the novelist exercises his gift for exploiting the magic. Using her love story, Rushdie claims that a multicultural spirit lives in between two lives because of two different countries existing in his or her self, the one at origin and the adopting one:

> I live today neither in this world nor the last, neither an America nor Astrakhan. Also I would add neither in this world nor the next. A woman like me, she lives someplace between. Between the memories and the daily stuff. Between yesterday and tomorrow, in the country of lost happiness and peace, the place of mislaid calm. This is our fate. Once I felt everything was okay. This I now don't feel. Consequently however I have no fear of death. (Rushdie, 2006: 90)

Acquiring citizenship, being "a national" of a country, he continues to infer, doesn't necessarily mean naturalization and all stories made up with people of different nationalities which will follow in the novel will prove again the mere evil of globalization: the lost self.

In the chapter dedicated to Boonyi, India's mother, she points out to Max that she has lost her identity both as a woman and a culture. She has been reinvented like the make – up on the face of the West but remains just a copy: "I am your handiwork made flesh," she tells Ophuls. (Rushdie, 2006: 78)

Boonyi is not the only character in the novel who tries to reinvent herself, Max and Shalimar do the same when they decide to abandon their cultural selves in favour of a new "territory" – and they all die in the end. Rushdie comments negatively on the reconstruction of the self: "the reinvention of the self, that classic American theme […] that the self can no readily be remade is a dangerous, narcotic discovery. Once you have started using that drug, it isn't easy to stop." (Rushdie, 2006: 84)

India – Kashmira is finally successful because she is a hybrid of birth and circumstances who doesn't leave her territory for another

one, on the contrary she tries to reconstruct her self by progressing through a flow of consciousness, judgment and reasonable thinking. The whole book lies under the power of "the flow," from the very beginning we are invited to witness the flow of the river of Hell and within each book dedicated to a character (India, Boonyi, Max, Shalimar, Kashmira) we follow the "flow" of their lives, the only difference is that for India it constructs while for the other three it deconstructs. India's self in the first book is reconstructed during the flow of memories and circumstances mapping progress from the first (India) to the latter (Kashmira). Only she is dedicated two books in the novel because her self-divided between two different identities and implicit cultures is in process of reconstruction from India, the first "half" of her unknown self to Kashmira, the latter "half" of the regained one. Like Shalimar the clown, she is initiated in a kind of a "mystery" in which, through the process of metamorphosis she can discover the "hidden soul of life," a metaphor for her hidden self. Once you have discovered it, you become the leader of your own "territory" and you "live" it no matter it is multi-faith and multicultural. Shalimar fails because he wants to "transcend" his self in a negative engagement process which is a regress not a progress as in the case of India. For Rushdie, India Kashmira is "different" because of her hybrid nature of conflicting cultures (Kashmir-Europe / America and British) while Shalimar's the clown is a conflicting one as regarding his religion (Muslim who marries a Hindu) and his territory of birth (a Muslim in the India – Pakistan war becoming a terrorist against America).

Moreover, India inherits from her father a "hybrid" nature since he is a Jewish living in Strasbourg, a French with a German name, and he doesn't escape the process of globalization when he is forced to run away. From Europe to America India is multicultural by nature and she behaves and feels like this: her roots are deep into her mother's "land," Boonyi is symbolically chosen by Rushdie – meaning either "earth" (Boomyi) or "the most beloved national tree of Kashmir" (Boonyi), while her spirit is that of an American rebel, the country of adoption.

According to Mariana Boeru's paper "Disentangling History(ies). From West to East and Back: Colonizing Journeys in Shalimar the Clown – India survives because she is "nomad" not a "migrant."

The destruction of the self is a consequence of globalization. She goes further and she finds an explanation for its starting from

Deleuze and Guattari 508 in "A Thousand Plateaus" who discuss the issue of "deterritorialization" of the self in the process of migration: "this process of abandoning one's homeland and transporting oneself to another place has deep implications for one's construction of the self." (Rushdie, 2006: 264)

This point is valid for a migrant but India Kashmira can be seen as a "nomad," a concept detailed by Deleuze and Guattari: "A nomad is deterritorialized while a migrant is re-territorialized. The migrant goes from one point to another while the nomad just goes on and moves constantly." (Rushdie, 2006: 266)

She finally concludes that: "India Kashmira is a nomad because she can move freely among countries and territories without being fully described by and thus being able to maintain a sober, disenchanted, non-passionate relationship with the historical realities in which she lives and the power system which have produced her." (Boeru, 2012: 37)

We consider this point valid. India Kashmira does not lose herself because once she has understood and accepted the different 'territories' within herself she is capable to live in them by recognizing her personal history. In the end India dies only symbolically because it represents a false identity she has been endowed with (by her adoptive mother) while Kashmira survives because it represents her real mother and identity, her new regained self. Kashmira's final triumph over Shalimar the clown bears two symbols: one of personal detail that refers to the character India Kashmira who enrolls in a journey of self-discovery during which India leaves for Kashmir in quest of her true identity. She returns not as India but as Kashmira. Her presence is an indication that she has gained a new beginning in her life and her love for Yuvraj stands for it. The other one is tangent to it and it rises with Rushdie's voice that the region of Kashmir in spite of the struggle over it will not be lost: "There was no India. There was only Kashmira, and Shalimar the clown" (Rushdie, 2006: 107). She is alive and he is dead, killed by one of her arrows of fury and revenge. She is the only one who survives and is offered as a hope for the future.

Because of her hybrid nature reconciliation between conflicting cultures is possible according to Salman Rushdie.

