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**LITERARY AND CULTURAL STUDIES/ ÉTUDES  
LITTÉRAIRES ET CULTURELLES/ LITERATUR- UND  
KULTURWISSENSCHAFTLICHE BEITRÄGE**

## Lecture des Palotins

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**Resumen:** *El trabajo trata de las múltiples representaciones textuales y gráficas de los Palotinos, acólitos de Padre Ubú, el protagonista de varias obras de Alfred Jarry. La imagen de estos seres extraños, tal como se configura al leer sus contornos, demuestra ser mutante, no sólo por el hibridismo corporal de los Palotinos, sino también por la mutabilidad de sus rasgos físicos, morales y hasta onomásticos, que parecen migrar de un texto a otro, de un dibujo a otro, combinando a placer repetición y diferencia.*

**Mots-clés:** *Alfred Jarry, Ubu, Palotins, mutabilité*

Les Palotins sont les acolytes du père Ubu, qui l'accompagnent dans ses méfaits et l'aident à réaliser ses désirs ignobles. Ce sont des entités étranges, monstrueuses, qui mélangent dans leur configuration des éléments humains, animaux, et même des objets, ce qui rappelle l'hybridisme d'Ubu et leur donne à tous un air de famille.

Le portrait physique de ces mutants nous présente des êtres très barbus, qui ont „au moins quatre oneilles / Sur lesquelles le pole / Exerce diverses influences / De déclinaison, et autant d'inclinaison” et qui urinent par un robinet („Nous pissons par un robinet / Et nous respirons l'atmosphère / Au moyen d'un tube recourbé”, Jarry, 1985: 210), ce qui n'est pas sans rappeler des bizarreries à venir, tels les „gros tubes pareils à des serpents” du manifeste futuriste de Marinetti, ou le serpent qui, Dieu sait pourquoi, ferme la soupape dans *Chanson dada*, ou bien Cotadi d'Urmuz, avec ce couvercle de piano vissé à son dos.

La barbe abondante qu'on leur attribue contraste fortement avec la pilosité particulière d'Ubu, fier possesseur d'une moustache foliacée, et compense une masculinité diminuée par cette information végétale, et assez improbable d'ailleurs entre tant de graisse. Pour ce qui est des quatre oneilles, la forme du mot atteste l'appartenance de ces êtres au monde d'Ubu tandis que ce surplus auriculaire compense la faible dotation du monstre dans ce domaine, car il n'a qu'une oneille et, par conséquent, une piètre ouïe. Quand on lui dit „Amenez le grand foc, prenez un ris aux huniers”, il entend «amenez le grand coq et allez faire un tour dans les pruniers» (*ibidem*, 129. Pour leur part, le robinet et le tube entrent en résonance avec le croc qui achève le bras d'Ubu et grossit le côté mécanique d'un monde dont la représentation première et idéale était le théâtre des marionnettes.

Ce qui est très intéressant et mérite d'être analysé, c'est que, à l'instar d'Ubu, le portrait des Palotins construit des figures mutantes non pas seulement par leur hybridisme corporel, mais aussi par la mutabilité de leurs traits, capables de migrer d'un texte à l'autre, d'un dessin à l'autre, en changeant d'apparence, d'attitude, de valences d'interprétations. A l'instar d'Ubu, ils modifient leurs contours, combinent à loisir répétition et différence, en se moquant des prétentions unificatrices, de la logique, des lectures sûres.

Dans *César-Antechrist*, par exemple, Les Palotins sont „semblables à des sphères grossissantes” (Jarry, 1972: 56). Cette description les rattache à Ubu par la rondeur et elle est confirmée dans l'affiche de la représentation d'*Ubu roi*. Mais dans cette même affiche, les Palotins sont en toute évidence imberbes. En revanche, dans le dessin appelé „Ouverture d'Ubu roi”, ils sont poilus, mais nullement ronds et de plus ils sont beaucoup plus petits qu'ailleurs; ici, le point commun avec leur maître n'est plus le ventre, mais la tête piriforme. Ce qui est assez surprenant quand on compare ces deux représentations graphiques c'est que, à l'encontre des Palotins, méconnaissables d'un dessin à l'autre, Ubu, en général si sujet à des changements d'apparence, reste exactement le même, donc maître et suppôts ne mutent pas exactement en même temps, ce qui

aurait été un joli point de stabilité dans ce chaos de la représentation. Dans la gravure publiée dans *Minutes de sable mémorial*, on les voit plus phalliques que jamais, ce qui va de pair avec leur description dans le texte: „Barbus de blanc, de roux et de noir, coiffés à la phrygienne de merdoie, serrés en des justaucorps versicolores, ils agitent leurs bras placides, qui traversent en croix leurs tronc annelé de chenille” (*ibidem*: 184). Ce passage d’un lieu à l’autre dans des formes distinctes s’explique surtout par la pluralité d’auteurs et de temps de rédaction de la geste, vu que, bien avant que Jarry ne se charge de participer à la production de la geste, ils avaient déjà commencé à muter. Selon Charles Morin, l’auteur premier des *Polonais*, c’est-à-dire *d’Ubu roi*, „au début, ils étaient sales et déguenillés, actuellement ce sont des bonhommes en caoutchouc, gonflés tels des pneus, n’ayant qu’un pied et une oreille, et une gueule de lapin” (Chassé, 1947: 187). Le fait que Jarry décide perpétuer la représentation variée, au lieu de la résoudre dans une lecture unificatrice des attributs de ces êtres, pourrait démontrer son respect pour ce qu’ils étaient avant qu’il n’arrive, ou son astuce de parier sur l’instabilité comme garantie du succès, ou même un intérêt moindre pour le thème, car les Palotins, à l’encontre d’Ubu, ne bénéficient pas de discours paratextuels avec des clés de lecture de sa part et surtout, car le texte de la geste écrit par lui de a à z, *Ubu enchaîné*, se dispense complètement de leur présence.

Il paraît que c’est la monstruosité physique des Palotins l’élément constant dans cette variation des contours, car indépendamment des traits particuliers qu’ils ont dans un endroit ou dans autre, ceux-ci formeront toujours une figure composite, de fantaisie. Mais cette monstruosité constante en tant que méthode de fabrication est, à son tour, d’une intensité réglable, selon les circonstances et les effets qu’on désire. Parmi leurs avatars, il y’en a des plus monstrueux que d’autres, comme il résulterait, par exemple, de la comparaison entre l’amusant ballon volant de l’affiche de la représentation *d’Ubu roi* et cette description extrême de *César-Antechrist*:

Pareils à des écorchés ou au schéma du sang veineux et du sang artériel, la bile financière leur sortait par des trous et rampait en varicocèles d’or ou de cuivre. Ils étaient numérotés aussi et je les menais combattre avec un licou d’où pendaient des plombs funéraires. Les femmes avortaient devant eux heureuses, car les enfants leur seraient devenus semblables. Et les pourceaux coprophages vomissaient d’horreur (Jarry, 1972: 312).

Dans cette variation de contours, de couleurs, de textures, d’impacte, un élément qui semble aspirer à la stabilité c’est qu’il sont trois, ce qui est vrai en général, mais faux dans le particulier d’*Onésime ou les tribulations de Priou*, pièce écrite au Lycée de Rennes en 1888-1889, ou il y a „une infinité de Palotins” et, pour plus de précision, un Palotin 3246 (Jarry, 1985: 232).