Beyond the borders of conflicts in Shalimar the clown he voices the concept of a borderless world, untouched by hatred and communalism, a "Kashmiryat," a land of eternal beauty and charm, with a unique way of life having Pachigam, a fictional village in its

centre like an imago mundi resistant to all kinds of conflicts, both religious and ethnic. India Kashmira herself is a product of this utopian territory in which the writer seeks refuge from a disharmonized world, like Faulkner in his Yoknapatawpha or Hardy in his magical Wessex. Apparently this world is shaken almost to destruction by the struggle over the contested Hymalayan region of Kashmir and by the atrocities of terrorism. At a symbolic level its resistance becomes frail with the dramatic end of the love story between Boomyi, India Kashmira's mother and Shalimar representing the Islamic religion. Rushdie's point here is that the religious conflict can be solved only by creating a new religion out of the two (Hindu and Muslim), a religion of love: "the iron mullah says that the question of religion can only be answered by booking at the condition of the world. When the world is in disarray then God does not send a religion of love." (Rushdie, 2006: 47)

But Kashmir and Pachigan still exist and not only in the memory of the people whose lives had been destroyed during the ethnic conflict but also in India Kashmira's spirit and due to her hybrid nature in which the "territory" of her birth (India, Kashmir) is finally reconciled with the "territory" of her living (Los Angeles, USA). Moreover she resists to the evils of globalization because she is capable to erase conflicts both ethnic and religious, therefore inferring the idea that there is still hope after globalization and its name is love. Her religion of life is neither Hindu, nor Muslim or any of her American because the angels in Los Angeles disappeared: "the city's angels were far away, in another earthquake zone. They were Italian and had never seen the city." (Rushdie, 2006: 112)

The allusion to a kind of a multicultural religion is evident here. In fact she has developed a constant attraction during her life for studying other cultures than that of her country of adaptation. She had planned a documentary film in which the idea was to examine the contemporary life of California by following the trail of the first European land expedition from San Diego to San Francisco.

In spite of all the efforts she fails in almost everything she tries until she discovers her real identity and she rediscovers and reconstructs her divided self. The change is possible, through a journey back to her "territory" of origin, Kashmir, where she came "to be reborn or to die" (Rushdie, 2006: 117). Finally death is allotted to Shalimar, the symbol of Jihad terrorism and rebirth to Kashmir. Symbolically death is also allotted to her father as an allusion to the US's involvement in third world zones. Max Ophuls was also

involved in the making of global history. Rushdie names him "a maker of his time," "a real big man" and he is shown to have participating in the design of the whole architecture of globalization. India Kashmira has also assimilated her father's "nature" but what distinguishes her from other characters is her hybrid nature of the "nomad." She is reterritorialized within herself after her discovery journey. She is no longer a victim of globalization but a hope for disaffecting its evils. From the perspective of her development globalization may be transformed into a constructive and creative force.

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Negotiating Identity in Paul Auster's *Leviathan*

Valentina Stîngă[1]

Abstract*: Identity, or at least the readers' basic understanding of it, is an interesting and rather complex concept in the works of Paul Auster (1947 -), an American writer who has authored numerous novels, poems, screenplays and works of nonfiction. As a general observation, Auster's novels contain characters whose identities are subject to numerous permutations and changes, being constantly reshaped and rebuilt through personal decisive actions. The present paper sets out to illustrate Auster's approach to identity in the novel entitled Leviathan (1992), whose protagonist finds himself forced to negotiate between two opposing hypostases of his identity: a creative one and a violent one.*

Keywords*: identity, violence, art, leviathan, negotiation.*

Preliminary Remarks

Published in 1992, after its author had already acquired wide fame through the publication of *The New York Trilogy* and *The Music of Chance*, *Leviathan* can easily be regarded as Paul Auster's "most overtly political work, (…) a commentary on the ethos of late twentieth-century America" (Auster, 1992: 177). The novel is important in that it subscribes to what has become a tradition in the American cultural paradigm – the tradition of fictionalising terrorist violence and representing its human agents in literary works.

In broad lines, the novel follows the life of a man who decides to take action against the institutional power and deliver his message to the world by means of violent deeds. But Benjamin Sachs, Auster's terrorist, is no ordinary terrorist. The novelist chooses to describe his protagonist as trapped between two contrasting identitary hypotheses: once a writer, and an appreciated one, he later on gives up the writing career to embrace violence as a means of making his voice heard in front of what he sees as an amorphous mass: the American nation.

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Leviathan – The Story of a Terrorist in the Making

The novel *Leviathan* introduces the reader into its world in a rather shocking way: "Six days ago, a man blew himself up by the side of a road in northern Wisconsin. There were no witnesses but it appears that he was sitting on the grass next to his parked car when the bomb he was building accidentally went off" (Auster, 1992: 1). After the explosion, two FBI agents arrive at the door of Peter Aaron, a novelist, questioning him about that man's death. The only connection between the two individuals, at that time, was Aaron's phone number which the policemen had found on the dead body. After this initial event, the narrator Peter Aaron attempts to shape and render in a coherent manner the story of the dead man (his friend), Benjamin Sachs, as "Once the secret is out, all sorts of lies are going to be told" (Auster, 1992: 2). Aaron's narration of his friend's life is not explained through his wish to defend Sachs, but "since he's (cf. Ben Sachs) no longer in a position to defend himself, the least I can do is explain who he was and give the true story of how he happened to be on that road in northern Wisconsin" (Auster, 1992: 2). Throughout this process, Aaron is confronted with the unavailability of truth and objectivity. The only truth he discovers is the truth of the story that he has created in the investigation.

Benjamin Sachs's life story began on the fateful date of August the 6th, 1946, the same day of the WW II Hiroshima attack. He came from a marriage between religions: his father was a Jew, and his mother was an Irish Catholic, a combination that, however, never put an imprint on the child's personality, who grew fonder of political issues rather than religious beliefs. As a schoolboy, he was an average student, whose major achievements related to how to play another prank on his teachers or colleagues. A memorable childhood experience had been his first contact with the Statue of Liberty, an event that will be attributed a due place later in the novel. We learn from him that the happening itself (climbing the stairs and almost falling from an enormous height) taught the little Sachs that freedom could be quite dangerous. During high school, he kept the same minimal interest in learning, but he developed a passion and interest in reading and writing works of literature, which gradually led to his formation as a writer and the publication of some four-hundred-page novel entitled *The New Colossus.* His second literary project (by the name of *Leviathan*!) is interrupted towards the end of the novel due to circumstances that are to be revealed.

Ben Sachs's family life mainly revolves around his wife, Fanny, a doctor in Art History, an intelligent and independent woman. Their marriage had lasted for 20 years at the time this story is set, and they seem to be leading a happy life. In fact, it is constantly shadowed by the suspicions each had about the other's infidelity. A crucial episode in Sachs's inner evolution is a party that he and Fanny organised on the hundredth anniversary of the Statue of Liberty – the physical site of the childhood happening, and later on the centre of his political activity. A fall from the fire escape, which interrupted a flirting episode between Sachs and a guest, Maria Turner, makes the writer reconsider his life. He seems not to be severely injured, yet he is kept in hospital under observation for two weeks. Physically, there is nothing serious. Spiritually, the Sachs that has been known to the readers prior to the accident disappears. Sachs seems to be convinced that the incident was not a mere accident, but more of a "grotesque form of punishment" (Auster, 1992: 131). After recovering from a speechless period that was meant to drive everybody away, Sachs changes dramatically: he alienates the loved ones and establishes new connections. He consciously premeditates his withdrawal from social life action, as we find out at some point from the conversation he has with Aaron: "Furthermore, it happened and it happened for a reason. If I could be caught by surprise like that, it must mean that there's something fundamentally wrong with me. It must mean that I don't believe in my life anymore" (Auster, 1992: 110). Moreover, his conscious climbing on that railing makes him think that he wanted to terminate his existence: "something extraordinary had taken place: I had put myself in a position to fall, I realized, and I had done it on purpose…I learned that I didn't want to live. For reasons that are still impenetrable to me, I climbed onto the railing that night in order to kill myself" (Auster, 1992: 134). His plan fails, and this failure forces Sachs to re-analyse his life: the only thing he wants now is "to end the life I've (n.r. Ben*)* been living up to now. I want everything to change" (Auster, 1992: 136). From this point on, his professional life seems to lose its relevance:

> The idea of writing disgusts me. It doesn't mean a goddamned thing to me anymore... I don't want to spend the rest of my life rolling pieces of blank paper into a typewriter. I want to stand up from my desk and do something… I've got to step into the real world now and do something. (Auster, 1992: 137)

He gives up writing for a while, turns down commissions from the editor, makes Fanny leave him; later he moves to Vermont and starts working on a new novel, which he calls *Leviathan.* After seemingly recovering his appetite for creating, and writing one third of the novel, Sachs is both willing and forced by circumstances to enter into contact with the real world as represented by genuine hypostases of physical violence: taking a break from the writing of *Leviathan*, he goes for a walk in the woods but, before he knows it, he gets lost. He is offered a lift by a young man, Dwight, and on their way to Sachs's house, they meet another car that blocks their way. The other driver kills Dwight, and Sachs kills him. This moment could easily be taken to be the most critical moment in the novel: Sachs, the writer who is dissatisfied with his artistic life, but has done nothing to change it up to that point, is alone, in a place he does not know, with two dead men, neither of whom he knows, one of whom he has killed while the other's death he has witnessed. This also launches Sachs's journey from guilt to redemption, and leads to the discovery of what he perceives to be his real vocation.

The identity of the unknown man is revealed through a series of past connections and future developments. The stranger is in fact Reed Dimaggio, "the husband of a friend (Lillian) of a friend (Maria Turner) of Sachs's friend and fellow-writer, Peter Aaron" (Whitebrook, 2001: 88). Sachs decides to find Lillian to somehow escape the guilt of having murdered her husband, but he ends up having an affair with her. In fact, he is given now the chance to start a new life with this woman in Berkeley; instead of doing that, and in light of his discovery that Dimaggio was perpetrating acts of political violence, Sachs assumes Dimaggio's identity. He even finds and passionately reads Dimaggio's doctoral thesis, which was a documented and passionate presentation of the life and activity of a famous nineteenth-century anarchist, Alexander Berkman. During his subsequent bombing campaign that he organises to the smallest details in all America, Ben Sachs even adopts the pseudonym Alexander Berkman.

The end of Sachs's experience as a terrorist is brought about by his death, which represents, in fact, the starting point of the narration. As for the actual ending of the novel, it presents Aaron's thoughts on the narrative he had just concluded:

> Desperate as I was for resolution, I had to understand that it might never come. You can hold your breath for just so long, after all.

Sooner or later, a moment comes when you have to start breathing again – even if the air is tainted, even if you know it will eventually kill you. (Auster, 1992: 272)

From Writer to the Phantom of Liberty

Leviathan challenges the readers to interpret terrorist ideology by means of staging a series of events in which a writer transgresses his sphere of activity and enters a fundamentally different one. The novel raises the question of the proper limits of a writer's sphere of activity; the question gains further significance due to the fact that the protagonist is a serious writer and the sphere he enters into is politics. The formerly successful novelist "is gradually losing faith in himself" due to declining readership and a film option in Hollywood that fails to materialize. At the height of his creative powers (in the 1960's), Sachs felt connected to his readers and appreciated by them. As time passed, Sachs's influence began to decline; not even the publication of a four-hundred-page novel, *The New Colossus*, was able to restore the old order of things. *The New Colossus* was rejected by some literary critics as anti-American – even Aaron comments on some of its flaws as result of its author's literary conception: too long, too complicated and with too many characters.

By the 1980's, the political atmosphere of the Reagan era put an end to the favouring of radical thought – in other words, Ben Sachs started to suffer heavily from a lack of community:

> The era of Ronald Reagan had begun. Sachs went on doing what he had always done, but in the new American order of the 1980s, his position became increasingly marginalised…Almost imperceptibly, Sachs came to be seen as a throwback, as someone out of step with the spirit of the time. The world had changed around him, and in the present climate of selfishness and intolerance, of moronic, chest-pounding Americanism, his opinions sounded curiously harsh and moralistic. (Auster, 1992: 116)

Although Peter Aaron, himself a writer, never says that Sachs is a commercial or ambitious novelist, his early success had marked him as "one of the most promising young novelists to have come along in years" (Auster, 1992: 53). When confronted with the passing of time and the out-datedness of his writing, Sachs begins to question his vocation. Steeped in the politically engaged literature of which

Thoreau's "On Civil Disobedience"[2] was the precursor, Sachs decides to stop writing and to communicate his ideas through other means than the written word. In a conversation with Aaron, Sachs tells him that "I've got to step into the real world and do something." Which launches the question of what is the 'real world' to a novelist and whether there are multiple ways in which a writer can approach reality.