Même leur nom n’est pas libre de variation, ni le nom commun ni le nom propre. L’autre nom, Salopins, qui précède Palotins dans les textes des lycéens, souligne leur saleté physique et morale ainsi que leur rôle hygiénique, c’est-à-dire de faire le travail sale de leur maître. Par un réarrangement minimal dans l’espace du mot et en n’y changeant qu’une consonne, on obtient à partir de Salopins un nom qui ouvre un nouveau champ d’interprétation qui pourrait parier, d’une part, sur le passage de l’allusion phallique (possible lecture de pal comme phallus), interprétable non seulement comme changement du thème d’intérêt de la part des lycéens, mais aussi comme plus adéquat aux données particulières de l’oeuvre créée *de facto* par Jarry, où les instances phalliques dépassent largement les allusions anales; d’autre part, on peut penser à une réécriture de l’abject dans un registre élevé, puisque de Palotins à Palatins il n’y a qu’un pas, puisqu’en Pologne il y a un ordre religieux qui porte ce nom (Béhar, 2003: 168), ou bien, puisqu’en héraldique, le pal est la pièce honorable qui occupe le tiers moyen d’un écu.

Même cette certitude que Salopins et Palotins désignent les mêmes êtres et sont des synonymes en diachronie est débilitee dans plusieurs endroits dans la geste. „Sont-ce les Larbins de phynance annoncés dans la liste des personnages, ou bien des Grippe-Sous ou même des Palotins?” se demande Henri Béhar (Jarry, 2000: 171) à propos des Salopins. L’énumération salopins, serre-argent, palotins, hommes de finance, larbins chimiques” (Jarry, 1985: 194) d’*Onésime*, corroborée au fait que les Palotins sont les seuls qui apparaissent quand leur maître les appelle par la tirade antérieure montre que ces noms sont des synonymes en synchronie. Que Larbins de phynance

désignent aussi les mêmes n'est pas sûr, car tant eux comme les Palotins apparaissent dans la liste des personnages d'*Ubu roi*, espace paratextuel des plus rétifs à accepter des synonymes. Mais, dans le Répertoire des Costumes de l'oeuvre on spécifie que ces Larbins de phynance sont les Palotins, peut-être pour des raisons d'économie propres de la représentation théâtrale. Pour concilier, en quelque sorte, ces données sans prétendre résoudre le problème, on peut considérer que 1. salopins / serre-argent / palotins / hommes de finances / larbins chimiques désignent les mêmes êtres et concernent de différents aspects de leur personnalité: avec Salopins c'est la saleté du corps et des actions, avec Serre-argent et Hommes de finances c'est leur rôle de recueillir les impôts, avec Palotins leur fonction d'empaleurs, avec larbins chimiques on fait fusionner leur servilité et leur capacité d'exploser et 2. il existe une multitude d'êtres de ce nom, mais il n'y en a que trois qui acquièrent un nom propre et une voix, les plus proches, les plus importants

Pour ce qui est des noms propres de ces personnages, dans l'oeuvre originelle, *Les Polonais*, les Palotins s'appelaient, incroyablement, Don Juan d'Avilar, don Pedro de Morilla et don Guzman Alvarez. La sonorité clairement espagnole est cohérente avec le passé d'Ubu comme roi d'Aragon, tout en étant incohérente avec les besoins d'essentialisation, d'épuration, de soustraction à toute couleur locale et temporelle de la poétique de Jarry. De plus, ils auraient discordé avec l'économie onomastique de leur maître, et de la sorte s'en aurait-ils distancié, ils auraient nié leur interdépendance. La simplicité qu'il désire pour eux, Jarry la trouve dans le vocabulaire héraldique, déjà préfiguré dans la possible lecture de palotin comme dérivé du pal héraldique, où il trouve les trois noms qui ont finalement connu la célébrité: Pile, Cotice et Giron. Dans le vocabulaire héraldique, Pile veut dire pal qui s'amenuise en triangle du chef à la pointe et qui s'achève avant d'atteindre celle-ci, Giron est la pièce en triangle rectangle demi quartier dont la pointe est au centre de l'écu et Cotice est une bande diminuée de largeur. Ces noms, à part de faire concorder ces personnages à son maître, à travers la simplification formelle et le déracinement spatiotemporel (Ubu vit nulle part, c'est-à-dire partout), gardent la noblesse cernée par les noms initiaux, mais en déshumanisent les porteurs, en les transformant dans des figures géométriques, et surtout, symboliques.

Le chemin des chevaliers à l'écu, de l'histoire à sa figuration est passé aussi par la variante intermédiaire de *Minutes de sable mémorial* et *Ubu cocu*, où les trois Palotins principaux s'appelaient Herdanpo, Mousched-Gogh et Quatrezoneilles. Ces noms d'extraction rabelaisienne sont bien évidemment très amusants, mais il leur manque le côté illustre de l'héraldique brillant en tant de vulgarité, cet humour plus fin, de connaisseur, voulu par un Jarry qui aime faire côtoyer Ubu avec Platon.

Voilà les avatars des fidèles accompagnants de père Ubu itinérant à travers ses propres transformations textuelles et figuratives. Le point de stabilité entre tant de représentations est précisément leur rapport constant à leur maître, leur ressemblance à lui en plusieurs points et le rôle qu'il ont dans son univers. Charles Morin parle de ce dernier aspect: „Leur rôle consiste à tuer et à voler pour le compte du Père Ubu, et à faire marcher les appareils (machine à décerveler, pince-porc, etc )» (Chassé, 1947: 187-188).

Par conséquent, les Palotins ont un triple rôle instrumental: 1. c'est à travers eux qu'on exécute les crimes du monstre 2. ce sont des instruments dans le sens le plus propre par leur condition d'objets gonflables, explosifs et 3. à leur tour ils font marcher d'autres instruments de l'arsenal du monstre. Ce rôle instrumental est même inscrit dans leur nom, qui pourrait être une dérivation correcte de pal, suffixé palot puis „diminué». Curieusement, le mot travail vient de tri-paliare, c'est-à-dire, torturer avec trois pals, heureuse coïncidence avec la malheureuse vision du travail selon Ubu.

En conclusion, les Palotins ont ceci de particulier qu'ils provoquent le désarroi quand on tâche de les analyser. D'une part, cette mutation constante de leurs contours n'aboutit pas à des lectures confortables. D'autre part, malgré cette avarice quant aux lectures sûres, ils sont généreux en détails coloriés et disparates à même d'éclore dans des champs d'interprétation multiples. En fin de compte, ce ne sont pas des êtres opaques, résistants à l'analyse, mais ils vérifient notre capacité de simplification, d'essentialisation, et pourquoi pas, notre capacité d'accepter le principe

pataphysique selon lequel il n'y a pas une vérité, mais des vérités et de voir la beauté du chaos. En essence, les Palotins ne sont que des êtres bizarres, de fantaisie, qui changent, qui volent, qui conduisent un voiturin de finances, mais qui pourraient tout aussi bien rouler carrosse ou piloter un avion, pourraient se métamorphoser en n'importe quoi. La seule chose qui ne changerait pas, qui ne devrait pas changer, c'est leur relation constante à leur maître. Pour ce qui est du reste, selon la vision qu'en aura un écrivain, un peintre ou un metteur en scène, ils pourront être trois (très bon numéro sans doute), ou deux, ou se multiplier à l'infini, on pourra les faire surgir de la terre, de l'eau ou du ciel, ils auront des ailes, des pétales ou des écailles sans que leur essence en soit pour autant altérée.