It is after renouncing his literary options that he manages to produce the type of changes that he had previously failed to obtain in the consciousness of the wider public. The transition from one identity to the other is not a process deprived of hardships. The discovery of the hidden information on Dimaggio's terrorist career and the latter's documented doctoral thesis on Alexander Berkman leads to a comparison he draws between himself and the former aggressor, which ends with the conclusion that "I'd sat around grumbling and complaining for the past fifteen years, but for all my self-righteous opinions and embattled stances, I'd never put myself on the line. I was a hypocrite and Dimaggio wasn't, and when I thought about myself in comparison to him, I began to feel ashamed." (Auster, 1992: 253)

Sachs's departure from writing is not yet complete: his initial reaction is to write a book on Dimaggio – "*something similar to what he had written about Berkman*" (Auster, 1992: 253) – which proves that, at this point, his trust in literature surpasses any other vocational tendency: literature is a means of compensating for his violent deed. For reasons he cannot understand, he can't perform the self-imposed task of writing about Dimaggio – his consciousness must have been seriously altered on that terrible day, this inability being another motivating factor for stepping into the real world. Perhaps not surprisingly, the answer to his questions is offered by a book, by a copy of *The New Colossus* he finds in a library. Seeing the book and gazing at its cover, he has an epiphany:

> The Statue of Liberty, remember? That strange, distorted drawing of the Statue of Liberty. That was where it started, and once I realised where I was going, the rest followed, the whole cockeyed plan fell into place… I would be using it (n.r. Dimaggio's money) to express my own convictions, to take a stand for what I believed

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[2] *Resistance to Civil Government* (*Civil Disobedience*) is an essay by Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862) in which the author argues that individuals should not permit authorities to atrophy their consciences.

in, to make the kind of difference I had never been able to make before. All of a sudden, my life seemed to make sense to me. Not just the past few months, but my whole life, all the way back to the beginning. It was a miraculous confluence, a startling conjunction of motives and ambitions. I had found the unifying principle, and this one idea would bring all the broken pieces of myself together. For the first time in my life, I would be whole. (Auster, 1992: 256)

The return to fiction does not bring him the peace he so much desired; consequently, he turned away from artistic creation and resumed Dimaggio's activity. Influenced by Dimaggio's reappraisal of the nineteenth-century terrorist, the former novelist comes to the conclusion that "Terrorism had its place in the struggle, so to speak. If used correctly, it could be an effective tool for dramatizing the issues at stake, for enlightening the public about the nature of institutional power" (Auster, 1992: 252). Therefore, terrorist violence is justifiable when it is directed against the institutions of the state (this would be the 'correct' use that Sachs talks about at the beginning) and when it is meant to enlighten the wider public, to attract its attention in a certain direction.

With a significant intellectual baggage extracted from Thoreau's writings [Thoreauvian resistance against unjust government finds a reflection in his historical novel which was full of "anger against America, anger against political hypocrisy, anger as a weapon to destroy national myths" (Auster, 1992: 44)], Benjamin Sachs feels that American freedom, symbolized by the Statue of Liberty, has become merely an empty myth, and a mockery of the real freedom defined by its symbolism. Hence, he sets out to blow up replicas of the original Statue of Liberty placed in different towns and different places in order to awaken the sleeping political unconscious of the American people. While doing so, he becomes known both to people and to the media as the Phantom of Liberty – the target is not selected randomly: the statue managed to go beyond every shred of power and ideology and promote American ideals of liberty, equality and democracy. Ideals that "have given comfort to millions. They have instilled the hope in all of us that we might one day live in a better world" (Auster, 1992: 242). A false hope, apparently.

The Phantom comes to be associated in the popular imagination with "a kind of underground folk hero" (Auster, 1992: 243), and to this public perception of his personality contributed a lot the messages

he phoned in to newspapers and radio stations the morning after each explosion. They were necessarily short, but they seemed to get better as time went on: more concise, more poetic, more original in the way they expressed his disappointment in the country. "Each person is alone," one of them began, "and therefore we have nowhere to turn but to each other." Or "Democracy is not a given. It must be fought for every day (…)" (Auster, 1992: 243)

However different from the ordinary terrorist messages, there is nothing original in the Phantom's words. Generally, his messages: "Unlike the typical terrorist pronouncement, with its inflated rhetoric and belligerent demands, the Phantom's statements did not ask for the impossible. He simply wanted America to look at itself" (Auster, 1992: 244). We are given the impression that the critical intensity that had once existed in his writing activity has disappeared to make room for some dull messages of democracy. However brilliant a writer he had used to be, Ben Sachs is now presenting slogans of democracy that strike the hearers as generic and rhetorical. He does not deconstruct the American myths, but he rather tries to reinvent them. He even mythologizes himself, by becoming the Phantom of Liberty. Behind this mythical figure is, however, a contradiction. In his previous sphere of activity, Sachs was engaged in intimate relations with various people from his life, i.e. he communicated and interrelated to people. But, once with the acquiring of this new identity, the current posture keeps him away from such relations and propels him into a realm of spectacular violence (where no one gets hurt, but the terrorist). His messages talk about caring for other people, while the promoter of those messages has escaped the outer community and lives alone.

As already discussed, the narrative of *Leviathan* relates the abandoning of a vocation and the taking up of another kind of vocation, devoted more especially to performative means. Sachs's renouncing the literary career is timely replaced by another writer and another writing career. Indeed, the novel that Sachs stops writing before assuming the terrorist identity, *Leviathan,* is resumed by his close friend, Peter Aaron, the narrator of Auster's *Leviathan*. Forced by extraordinary circumstances, Peter Aaron writes *Leviathan.* One writing career gives way to another, and the failure of a vocation is the necessary condition for the emergence of a new one. The situation is not deprived of hidden meaning: however brilliant and singular a

writer may be, he still evolves within a community, who takes things forward and continues the activity of writing, long before the disappearance of a certain writer. In *Leviathan*, the situation is reflected by the permanent comparison drawn between Benjamin Sachs and Peter Aaron, not only in terms of writing, but also in terms of lifestyles as writers. Considered a naturally gifted and a very productive writer, Ben Sachs did not possess a regular schedule and he seemed free for social activities and the pleasures of city life. Peter Aaron finds himself astonished by Sachs's "curious talent," since the latter has "little or no interest in pursuing what people refer to as a 'literary career'" (Auster, 1992: 53). He does not stick to writing novels, but tries his hand at writing non-fictional genres including essays, reviews and the like. It seems to be all the same for him, as long as it involved writing. By contrast, Peter Aaron is a deliberate novelist, who must maintain a steady focus on his work and can't take his writing talent for granted. While for Sachs "the act of writing was remarkably free of pain" (Auster, 1992: 53), for Aaron writing is a daily struggle to which he must commit himself quite diligently.

It is indirectly suggested by the narrator, when completing the manuscript of *Leviathan,* that Sachs's failure (as a writer and as a terrorist) is produced by his leaving his initial sphere of activity, which was, in fact, the basis of his identity. This is the meaning of the piece of advice he offers Sachs at some point in the story: "You need to get back to work. The minute you start writing again, you'll begin to remember who you are" (Auster, 1992: 137). Which he did not, and the events that followed his leaving his house in Vermont, and his leaving of the unfinished manuscript on the table for Aaron to find it, proved him wrong. Having taken that road, Sachs is subject to chance, coincidence and multiplicity. He assumes many roles and strange things and accidents happen to him. As a writer, Sachs seemed to lead a free life, but that freedom drew strength from his writing activity and from the people around him. However unsatisfactory and time-absorbing it might have been at times, writing was essentially a form of self-discipline. From this point of view, a writer seems to be his own Leviathan, his own governing authority who establishes the limits of writing and the degree of freedom necessary to an adequate performing of his tasks. But the writer is also to be subjected to another Leviathan, one of multiple choices or, in Sartrean terms, a Leviathan of absolute freedom, which interferes with his evolution through life and deviates its course. The moment Sachs enters into its influence, he commits a murder. "This

is American culture in all its violent heterogeneity: every man for himself, multitasking, unbridled capitalism. Is the Leviathan of Hobbes all that distant?" (Schreiner, 2005: 614)

If the novelist died earlier in the development of the plot, the terrorist dies at the end of our itinerary through the world of terrorist violence depicted in *Leviathan*. Far from closing the horizon of research, the scene of death opens new perspectives, since it seems to be derived from Roland Barthes's essay "The Death of the Author." According to Barthes, the process of writing corresponds to a process of loss of identity, voice and origin: "As soon as a fact is narrated… the voice loses its origin, the author enters into his own death, writing begins" (Barthes, 1972: 221). The author whose death is described in the opening sentences of *Leviathan* has likewise lost his voice, origin and identity. The authorities are trying to *reconstruct* his identity based on the little amount of information found at the place of the crime, but the process would end in failure if it were not for the voluntary intervention of another … writer.

Conclusion

Paul Auster's message is that Benjamin Sachs's death would never have occurred if he hadn't left the sphere of activity he felt the most stability in. With his vocation supported by years of literary activity, Sachs's primary modality of being-in-the-world was that of a writer, even if he felt tired of it and gave it up. If a writer, his life would probably not have ended so tragically. But given the nature of his post-writing life, the radical engagement he undertakes finally leads to his death. Sachs makes the mistake of letting himself be seduced by the political unconscious of a seemingly dormant nation and, thus, of moving from the destiny of a writer to that of a political radical. His life force vanishes in the violent explosion of a misadventure which, in Maurice Blanchot's terms, should be related to the sovereignty of the "reign of the public" – a reign that influences the destiny of a writer and modifies its course by pushing him into a space that is "not close, not distant, not familiar, not strange, deprived of centre, a sort of space that assimilates everything and keeps nothing." (Blanchot et al., 2003: 247)

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The Conflict of Moral Values in John Steinbeck's *The Winter of Our Discontent*

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Abstract: Steinbeck's later fiction proves to be an essential provider of answers regarding human moral development. Largely, this study intends to explain the moral conflict that arises in Ethan's mind – the protagonist of the novel *The Winter of Our Discontent* – under the pressure of a materialistic, self-centred society. Living in a community where right behaviour is what brings personal benefit, Ethan gradually becomes a greedy and selfish person. The rise of materialism and the social inequity give birth to the social conflict from which only the fittest and those enduring will survive, a concept coming down not only from Darwin's natural selection, but also from Nietzsche's Superman. Steinbeck makes reference to ethical relativism as he wants to reveal that people's conscience and way of thinking are no longer influenced by the "voice of God" but by the culture of their society. However, Steinbeck believes that, even in a democratic and independent society where people have free will, everyone should follow a universal moral code. Otherwise, the society would no longer function and the world would be dominated by chaos and conflict. The writer's aim is to make the reader acknowledge that *our* actions affect *the other*.

Keywords: *moral conflict, culture, society,* inequity.

Contemporary society is the witness of value and principle dissolution, as it is frequently reminded that its members should regard the changes they are going through as leading for the worse. The respect which is supposed to be given to oneself and others is slowly fading away, and the human being is degrading at a magnified speed. The social, political and economic events all over the world give the impression that there is something corrupting the current situation of modern society. This idea is recurrent in John Steinbeck's literary attitude especially while writing the novels *East of Eden* and *The Winter of Our Discontent*. Loyalty, honesty, virtue, and equality are values that have always been honoured in the American society. Along the time he has been regarded by critics from so many different points of view that a mere mentioning of some of them can easily bring forward the deep preoccupation the author had with society and everything concerned with the developing of the human being and the impact of social change:

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Frederick I. Carpenter and Arnold L. Goldsmith, for example, see him as a transcendentalist philosopher. Martin Shockley contends that Steinbeck's philosophy is fundamentally Christian although his religious vision is more in line with Unitarianism and the transcendentalist philosophy of Ralph Waldo Emerson and Walt Whitman than with orthodox Christianity. Chester E. Eisinger finds Jeffersonian agrarianism in Steinbeck's fiction. Freeman Champney, among others, considers Steinbeck a pro-communist based on a sociological reading of works such as *In Dubious Battle*, *Of Mice and Men*, and *The Grapes of Wrath*. Charles C. Walcutt and Alfred Kazin view Steinbeck as a naturalist whose ideology is informed by evolutionary theory. According to Joseph Fontenrose, however, Steinbeck is a romanticist, "an heir of the Romantic movement." Although Steinbeck is generally considered a realist or naturalist, Fontenrose observes, these are "mere labels."' John Timmerman's "John Steinbeck: An Ethics of Fiction" calls Steinbeck a deontological moralist whose work manifests "an acute sense of right and wrong behavior." Others have labeled him a humanist, primitivist, crypto-Nazi, mystic, or pragmatist. (Han, 2005:41)

The unpredictable side of Steinbeck's personality confused most critics as they could not judge him from just one angle. If in *Of Mice and Men* his approach was that of a quiet tragedy, in *Dubious Battle* he was regarded as a Marxist follower while in *The Long Valley* the central motif of his writing was the shadowed landscape. In his later work he felt the need to bring his analysis of human behaviour closer to the reality of the time and because at the beginning of the twentieth century the Americans became more interested in material wealth than in high standards of morality, as society started developing both financially and at the behavioural level, Steinbeck felt the need to go deeper into observing the way in which moral and common sense attitude was being undermined and excluded from the general education. The period covered by the novel *East of Eden*, for example, was an age of growth in all domains in the US. Between 1860 and 1900, the population of the country increased by 140 per cent and there was an enormous change in the production of petroleum, coal, steel and iron. All the large cities were linked by railroads that allowed the movement of farmers and immigrants towards west. Since then, it has been a continuous rising of materialism whose effects are obvious not only in Steinbeck's

fictional society but also in people's selfishness, solitude and loss of moral values.