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## Aspects végétaux et vestimentaires de la composition d'Ubu

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**Resumen:** *El trabajo considera dos aspectos de la composición amalgamada de Ubu, el monstruo patafísico que fue producto colectivo de varias generaciones de alumnos de un colegio de Rennes antes de alcanzar la fama a manos de Alfred Jarry: los elementos extraídos del reino vegetal que se añaden a los rasgos animales del monstruo, así como la información de índole indumentaria integrada a su ser, información que consideramos de igual importancia que la aportada por los elementos vegetales, animales, humanos o mecánicos a la hora de leer el signo-Ubu.*

**Mots-clés:** *Jarry, Ubu, patafísica, hibridismo*

A part l'évidente représentation du règne animal dans la composition d'Ubu, il y aussi le règne végétal, placé dans son amalgame corporel au niveau de son oreille, appelée „oneille”, en forme de feuille, et de son crâne piriforme. Ces traits physiques vont de pair avec son caractère essentiellement végétatif, sédentaire, au début d'*Ubu roi*, pareil aux mouvements rudimentaires de la plante à la recherche de minéraux. Mais Ubu est „plante» pendant peu de temps, car son épouse, la mère Ubu, ou Lady Macbeth à la grotesque, le convainc d' étendre son territoire par un petit régicide. Via des arguments alimentaires et vestimentaires:

Mère Ubu: Tu pourrais augmenter indéfiniment tes richesses, manger fort souvent de l'andouille et rouler carrosse par les rues.

Père Ubu: Si j'étais roi, je me ferais construire une grande capeline, comme celle que j'avais en Aragon et que ces gredins d'Espagnols m'ont impudemment volée.

Mère Ubu: Tu pourrais aussi te procurer un parapluie et un grand caban qui te tomberait sur les talons. (Jarry, 1985: 35)

Vu qu'il s'agit de parapluie, de caban et de capeline, Ubu ne peut que céder à la tentation. Accro aux accessoires en général, il se vante d'être l'inventeur du parapluie, des pantoufles et des gants, ceux-ci pour que personne, ni mère Ubu, ne sache s'il se lave ou non les mains, en nous donnant encore un exemple de logique pataphysique, aussi absurde qu'irréfutable. On ne saurait lui prouver le contraire en toute honnêteté puisqu'en effet a-t-il inventé une raison d'être *sui generis* des gants, qui mériterait un brevet. D'ici à généraliser, il ne manquait que la pataphysique. Chose faite.

Ces vêtements fonctionnent aussi comme symboles de sa personnalité, à l'instar des animaux et des plantes. Ils pourraient représenter le trait imperméable, isolateur, qui s'ajoute au signe-Ubu. Le parapluie, le caban, la capeline, les pantoufles et les gants semblent célébrer la disparition de la peau en tant qu'espace d'échange avec l'extérieur. Les pores demeurent cachés, tandis que le contact intérieur-Ubu / extérieur-l'autre n'est assuré que par les orifices d'une importance vitale pour le monstre: la bouche et l'anus. La peau est une surface sécrétoire, transpirer c'est perdre et le fantoche n'aime éliminer que par le postérieur, le seul espace où il puisse y avoir une confirmation „formelle” du succès de l'appropriation de l'autre. Michel Arrivé, l'un des meilleurs spécialistes de l'œuvre de Jarry, en donne une autre explication: „Ce goût accentué pour

les protections vestimentaires les plus solides, cette attention apeurée portée à son corps s'interprète assez aisément dans le cadre de l'hypothèse phallique, alors qu'ils restent dépourvus de fonction dans toute autre interprétation" (1972:154).

Le critique est bien évidemment de souche freudienne et privilégie presque toujours une lecture „phallique” des composants du monde d'Ubu. Selon Freud, un manteau épais et lourd signifie un préservatif.

Pour ce qui est du végétal, l'appartenance de l' „oneille” à ce règne met en relief son caractère rudimentaire, étant un orifice moins évolué que la bouche ou l'anus dans le corps d'Ubu. La déformation graphique du mot le rattache à „merdre”, en traçant un axe vertical entre l'orifice supérieur et le postérieur, le seul à même de soutenir le corps obèse d'un personnage moralement invertébré. En tant que feuille, l' „oneille” pourrait représenter aussi le sexe féminin, ce qui engendrerait une relation de parenté *oneille / bouche*, vu que, selon la psychanalyse et d'autres lectures du symbolique imaginaire, celle-ci a fréquemment été assimilée à une *vagina dentata*. Parfois, pour Ubu il y a même confusion des deux, comme quand il affirme „j'ai des oneilles pour parler et vous une bouche pour m'entendre” (Jarry, 1985: 83). L'absurdité de ses propos n'est pas sans avoir une base réelle, comme il en est toujours avec les jeux pataphysiques: dans un dessin qu'en fait Jarry, Ubu porte deux feuilles qui lui sortent du nez et qui sont aussi sa moustache, de manière que tant son oreille comme sa bouche sont foliacées, ce qui ouvre la possibilité de confusions et d'identifications pataphysiques. Enfin, pour Michel Arrivé, l'«oneille» est elle aussi un symbole phallique.

Le crâne d'Ubu, déformé à l'imitation d'une poire, joue sur plusieurs plans. Pour partir des évidences, une tête végétale confirme que, chez son possesseur, l'esprit brille par son absence. D'une part, la tête-poire fait un clin d'œil flagrant à la caricature du roi Louis-Philippe par Charles Philippon, dans le numéro de *Charivari* du 17 janvier 1834, où le roi est affublé d'une tête qui est une grande poire<sup>1</sup>. En fait, depuis, l'argot identifie poire et tête. Le même mot désigne un imbécile, un idiot, en fonctionnant ainsi comme marque emblématique du caractère de notre personnage.

Il reste encore des façons de déployer la poire sur l'échiquier d'Ubu. L'un des personnages principaux d'*Ubu cocu*, le grand expert en polyèdres toujours accompagné de son tic „voyez-vous bien”, s'appelle Achras et son nom, en grec, signifie poirier. L'intersection de la poire avec les polyèdres pourrait renvoyer aussi à une présence extratextuelle, un professeur de mathématique du Lycée de Rennes qui s'appelait Périer, formellement assez proche de Poirier.

Une donnée très intéressante arrive par une phrase de Jarry, placée au-dessous de la dédicace à son ami, Marcel Schwob, dans la première édition d'*Ubu roi*: „Adonc le Père Ubu hoscha la poire, dont fut depuis nommé par les Anglois Shakespeare, et avez de lui sous ce nom maintes belles tragoedies par escript”.

A première vue, ce n'est qu'un jeu de plus, et peut être pas des meilleurs, malgré le langage joliment patiné du chroniqueur Jarry. Qu'Ubu ait une tête de poire n'est pas vraiment une condition suffisante pour qu'en la secouant il devienne Shakespeare. Toujours est-il que la pataphysique est de nouveau capable d'unir le disparate sur un support réel: on est tous d'accord, *Ubu roi* est une réplique grotesque de *Macbeth*, pour ce qui est de la trame basique (le chevalier, instigué par son épouse, tue le roi et se fait couronner). Par conséquent, les deux auteurs ont sans doute quelque chose en commun. Si le personnage est Shakespeare pour secouer sa poire et l'auteur est Shakespeare pour reproduire son intrigue, il est pataphysiquement possible qu'Ubu soit l'auteur d'*Ubu roi*. En *Gestes et opinions du docteur Faustroll, pataphysicien*, le protagoniste parle de l'auteur „de ce grand livre qui a pour titre *César-Antechrist*, où se trouve la seule démonstration pratique, par l'engin mécanique dit *bâton à physique*, de l'identité des contraires», dont le nom est...*R.P.Ubu, de la Cie de Jésus*” (Jarry, 1972: 720). Rappelons-nous, *César-Antechrist* comprend, dans son „Acte terrestre”, le texte d'*Ubu roi*. Alors, dans cette paralogique, tant Ubu comme Shakespeare sont les auteurs d'*Ubu roi*, ergo Shakespeare c'est Ubu.