The author's determination to focus on individual's responsibility reveals his dissatisfaction with the American public institutions. Steinbeck believes that matters should be taken, people awakened and dishonesty should be fought by all means. He clearly declares his disappointment and pessimistic view concerning society in a letter to his friend, Adlai Stevenson:

> Someone has to reinspect our system and that soon. We can't expect to raise our children to be good and honorable men when the city, the state, the government, the corporations, all offer the highest rewards for chicanery and dishonesty. On all levels it is rigged, Adlai. Maybe nothing can be done about it but I am stupid enough and naïvely hopeful enough to want to try. How about you? (Steinbeck and Wallsten, 1975: 653)

The harsh reactions the author had shown regarding the lack of reaction and complete passivity of authorities and social leaders were mirrored in his work. Steinbeck's books issued during the 1940s and the 1950s consisted in complex meditations upon the strange position of the modern man, all alone and lost in a period dominated by corruption and indifference. The human being appeared as alienated, uncomfortable with himself, trying to find a way to escape the situation he/she was in. The writer debated on an issue still approached today: the rethinking of the human condition. Mainly for this reason, Steinbeck's fiction is still fashionable, read and highly appreciated all over the world.

The writer focused greatly on being a moral writer and he maintained his ethical views, and, while writing his major works his, intentions were those of showing the difference between right and wrong and especially the consequences of such choices. "When ethical contexts do occur they often come obliquely: the role of conflict and paradox, the relevance of biblical/religious allusions, individual freedom and cultural oppression." (Timmerman, 2005: 33)

The author experimented not only many writing styles but, at the same time, he explored different places and people in the world looking for the fundamental answers of our existence. His later fiction denotes to be an essential provider of answers regarding human moral development. His findings have become real study cases for famous sociologists today such as David Blankenhorn and

Gerald Schoenewolf, as Steinbeck proved to have some basic knowledge of psychology and philosophy. In his opinion the best writers have a moral goal, although, his writings were often unfairly condemned as pornographic, violent and disturbing and so many times dismissed by the severest critics. Jackson Benson insists that even though more than 100 years have passed since the writer's birth he can still easily be considered the most banned author in the US.

> Steinbeck's moral philosophy is in part deontological; acting out of duty an according to moral principles meant a great deal to him. At the same time utilitarian principles are unmistakably present in his fiction. Steinbeck was a product of his time, and intellectual influences on him – some of which conflict with each other – were multiple. (Han, 2005: 46)

Living in America can always be considered a challenge in having contact with all types of people who focused greatly on individuality, independent spirit and originality. Nowadays, Steinbeck's later fiction is re-evaluated and valuable insights are revealed related to the moral echoes that exist in the author's fiction. Reloy Garcia's re-reading of *The Winter of Our Discontent* provides a clear light over Steinbeck's moral voice:

> In preparation for this brief introduction I reread that book [*The Winter of Our Discontent*], in the process immodestly reviewing my own theme. Reality is a harsh mistress, and I would write that essay differently today… The book I then so impetuously criticized as somewhat thin, now strikes me as deeply penetrating study of the American condition. I did not realize, at that, that we had a condition. His [Steinbeck's] work thus rewards a returning reader, is seemingly amplified by our own enriched experience. (Garcia, 1979: 4)

The Steinbeckian characters seem to have a wrong perception regarding ethics due to the social changes that they have undergone, meaning that the source of their conscience is no longer "the voice of God" (Newman, 1874) although both *The Winter of Our Discontent* and *East of Eden* re-enact several Biblical stories. The author was aware that churches have their roles in promoting morality in people and cultivating conscience: "And they [churches] brought conscience, or rather, nudged the dozing conscience. They were not pure, but they had a potential of purity, like a soiled white shirt. And any man could

make something pretty fine of it within himself." (Steinbeck, 1992: 217)

The representatives of the church held the concept that the moral judgment is the result of God's authority over us and according to Pope Paul VI, deep within his conscience "man discovers a law which he has not laid upon himself but which he must obey. Its voice, ever calling him to love and do what is good and to avoid evil, sounds in his heart a law inscribed by God."[2] Nevertheless, there exists another side which supports an opposite view, that conscience is not the outcome of God's existence, but it is the result of societies and cultures developing throughout years. The anthropologist Ruth Benedict, who worked in research on different cultures, discovered that they had very different values which proved to be especially dissimilar to contemporary ones. The results of her work pointed out that the Spartans did not regard stealing as morally wrong, while in ancient Rome, the father was allowed to kill his child without being punished. Such extreme actions are the type that nowadays society, not only disapproves of, but also punishes, being considered morally wrong. (Benedict, 1934: 4)

The psychologist Lawrence Kohlberg argued that conscience is the result of social development and this is the reason why rules and sets of punishments have been issued. The behaviour of Steinbeck's characters could rather be explained through Kohlberg's second level of moral development according to which the right behaviour is that which brings personal benefit, and so, people with such conscience can be extremely dangerous for society: "Steinbeck was not just a superb experimental stylist, social critic, and, in many ways, the conscience of America. He was, as well, a moral philosopher who probed deeper than nearly any other American writer the contours of individual and societal ethics." (George, 2005: 8)

Some of his most famous characters are individualists, because they follow their own purpose at any costs. They are unscrupulous and capable of anything, including murder, as they have no hesitation about harming others around them as long as they manage to achieve their own goals and are not bothered by any type of external involvement. The message of Steinbeck's work is that the individual must understand that his well-being depends on that of

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[2] Pope Paul VI (7 December 1965), Pastoral Constitution On The Church in The Modern World – Gaudium *et Spes, Hope and Joy*.

those around him. The central motif of many of the author's novels is that the selfish will not survive, as one of John Steinbeck's greatest qualities was that of being a keen observer of the realities his time brought to his attention noticing a complete social change when passing from the small communities to the larger society in the cities. As a realist and a leftist Steinbeck is aware that along history, the American people have developed a character with social implications, between two realities: the Christian morality on the one hand and the liberalism of the capitalist economy on the other. Habermas states that Steinbeck's characters live, work and speak according to their social status and their actions become predictable in terms of social determinism (Habermas, 1973: 40). Patrick Dooley goes even deeper with his article on Steinbeck to mention that