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<sup>1</sup> C'est aussi l'hypothèse de Christine Van Schoonbeek: l'image du roi piriforme comme métaphore du souverain «bourgeois, borné et autoritaire» (1997: 50-51).

L'animal, la plante, les vêtements, la marionnette, voilà les éléments fournisseurs d'attributs à la construction du monstre, sans que son centre d'appui en soit changé pour autant. Il reste figé dans un sol humain, car il ne s'agit pas d'une plante ou d'un animal anthropomorphique, mais d'un homme de papier cumulant des attributs extraits d'autres règnes. Jarry n'a pas voulu mettre en danger l'essence d'Ubu précisément pour qu'on se reconnaisse toujours dans son corps désagréable malgré les apparences. C'est pourquoi il a choisi de jouer avec les possibilités qu'offre la ressemblance, suffisantes pour qu'il y ait transfert de caractère et la coïncidence intérieur - extérieur, insuffisantes pour que l'identification programmée avec nous (Ubu est, rappelons-nous, notre „double ignoble”) en soit mise en danger. Si les traits animaux, végétaux et vestimentaires opèrent l'identification première du monstre avec soi-même, avec son image interne, les traits humains et l'impersonnalité de la marionnette prétendent nous identifier à lui et, par ricoché, à la partie animale ou végétale mise en évidence. De ce point de vue, la création d'Ubu démontre un principe tératologique assez commun, que la fabrication d'un monstre est, avant tout, une affaire de calcul.

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## Richard Wagners „Miss Bukarest“ - Die kriminale Lebensgeschichte eines Mannes

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**Abstract:** *This paper focuses on the relation between cultural memory and writing. The analyzed work is an example of contemporary literature of a Romanian German writer who lives and publishes in Germany. His multicultural memory reflects itself in the work, thus creating a codified literary genre. Behind the mask of a detective story hides the Entwicklungsroman of the postcommunist era. Behind the dead body of a woman hides the insecure personality of a former Securitate agent.*

**Schlüsselwörter:** *kulturelles Gedächtnis, Grenzübergang, kodifiziertes Fortleben, Entwicklungsroman der postkommunistischen Ära, Kriminalroman*

### Einleitung

Das Merkwürdige an diesem Roman ist die Tatsache, dass er sich vom Titel aus gar nicht als Krimigeschichte ankündigt und um so weniger als die Lebensgeschichte eines Mannes. „Miss Bukarest“ ist eigentlich etwas anderes als es zeigen lässt.

Dieser Roman zieht in erster Reihe die Aufmerksamkeit der Leserschaft auf sich durch einen eher kommerziellen Titel. Unter der Schale der Oberflächlichkeit verbirgt dieses Buch eine interessante Genremischung, die aus rein literaturwissenschaftlicher Perspektive betrachtet, erfrischend auf die thematische Ebene des Textes auswirkt. Detailliert spricht man von einem Detektiv, der sein Lebensrätsel lösen muss. Der aufgeführte Mordfall ist im Roman ein Vorwand für die Identitätsprobleme der Hauptperson, Dino Schullerus. Der Rumäniendeutsche Schriftsteller Richard Wagner verbindet in seinem Werk die schwere, einem ausgewanderten Securitate Mitarbeiter spezifische Problematik der Identitätskrise mit der eher leichten und ungenügend ausgearbeiteten Geschichte eines Mordes. Das Opfer ist eine alte weibliche Bekanntschaft des Detektivs Schullerus, die ihm die rumänischen Lebenszeiten in Erinnerung hervorrufft.

Man könnte diesen Roman in die kulturwissenschaftliche Kategorie der Grenzliteratur einteilen. Mehrere Grenzphänomene sind an diesem literarischen Werk erkennbar: die Hauptperson ist ein nach Deutschland ausgewandelter Rumäne, „Miss Bukarest“ dagegen ist eine Banater-

Schwäbin, die ebenfalls nach Deutschland ausgewandert ist; die Handlung des Romans ist als Fortsetzung eines Lebens zu lesen, das vor dem Grenzübergang nach Deutschland stattfand.

Der Detektiv, Dino Schullerus übernimmt im ersten Teil des Romans die Hauptrolle, er wird jedoch im zweiten Teil des Romans durch Richartz in den Hintergrund gedrängt, da dieser schließlich im letzten Teil den Mörder entdeckt. Die Anwesenheit der weiblichen Leiche – Eva Osthoffs – trägt zur Identifikation des Romans als Detektivroman bei. Seine Vorgehensweise in der Entlarvung des Mörders weist mehr oder weniger die von Peter Nusser aufgestellten Eigenschaften des Detektivromans auf.

Es ist nicht unsere Absicht, dieses Werk zu kategorisieren. Interessanter erscheint hier dem vorhandenen interkulturellen Geflecht unser Verständnis entgegen zu bringen, um die Innovation dieses literarischen Textes herauszufördern.

These ist, dass die Tagebuchführung durch Dino Schullerus als kodifiziertes Fortleben seines Lebens vor der Auswanderung zu verstehen ist. Parallel entwickelt sich die Fiktion des Romans mit Hilfe des tatsächlichen Schriftstellers und überlappt das Deutschlandleben mit Erinnerungen und Erlebnissen aus dem kommunistischen Rumänien. Somit entwickelt sich hinter der Maske eines kommerziellen Genres eine Art von Entwicklungsroman der postkommunistischen Ära. Das interkulturelle Geflecht widerspiegelt sich einigermaßen in der Form der Narration.

### **1. Theoretischer Rahmen. Das Kanon des Kriminalromans**

Nach Peter Nusser sind im inhaltlichen Verlauf des Detektivromans bestimmte Stufen zu bemerken. In dem Kapitel *Inhaltliche Elemente der Handlung*<sup>1</sup> bestimmt Nusser diese Stufen, wobei deren Reihenfolge auch von großer Bedeutung ist. An die Spitze der Liste setzt Nusser das Verbrechen, welches unter ungewissen Umständen stattgefunden hat. In diesem Fall lässt sich eine völlige Übereinstimmung mit Wagners Roman feststellen. Der Roman setzt mit dem grausigen Fund einer Wasserleiche in der Spree ein und somit mit dem noch unaufgeklärten Mordfall. Nussers „rätselhaftes Verbrechen“<sup>2</sup> wird von unserem Autor als Einstieg in seinen Roman verwendet: „Schön sah die Leiche nicht aus.“<sup>3</sup>

Das nächste Element der Handlung eines Kriminalromans entdeckt man nach Nusser in den Bemühungen und den Ermittlungen des Detektivs auf der Suche nach dem Täter. Des Weiteren führt Nusser zwei untergeordnete Elemente dieses thematischen Aspektes auf. Erstens bezieht er sich auf die „Rekonstruktion des Tathergangs“<sup>4</sup> und auf „die Klärung der Motive für die Tat.“<sup>5</sup>

In unserer Falluntersuchung entdeckt man aus diesem Sichtpunkt ein Element, welches „Miss Bukarest“ als Abweichung von den vorgeschriebenen Merkmalen der kanonischen Kriminalgeschichte einführt. Dino Schullerus fällt einem Stimulus anheim, der in ihm psychische Vorgänge in Gang setzt. Die Lebensgeschichte der Hauptperson setzt hier ein. Dementsprechend verliert der Detektiv das Interesse an der detailgemäßen Wiederherstellung des Verbrechens, so wie Nussers Kanon es verlangt. Der Stimulus wirkt sich in dem Maße auf ihn aus, dass er der

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<sup>1</sup> Nusser, Peter: *Der Kriminalroman*. Verlag J. B. Metzler. Stuttgart. Weimar. 2003. S. 22. Ab hier „Nusser“ abgekürzt.

<sup>2</sup> Ebd.

<sup>3</sup> Wagner, Richard: *Miss Bukarest*. Aufbau Taschenbuch Verlag. Berlin. 2001. S. 7. Ab hier *Miss Bukarest* abgekürzt

<sup>4</sup> Nusser, S. 22.

<sup>5</sup> Ebd.

Vergangenheit verfällt und ihn dabei verhindert, sich der Fahndung professionell zu widmen. Aus diesem Grund wird dem Detektiv auch die Pointe entrissen. Bei dieser Pointe bezieht sich Nusser auf die Szene, wenn der Detektiv vor allen Ermittlungsbeteiligten und Verdächtigen den Tathergang logisch und chronologisch wiedergibt und demnach triumphierend den Fall löst. In unserer Situation jedoch werden die Rollen, wie gesagt, vertauscht. Genau an diesem Punkt mag der Detektiv die Anerkennung mancher Leser verloren haben, denn die logische Erklärung des Tatherganges kommt nicht von ihm.

## 2. Vom Bruch mit dem Kanon zum neuen Genre

„Ehebruch. Damit fing es an.“<sup>6</sup> Dieser Satz zeigt deutlich Dinos Drang zum Erzählen und nicht etwa zum Fahnden; Durch dieses Erzählen bringt er die inneren Vorgänge zum Vorschein. Die tote Frau, Erika Osthoff, eine Banater Schwäbin, wird während der Handlung zum Auslöser der Erinnerung und des Kampfes mit den Sünden der Vergangenheit. Mit Wagner bekommt die Schuld des Securitate Spitzels auch eine christliche Dimension, denn Dino nimmt sich feierlich vor, Erikas Fall zu lösen, aus Gründen, die sich weniger aus der Deontologie seines Berufes ergeben, sondern weil er die Schaden seiner vergangenen Spitzeltätigkeit wieder gut machen möchte.<sup>7</sup>

»Vielleicht wäre sie noch am Leben, hätte ich sie damals gesucht und sie dem Geschäftsmann entrissen, diesem dämlichen Osthoff. Vielleicht würde sie noch leben, denke ich mir.«<sup>8</sup>

oder

»Aber du hast sie doch ständig verraten, du hast sie benützt, du hast sie abgeschöpft.«<sup>9</sup>

Die rumänischen Erinnerungen bringen ans Licht eine Weltanschauung, die Dino Schullerus in sein Unbewusstes vergraben hatte und die in dem deutschen Raum nicht akzeptiert wird. Jedoch fällt es Dino Schullerus schwer seine Dinu Matache Persönlichkeit nicht wahrzunehmen. Seine starken Schuldgefühle, die vom Mordfall an seiner ehemaligen bespitzelten Geliebten ausgelöst werden, bilden eine schwer drückende Klemme, von der Dino mittels seiner Tagebuchführungstätigkeit erlöst wird. Dino versucht als Tagebuchführer eine Rechtfertigung Dinus zu unternehmen und möchte infolge dessen das Verständnis seiner deutschen Mitmenschen gewinnen. Der zweifache Perspektivenwechsel der Narration ist das Ergebnis eines künstlichen Griffes, zwar ändern sich die Verfasser der Lebensgeschichte zweimal. Der Letzte, der sich dem Text annimmt, ist Dinos Sohn, ein Deutscher. Dieser wird den Tagebuchtext lesen und als Zeichen seiner Anerkennung ihn veröffentlichen.

Die Lebensgeschichte des Securitate Spitzels wird zum eigentlichen Bindeelement der Narration, zugleich ist dieser Text auch das Heilmittel für vergangene und verdrängte Schuldgefühle. Man könnte hier sogar die Frage aufwerfen, nach der auktorialen Intentionalität. Versucht Richard Wagner eine Botschaft an die Deutschen zu schicken? Dies ist noch zu untersuchen.

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<sup>6</sup> *Miss Bukarest*. S. 7.

<sup>7</sup> In diesem Sinne äußert sich der Schriftsteller in einem Interview zur Problematik des Glaubens, wie folgt: „Der Unterschied zum Beispiel im Glauben an eine Ideologie und im Glauben an eine Religion, also der Unterschied zwischen dem Glauben an Gott und dem Glauben an das Gute, ist der, dass Gott immerhin, der christliche vor allem, eine Gewissensforschung nötig macht, während der Glaube an das Gute einen ins Recht setzt. Damit sind wir die Guten und wir machen das Richtige. Zum Beispiel heißt ja auch eine Intervention, eine militärische, heute humanitäre Intervention. Und das zeigt ja schon die extreme Moralisierung des Ganzen.“ (Deutschlandradio Kultur: Kulturinterview von Holger Hettinger, vom 04.09.07

<http://www.dradio.de/dkultur/sendungen/kulturinterview/665900/>). Der Schriftsteller schafft in Dino Schullerus eine Romanperson, die nicht das Richtige sucht, sondern sein Gewissen forsch.

<sup>8</sup> *Miss Bukarest*. S. 131.

<sup>9</sup>

### 3. Die Unruhe des Seilgängers

Aus einem anderen Gesichtspunkt lässt sich bei Dino Schullerus eine Art Unruhe bemerken, die dem zu verdanken ist, dass der Mordfall ihn zwischen zwei Frauen, die Ehefrau bzw. die ehemalige Geliebte, versetzt. Dieses Lebensgefühl beschreibt eigentlich einen ehemaligen unterdrückten Zustand des Rumänen Dinu Matache (alias Dino Schullerus), der sich vor Jahren aus politischen Gründen vor der Wahl stand, entweder in einem russischen Rumänien – so lautete seine damalige Überzeugung – oder nach Westen mit seiner halbdeutschen Familie zu fliehen. Seine rumänischen Wurzeln werden mit dem Auftauchen der toten Erika ausgegraben und der ehemalige Dinu fürchtet sich davor, nicht bloßgelegt zu werden.

Die tote Frau ist ein wiederkehrendes Motiv in Richard Wagners Werk und steht im Kontext des hier besprochenen Romans als Symbol der toten Erinnerung. Zugleich erfüllt dieses literarische Motiv Funktion des Erinnerungsauslösers.

Man kann behaupten, dass ohne diese Stimuli keine tiefen Gedächtnisgänge auftreten. Dementsprechend sind zu Beginn des Romans keine durchgängigen Gedankenströme zu bemerken. Dino macht zwar Andeutungen auf seine Vergangenheit, aber Fakt ist, dass es auch nur bei Anspielungen bleibt. Erst der Fund der Wasserleiche von Erika Osthoff löst in Dino weit ausschweifende Erinnerungen aus. Somit stellt Erikas Leiche den Stimulus für darauf folgende emotionale Zeitreisen in die Vergangenheit Dinos dar. Doch dieser Stimulus kann bei den anderen zwei Erzählern seine Wirkung nicht mehr entfalten, weil sie keinen direkten Kontakt zu Erika haben können.