> genuine moral goodness, genuine human happiness, and genuine human development are three ways to describe the same thing: a well-lived and fulfilling human life in a good society. Conversely, a disordered society cannot facilitate happiness, goodness or development. The short answer to the difference between a good and a disordered society (and the happy or discontented humans who live in it) has to do with needs and wants. (Dooley, 2005: 4)

In the later Steinbeckian works he was most attracted to the chivalric code *Morte d'Arthur* and felt disappointed by the turns society was facing, believing that courtesy was a weakness and emotions were simply related to sentimentality. For the writer, such attitude seemed completely useless as he mentioned to Adlai Stevenson that people had too many things that surrounded them and the only activity they found convenient was sitting on the sofa and searching for the soul. The materialism and consumerism that were taking over the society of his time revealed genuine matters of concern for Steinbeck. The writer is interested in offering a solution to the condition of hopelessness that Americans had brought themselves in and trying to find a way to avoid the malignancy increasing in the world by searching for a type of cure that might bring individuals closer together. Steinbeck follows the psychiatric steps of discovering the meaning of life offered by Viktor Frankl's theories "First, there is a meaning in a work well done. Second, there is a meaning in life's experiences and relationships. Third there is a meaning in person's attitude towards unavoidable suffering" (Heavilin, 2005: 50). The author intended for his readers to become

aware that his desire was that of being a part of what human improvement meant and by doing this he tried to create characters, which had both successes and failures like any other human being. As Frankl, he understands that self-absorption affects the individuals in a such a way that "year after year, thousands of families, having accumulated a nest egg through hard, monotonous, boring work, go back to the country and try with puzzled failure to re-create a self-sufficient island against the creeping, groping assembly-line conformity which troubles and fascinates them at the same time." (Steinbeck, 2002: 106)

The conformity also mentioned by Frankl's works goes back to Schopenhauer and the vacillation between distress and boredom, showing that people's intentions are obviously inclining towards more leisure time. The problem that one might find in such situations is how to use the spare time in order to actually have a useful impact on one's routine:

> The young dread to grow up, the grown dread growing old, and the old are in a panic about sickness and uselessness. As for the use of leisure, we are due to feel that pressure more and more as automation and increase of population force more and more leisure on us; and so far, in human history, leisure has caused us to get into destructive and unsatisfactory trouble. Unless some valuable direction can be devised and trained for in America, leisure may well be our new disease, dangerous and incurable. (Steinbeck, 2002: 105)

This new disease that the author brings into discussion is touched upon in his expression of the way human beings should behave and what they ought to value being put into perspective especially while writing *The Winter of Our Discontent*. Ethan Hawley, Steinbeck's protagonist, is the perfect example of someone trying to make good choices, but after a while becomes confused and somehow ends up losing all his principles and eventually his hope.

In the beginning of the novel Ethan struggles to remain decent and honest in a society where corruption is normal and freely accepted. Unfortunately, he notices that the world around him is more interested in earning money and making profit than in doing good and being compassionate. Money comes first, no matter what, being more important than the people around, including family, friends, and neighbours, showing that everyone is defined by selfishness and greed.

Steinbeck expressed his views through Ethan's meeting with Mr. Biggers whose opinions identify with Mary's, Ethan's wife, and many others living in the US in the 1960s. Mr Biggers tries to bribe Ethan and convince him to buy from him and make sure that Alfio Marullo, Ethan's boss, would never know: "This five percent could be in cash-no records, no trouble with the tax boys…" (Steinbeck, 2000: 31). Mr Biggers' offer makes Ethan appal: "You want me to double-cross the man I work for?" (Steinbeck, 2000: 31). The answer he receives is a stereotypical American one: "Who's double-crossed? He doesn't lose anything and you make a buck. Everybody's got a right to make a buck." (Steinbeck, 2000: 31)

Marullo is not an honest man as one might believe at observing Ethan's loyalty; however his being given in to the immigration office by Ethan does not represent the most encouraging image for the American society of the time. The employer tries to make Ethan save money at the expense of customers, as he considers that exploiting customers is the only solution in a degrading economy because "good business is the only kind…that stays in business" (Steinbeck, 2000: 21). He does not care about his customers' well-being and his ways of making business are representative for the society's lack of values. Ethan tries to fight against them and refuses Marullo's proposal.

Ethan first of all feels pressure from his wife, who scolds him for being so naïve and moral: "I'd like to be able to hold up my head in this town" (Steinbeck, 2000: 42). She would gladly give up "a habit of conduct and attitude for comfort and dignity" (Steinbeck, 2000: 257). Steinbeck uses Mary to render the typical American desire for materialistic things in life and to show how quickly the new trend took over people's lives. She is so concerned with being comfortable and respected by the community that she is ready to get money through immoral ways. Not only Mary's but also their children's desire for a television, a car or money for summer camp pushes them to accept the bribes, the plagiarism to win contests, the five per cent bonuses. All these seem suitable ways to obtain "comfort and dignity and a cushion of security." (Steinbeck, 2000: 257)

Unfortunately, as times goes by, Ethan gives up his Christian conscience and accepts to mould to society's new set of rules. He does not yet adopt the new "religion" of America, to "look after number one" (Steinbeck, 2000: 29) in order to get money and a social status, although later on he is "devoting himself to a delusion that he

is the measure of right and wrong, good and evil – that there is no ethical standard outside of himself – his moral moorings fall away, and he has failed to arrive at either goodness or truth" (Heavilin, 2005: 55). This self-absorption that the protagonist arrives to display closes upon him and forces him to lose perspective of life.