Das Motiv der toten Frau betrifft auch die konstante Thematisierung der Vergangenheitsbewältigung. Trotz der eigenständig scheinenden Teile des Romans durchqueren solche leitmotivartige Züge den Roman, und somit ist es überhaupt nicht abwegig zu behaupten, dass eine konstante Ebene dieses Themas bewahrt wird. In diesem Sinne wird der Leser einen Anteil an der Securisten-Perspektive haben, er wird nämlich bereichert, indem er das Rumänienbild der 70er und 80er Jahre sowohl aus dem Blickwinkel des regimegegnerschaftlichen Künstlers erfährt und als auch wird es ihm gewährt, die rumänische Diktaturzeit mit Kinderaugen zu sehen.

Das Erscheinen der Gedächtnis auslöser verursacht in Dinu Matache eine Zersplitterung der Persönlichkeit, die symptomatisch für Emigranten ist. Die kulturelle und anthropologische Schicht des Herkunftslandes wird von den Kennzeichen der neu umarmten Kulturen abgedeckt, bis das unausweichliche Ausbrechen geschieht.

Diese inneren Vorgänge entfalten sein wahres Ich, welches in den Fesseln seines Gedächtnisses gefangen ist. Seine Erinnerungen geben Aufschluss über sein Innerstes und weil er diese dem Leser gegenüber bloßlegt, begibt er sich auf die Suche nach seinem verlorenen Ich. Besser gesagt hat er jenen Teil seiner Persönlichkeit nicht verloren, sondern er hat es mit Absicht hinter sich gelassen. Gleichzeitig mit der Aussiedlung aus Rumänien hat Dinu Matache sein rumänisches Ich dort hinterlassen. Somit könnte man an diesem Punkt von einer oberflächlichen Persönlichkeitsspaltung sprechen. Er versucht mit allen Mitteln sein anderes Ich zu unterdrücken, um es den Deutschen recht zu machen. Er ist sich der Tatsache bewusst, dass sein rumänisches Ich keinen Platz in der deutschen Gesellschaft haben kann. Somit drängt er Dinu Matache in den Hintergrund, in das hinterste Stübchen seines Gedächtnisses und lässt Dino Schullerus die Hauptrolle spielen. Der Securist, Dinu Matache, wird in die Vergangenheit abgeschoben, um dem Detektiv, Dino Schullerus die völlige Aufmerksamkeit widmen zu können. Doch führt ihn dieser Entschluss geradewegs zurück zu seinem verdrängten Ich. Durch die Entscheidung gegen den Securisten und für den Detektiv begibt er sich, zunächst unbewusst, auf Spurensuche nach seinem verdrängten Ich. Während der Ermittlungen an Erikas Mordfall agiert und fungiert Dino nicht nur als Detektiv des Mordes, sondern er wird auch Detektiv seines eigenen Ich, er spioniert sich selber aus. Sich immer mehr seinen Erinnerungen hingebend fahndet er nach seinem fehlenden Teil, der ihn wieder vervollständigen könnte. Die tief verwurzelten Erinnerungen, als seine Persönlichkeit noch eine Einheit bildete, leitet den Detektiv von dem äußeren Fall zu seinem inneren Fall. An diesem Punkt muss Dino parallel zu Erikas Mordfall sich dem ausgeräumten Fall des Dinu Matache

zuwenden. Der äußere Umstand von Erikas Todesfall bietet dem Detektiv, Dino, sich selbst einer umfangreichen Ermittlung zu unterziehen, die als Ergebnis die Wiederherstellung seines zersplitterten Ich lieferte. Durch die Aufdeckung des Mordfalles und durch die Auseinandersetzung mit seinem vergangenen Ich, findet er sich selbst wieder, nimmt sein verdrängtes Ich, Dinu Matache, wieder auf und somit vermag er die Wunden seines anderen Ich zu heilen. Sein gebrochenes Ich wird wieder ein Ganzes.

### **Fazit**

Anstelle einer Schlussfolgerung wäre hier eine Behauptung mehr angebracht, zwar dass der Roman von Richard Wagner das Genre des Detektivromans als Metapher einsetzt und dementsprechend, auch wenn mancherorts nicht leichter Feder, neue Aspekte und Möglichkeiten einer traditionellen literarischen Form ans Licht schafft.

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## La politique postmoderniste dans le roman de Julia Kristeva «Meurtre à Byzance»

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**Abstract:** *Julia Kristeva's readers will find her novel, 'Death in Byzantium' a highly complex text which succeeds in meeting the various expectations of a diverse readership, illustrating the idea that an able writer is perfectly capable of producing a 'two-speed literature': at the same time 'marketable' and attuned to the taste of an exigent public. In this novel, Julia Kristeva reconsiders again the contemporary issue of historiographic representation, with particular emphasis on the forms, functions and the limits of the narration, highlighting the way in which 'the traces of the past', the 'far from innocent' historical documents signify critically on the represented phenomena, are used in fictional or historical representations ordering chains of social and ideological significations.*

**Mots-clés:** *représentation autoréflexive, communication biaisée, focalisation sur l'ex-centricité, paliers narratifs, réfutation de la représentation ; formes, fonctions et limites de la narration*

Julia Kristeva est née en Bulgarie en 1941. En 1965, elle a émigré à Paris, pour y faire ses études doctorales et elle a adhéré au groupe „Tel Quel” dont elle a épousé le chef, Philippe Sollers. Elle s'est impliquée dans le mouvement gauchiste de l'année 1968, à côté de son mari, et a continué à publier dans Tel Quel. En 1970 elle a suivi les cours de Lacan et a continué ses recherches doctorales. Sa thèse, „*La Révolution du langage poétique. L'avant-garde à la fin du XIXe siècle, Lautréamont et Mallarmé*”, a été publiée en 1985. A partir de 1974 elle enseigne à l'Université de Paris 7, au département de linguistique et donne des cours à Columbia University, puis elle enseigne la sémiologie à la "State University of New York". Sa carrière de psychanalyste commence en 1979. Docteur ès lettres, philosophe, psychanalyste, elle est un écrivain de talent et la substance de ses romans est enrichie par la diversité des domaines de recherche abordés de l'auteur. Elle est membre de l'Institut Universitaire de France. Elle dirige aussi le Centre Roland Barthes, dont les activités sont destinées aux doctorants et aux enseignants chercheurs qui interrogent les textes littéraires dans une perspective interdisciplinaire.

En 2004, „ses travaux novateurs consacrés à des problématiques qui se situent au croisement entre langage, culture et littérature” ont été récompensés du Prix Holberg. Au début, son activité s'est placée, comme celle de son mari - l'écrivain Philippe Sollers, dans le sillage du néo-structuralisme dont elle s'est légèrement écartée par la suite. Elle a écrit des romans, des essais et de nombreux articles. Parmi ses romans, mentionnons: *Meurtre à Byzance, Possession, Le vieil homme et les loups, Les Samouraïs* (1990).