Freud states that the social pressure is essential in forming the conscience of a person. Ethan's values, his way of thinking have changed now under the new social context. As his family used to own a very prosperous business in the past, he has always liked to be respected and he felt embarrassed with his new status of grocery clerk: "Would my great ancestors be proud to know they produced a goddam grocery clerk in a goddam wop store in a town they used to own." (Steinbeck, 2000: 12)

The protagonist begins to accept the new and corrupted world as he believes that "if the laws of thinking are the laws of things, then morals are relative too, and manner and sin – that's relative too in a relative universe" (Steinbeck, 2000: 57). As there is no right and wrong, then he will not be held responsible. Thus, Steinbeck makes reference to ethical relativism[3] as he intends to reveal that people's conscience and way of thinking are mainly influenced by the culture of the society they live in. Living in a materialistic, self-centred society, his protagonist also becomes a greedy and selfish person. However, Steinbeck does not agree with the implications of ethical relativism as his main character cannot easily and completely give up his traditional moral way of living. Unlike his father, Allen, Ethan's son, embodies the ideals of the coming generation in the 1960s. He lives in a world different from that of his father's as Ethan was a man accustomed to honesty, respect whereas his son grew up in the age of game scandals, of supermarkets, his views being: "Something for nothing. Wealth without effort" (Steinbeck, 2000: 91). When he confronts his father about plagiarizing famous speeches for the "I Love America" contest his reaction is: "Everybody does it. It's the way the cookie crumbles" (Steinbeck, 2000: 353). He considers that being dishonest and immoral is accepted by society as long as one is not caught. Allen is not upset because of what he has done is wrong, but because he has got caught.

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[3] "Ethical relativism is the theory that holds that morality is relative to the norms of one's culture. That is, whether an action is right or wrong depends on the moral norms of the society in which it is practiced. The same action may be morally right in one society but be morally wrong in another." (Velasquez, Andre, Shanks, and Meyer, 1992)

Moreover, Ethan feels rejection from society and even from his own family if he does not join the new world. Under this pressure, he mutters the eternal rhetoric of Shakespeare: "Now is the winter of our discontent, made glorious summer by this son of York" (Steinbeck, 2000: 157). He becomes another person as everybody around him notice the transformation: "All day people had remarked that I looked well, by that meaning I looked different, more confident, changed." "You don't seem the same man" (Steinbeck, 2000: 62), Margie tells him. Ethan himself becomes aware of the transformation he has been through: "I think I believe that a man is changing all the time. But there are certain moments when the change becomes noticeable." (Steinbeck, 2000: 64)

When Ethan changes and decides that he can make a better living for his family by behaving just like his contemporary he betrays his boss with no trace of regret. However, after he does this and finds out that Marullo has actually regarded him as a good person, Ethan feels remorse and guilt and "the wave of ill-disguised stomachs closed in again" (Steinbeck, 2000: 226) bringing with it a sense of desolation. Although now he has money it is meaningless because he becomes aware that his decisions have made him rich, but ruined the lives of others. He even destroys his childhood friend, Danny Taylor, although he had even had a sort of premonition in a dream that showed him back in adolescence together with Danny, exploring the ruins of a house when suddenly he hears Danny from behind the column of a juniper as if he were under water. He immediately notices that he is losing his friend, as his features are starting to run down over his frame. There is nothing Ethan can do, even though his efforts are made to try to put together Danny's face and it just fades away through his hands. Although Ethan is truly disturbed by his dream there seems to be nothing that can change his mind about betraying his childhood friend. Eventually Ethan drives Danny to commit suicide, as he was found dead, surrounded by whisky bottles and sleeping pills, in order to gain an enormous fortune. "Now he is the degenerate Every American" (Heavilin, 2005: 56). He declares loving his wife and always addressing her with endearments, but he feels no shame in contemplating the idea of an extramarital affair with Margie Young Hunt.

At first, Ethan enjoys being successful and respected, after he made all the actions that meant cheating others and benefiting from their sorrow: "[Mr. Biggers] began to look at me with respect and I liked it. I loved it. The bugger thought I was like him, only better at

it" (Steinbeck, 2000: 64). But in the process of restoring his family name, he becomes disgusted with himself. He becomes aware that his decisions have made him rich, but ruined the others' lives. Thus the lesson that Steinbeck wants to teach his readers is that to be rich and successful does not necessarily mean to be happy.

Ethan manages to earn the respect of those around him, family and friends, but this does not represent a permanent state as it is the result of his new position in society and wealth. By revealing this type of respect, Steinbeck aimed at disclosing the true one that no one can take away: it is the respect that comes from real virtues such as honesty, compassion, generosity.

Steinbeck believed that, even in a democratic and independent society, there should be a universal moral code that everyone ought to follow. Otherwise, the society would no longer function and the world would be dominated by chaos and conflict. Morality ensures harmony between people and helps create a better society. Ethan is disgusted and tries to escape from this false and corrupted world deciding to take his own life, without thinking about the responsibilities he had for his wife and children. He seems not to be able to distinguish any other idea that might save him. He takes his razor on the beach and believes that with a quick slash of the wrist he can end it all. But when he reaches his pocket he finds the talisman that his daughter, Ellen, treasures and which she has hidden there to give him hope for the future. The epiphany that he has restores his love for his close ones and makes him want to take on his role as head of the family. As he realizes that there is still a possibility that everything is not lost, he says "I had to get back – had to return the talisman to its new owner…Else another light might go out" (Steinbeck, 2000: 276). The protagonist has to dedicate himself to changing the habits that have brought upon him only negativity and to grow up and face the world with the necessary maturity: "Whereas Ethan has tried to find success and meaning in his life by rationalizing, plotting and planning for self-aggrandizement, he has been left with emptiness and loss" (Heavilin, 2005: 56). Nathaniel Philbrick notes that "Ethan's sudden determination to live is made possible by his realization that humanity's only hope rests not with a group but with the individual" (Philbrick, 1997: 237). Philbrick goes on to say:

> Only after he has connected this insight with his own daughter... does Ethan find the will and the strength to emerge from the tide

pool's carnivorous waters, an almost evolutionary progression in which his self-centred obsessions with the past and present give way to one truly altruistic act directed toward the future. (Steinbeck, 2000: 238)

The protagonist realizes that there are still decent and compassionate people in the world such as Ellen. He understands that his daughter needs him, "else another light might go out" (Steinbeck, 2000: 276) and he hopes that at least one person can make a difference in a society gone wrong. Ethan has his moment of triumph over the evil that had overwhelmed him. Every individual has an important and unique role in the fight with the degrading forces that exist in the world. This is also Steinbeck's hope that Americans can one day overcome corruption and greed that seem to have become the norm of today's society, as well. His optimism for the maturing of the American society and for its talent at overcoming the less fortunate events of history, while maintaining moral responsibility and maximizing the potential for greatness of the people is the actuality in which the author so passionately believed. This desire for progress at the individual and society level was observed in the author's Nobel Prize acceptance speech when he stated that hope for the humankind is with men referring to the concepts of generosity and interdependence. The support of community was the answer to avoiding the natural human state which he saw as "solitary, desultory and static."

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