Le roman *Meurtre à Byzance* est un texte complexe, réussissant la performance de répondre aux horizons d'attente d'un public très divers, situés sur des paliers différents, illustrant comment un écrivain habile est capable de manier une littérature à deux vitesses: celle qui „se vend” bien et celle qui s'adresse à des connaisseurs exigeants et raffinés. En effet, le titre, le début du roman semblent s'encadrer dans le genre thriller, qui rappelle Dan Brown. Le côté „roman policier” est présenté dès le préambule: „Mystère aux Phare des baleines” en parfaite concordance avec les habitudes de lecture d'un public alléché par les crimes mystérieux et ce n'est que tant mieux si l'on a affaire à un criminel en série, un vrai justicier qui choisit ses victimes parmi les membres les plus véreux et dépravés du Nouveau Panthéon - une secte dont les gourous avaient ramassé des „ingrédients ésotériques” de toutes les religions pour les servir aux assoiffés d'absolu

de Santa-Barbara. Le mystère redouble du fait que le criminel a la manie de marquer un 8 sur la peau de ses victimes, chiffre qui, renversé, renvoie au symbole de l'infini, mettant sous le signe de l'équivalence l'infinité des crimes des victimes élues et l'illimitation de la revanche du Purificateur.

L'épisode est narré à la troisième personne par un auteur omniscient, apparemment neutre, qui introduit ensuite, selon la tradition, le personnage opposant, l'inspecteur Rilsky, chargé de l'enquête. Ce personnage rompt avec la tradition étant un intellectuel raffiné, discret, élégant fils de musiciens qui détonne dans l'atmosphère du Commissariat de Police de même que dans la société snob de Santa Barbara.

Les quelques marques d'ironie subtilement glissées dans le texte ne sont pas censées perturber les habitudes de lecture du lecteur traditionnel de romans policiers.

Le premier chapitre introduit un personnage féminin, Stéphanie Delacour, reporter de „L'Événement de Paris”, mandée par son chef à Santa-Barbara pour investiguer les crimes dont les victimes étaient des chefs des sectes. Désormais le fil narrateur continue à la première personne, les événements et les choses étant observés par l'œil critique de Stéphanie, une femme très intelligente, cultivée, sophistiquée, cynique et désinhibée, et en même temps dévouée, sensible, courageuse. C'est à travers le philtre de sa sensibilité et de son intelligence que les événements nous seront présentés par la suite, c'est elle qui portera son regard ironique sur la société moderne de Santa-Barbara qui déborde l'espace géographique des Etats-Unis pour signifier la société capitaliste globale et globalisante, nivelant les différences culturelles, créant les mêmes désirs et répondant aux mêmes nécessités depuis Paris jusqu'aux Etats-Unis ou à Hong-Kong.

Nous y remarquons un trait essentiel du postmodernisme qui cultive un art politique, car ses représentations - images et récits-, bien que souvent présentées sous une forme parodique, autoréflexive ne sont point neutres.

Linda Hutcheon, remarquait chez les postmodernistes, l'impossibilité de se détacher des contextes politiques dans lesquels ils travaillent et s'expriment. Le contexte social dynamique implique l'existence d'un sens commun partagé par les parts engagées dans l'activité de communication, le cas échéant entre l'auteur et le lecteur avisé. A maintes reprises, la lecture entre les lignes permet cette communication subtile, biaisée entre l'auteur et le lecteur qui partage la même critique impitoyable et porte un regard également désenchanté sur le monde contemporain.

Dans le roman de Julia Kristeva la fiction et l'histoire se mélangent et sont focalisées sur la différence et l'ex-centricité: celle du bâtard Sebastian Chrest-Jones, celle du „purificateur” chinois, celle de Stéphanie, qui est Bulgare naturalisée Française (comme l'auteur du roman qui lui emprunte certaines de ses qualités et opinions), femme qui se confronte à son chef misogynne. Elle est la représentante d'un pays de l'Europe de l'Est qui garde encore, à la différence de Santa-Barbara, les exigences d'une culture et des valeurs spécifiques, un mode de vie en voie d'extinction, que le capitalisme mondial remplacera bientôt. Mentionnons aussi l'ex-centricité de son fils adoptif – Jerry, sourd-muet retiré dans un monde à lui, celle de Rilsky, intellectuel raffiné, égaré au commissariat de police.

Au moment où Stéphanie se décide d'écrire un roman et non un reportage sur les événements dont elle a été témoin à Santa-Barbara et sur les aventures et recherches de Sébastien elle se rend compte, comme tant d'écrivains postmodernes, du fait que l'attitude consciente vis-à-vis du langage et l'écriture du récit/ histoire acquièrent des dimensions politiques. En parallèle, l'écrivain constate que les choses étaient tout à fait semblables du temps où Ana Comnen entreprenait d'écrire la chronique du règne de son père, l'empereur byzantin Alexios. Bonne occasion pour l'ancienne féministe Kristeva d'introduire des réflexions sur la condition de la femme intellectuelle dont les œuvres, aujourd'hui comme autrefois, sont marginalisées.

Cette fresque ironique de la nouvelle époque de barbarie que connaît la civilisation actuelle, avec les problèmes qui ne lui permettent point de croupir dans le bien-être matériel: l'appel de l'absolu, exploité par les sectes religieuses, le terrorisme, la politique, acquiert des dimensions

symboliques lorsque les paliers narratifs bifurquent vers le roman historique, par les recherches de Sebastian Chrest-Jones sur les croisades et la prise de Constantinople par les croisés barbares, du temps d'Ana Comnen. Le rapport présent - passé, le thème de l'éternel retour doublé de celui de la recherche des origines, avec sa variante psychanalytique de la recherche du père ouvrent le roman à des lectures plurielles capables de satisfaire les goûts des lecteurs plus exigeants. Car il s'y pose en fait les rapports civilisation - culture, culture - barbarie, appréhendés non seulement à travers le reportage de Stéphanie – porte parole de l'auteur du roman-, mais aussi à travers le texte de l'Alexiade de la princesse byzantine Ana Comnen – dont l'insertion dans le texte du roman illustre les valences multiple de l'intertextualité étudiée par le sémiologue Kristeva.

Elle a d'ailleurs été parmi les premiers critiques littéraires qui, de concert avec les historiens de la fin du XXe siècle, s'accordassent à dire que les romans décrivent non pas la vie, telle qu'elle est, mais telle qu'elle est représentée par une idéologie. On s'en rend compte, par exemple, lorsqu'on compare les textes des chroniqueurs des croisades mentionnés dans les études de Sébastien Chrest-Jones: Raymond d'Aguilers, Foucher de Chartres, et le roman d'Ana Comnen. Les points de vue sur les mêmes événements divergeant tout à fait selon que le récit est fait par les envahisseurs ou les occupés.

Les choses se compliquent encore plus lorsque la recherche scientifique du professeur universitaire Sebastian Chrest-Jones prend pour cible la recherche de ses propres origines. Les documents investigués sont mis désormais au service de l'imagination inquiète du bâtard qui veut légitimer ainsi son existence.

Finalement, les mêmes événements sont présentés sur un quatrième palier par l'interprétation qu'en donne Stéphanie- le narrateur principal du roman-, interprétation prétendue lucide, ironiquement détachée et qui sert à insérer les divers récits des croisades et l'aventure de Sebastian et du Purificateur chinois dans le roman policier qui les enchâsse. Kristeva opère par là non seulement une dissolution et réfutation de la représentation en la rendant problématique, mais reprend aussi, ce faisant, l'interrogation contemporaine concernant la nature de la représentation dans l'historiographie. Celle –ci manifeste un intérêt considérable pour les formes, la fonction, les limites de la narration, en soumettant à un examen minutieux et circonspect la représentation narrative et sa politique dans l'histoire et la littérature. La notion de „document historique” comme représentation du passé est examinée pour voir comment ces traces sont utilisées dans les représentations historiographiques ou fictionnelles pour en conclure que les documents ne sont ni inertes, ni „innocents”, mais qu'ils entretiennent, au contraire, des „relations critiques” avec les „phénomènes représentés”, qu'ils peuvent influencer et transformer à leur tour.<sup>1</sup> Les auteurs deviennent conscients du fait que le contexte historique, social, politique et intertextuel influence toute forme de narration et ordonne les significations pour l'être social.

Le roman de Kristeva, qui parodie un genre prisé par le public contemporain, remet en question les modèles narratifs traditionnels, historiographiques ou fictionnels et leurs relations de causalité, ainsi que la relation qui s'instaure entre le monde et le texte censé le représenter, entre la vie et la culture et, par la complexité des discours en conflit qu'elle y fait dérouler, elle relève la nature idéologique de toute représentation. Par là, elle invite implicitement ses lecteurs à réfléchir aux moyens par lesquels ils se représentent eux-mêmes et le monde dans lequel ils vivent et à analyser les moyens par lesquels on construit „sa signification” et l'on confère un sens aux expériences particulières vécues dans une civilisation et une culture fortement politisées.

L'attitude adoptée par Kristeva ranime les polémiques de Michel Foucault et de Jean-François Lyotard concernant la nature et le statut de la représentation narrative dans le discours historique, distinguant les **événements** bruts des **faits** historiques qui sont construits à partir de ceux-là lorsqu'on leur attribue une signification. Les différentes perspectives sur l'histoire des mêmes événements, le cas échéant des croisades, sont le résultat des faits différents qui filtrent et interprètent diversement les événements, en truquant les traces du passé. L'une des caractéristiques

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<sup>1</sup> La Capra, D., *Rethinking Intellectual History: Texts, Contexts, Language*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press 1985, p. 38, cité par Linda Hutcheon, *Politica postmodernismului*, Ed. Univers, București, 1997, p. 55.

majeures du postmodernisme, qui se retrouve dans d'autres romans de Kristeva aussi, réside justement dans la prise de conscience du fait que le passé est incontournable, inévitable, incontrôlable, qu'il faut s'y confronter afin d'en connaître la force et les limites. L'accès au passé, le cas échéant au passé de l'Europe en train d'unification, est possible uniquement à travers les documents, les matériaux d'archive qui sont les „faits” des représentations antérieures et non les „événements” proprement -dits. La recherche des origines de l'actuelle culture ne peut se faire qu'à travers les représentations antérieures. Il faut donc accepter de défi de la tradition, appréhendée souvent par le postmodernisme sous la forme de la parodie. L'enjeu de ce roman, comme celui de tant d'autres romans postmodernes est l'analogie entre le processus de l'écriture de l'histoire et celui de la fiction, vu que le narrateur construit les faits en choisissant les faits racontés et en leur conférant une signification particulière.

Plus encore, démontre Julia Kristeva, une signification particulière peut se construire aussi en creux, par l'omission des faits que l'on passe sous silence pour diverses raisons. C'est le cas pour Ana Comnen qui évite de parler d'Evrard, le jeune croisé qui lui a laissé une impression inoubliable et qu'elle a détourné du but d'aller en Terre Sainte. La psychanalyste Kristeva entre en jeu, à propos, pour y déchiffrer, par le truchement de Sébastien, une histoire secrète d'amour de jadis, entre la Porphyrogénète raffinée et culte et le croisé ignorant, barbare. Le passé historique est donc une matière malléable que le narrateur pétrit à sa guise pour en relever ce qu'il veut. La réflexivité du langage et de la narration y est contestée au nom de la politique, selon la tradition de la critique marxiste. On se rappelle, à propos, les démonstrations de Roland Barthes selon lequel il n'y a. nulle part, rien de „naturel” puisque toutes les choses ont une dimension historique<sup>2</sup> ou bien „les franges de culture” qui pendent à toute chose, dont parlait Allain Robbe-Grillet.

En fin, un autre trait du postmodernisme de Kristeva que nous nous proposons de mentionner réside dans la vision pessimiste sur la société globalisante, la civilisation de Santa-Barbara, dont l'unique valeur est l'argent, qui manque de toute valeur morale ou éthique transcendantale, mais qui conquiert le monde tout entier. La précarité de la vie, soulignée par la vision finale de l'Apocalypse en porte témoignage. La domination de l'économie sur tous les autres déterminants de la vie humaine, la transformation de toutes les valeurs en bien marchands, les politiques et la mafia interagissant dans un réseau d'intérêts réciproques de plus en plus serrés et travaillant de concert pour tromper l'opinion publique rendent dérisoire toute préoccupation tournée vers un avenir, de plus en plus problématique et peu probable. Un avenir fait d'une répétition de moments présents, des présents pourvus tout au plus d'un nombre croissant de bien matériels garantis par l'évolution de la société postindustrielle, mais pour lequel l'homme est devenu une notion creuse, un tel avenir peut à tout moment éclater sous le souffle des bombes qui feront sauter en air le Louvre et les trésors que la culture humaine y a ramassés.

Les discontinuités savamment agencées du texte narratif reflètent les analogies avec les arts, la science, la société fortement marqués par l'indétermination de la culture post-humaniste acheminant vers une nouvelle conception de l'homme. Un homme plus que jamais „précaire”, selon ce livre où rien n'est superflu, car dans la structure poétique les éléments constitutifs sont reliés dans la vision unitaire de l'auteur qui nous invite à rompre l'os de la narration policière pour profiter de la substantifique moelle d'un roman qui pose bien des questions d'une dramatique actualité.

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<sup>2</sup> Roland Barthes, 1987, *Image, musique, texte*, Ed. du Seuil, Paris, p. 139.



# Scottish Literary Fastfood: Hard-Boiled Crime

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**Abstract:** *Die vorliegende Arbeit untersucht die Möglichkeiten des zeitgenössischen schottischen Romans, einschließlich seiner Untergattungen, der Herausforderung der Pop-Kultur narratorische Strukturen des traditionellen Kriminalromans übernimmt und so bearbeitet, entgegenzukommen, zwar entwickelt sich der Roman zu einem neuen Genre, indem er dass der neue Roman die regionale, lokale und partikuläre Perspektive in diese Strukturen hineinführt. Als Beispiele werden die Bücher der berühmtesten Schriftsteller unserer Zeiten herangezogen, nämlich William McIlvanney, Ian Rankin, Val McDermid und Alexander McCall Smith.*

**Key words:** *hard-man/boiled; investigate/investigator; crime detection/detector*

## 1. Blurring boundaries

The controversial times we are living in might question right away the traditional definition of crime fiction, suggested by J.A.Cuddon, for instance (J.A.Cuddon, 1992: 194), that is, “the commission and detection of crime, with the motives, actions, arraignment, judgment, and punishment of a criminal”, as lately popular fiction in form of detective story has become a site of postmodernism inclusion-exclusion play, when considering the compensating and distracting energies it conceals, so much hailed by current ideological discourses.

The interest for forms of popular culture has been growing for the last decades as commonly emerging from the general interest for contemporary cultural practicism, studied as areas of now generally accepted cultural studies that have slightly replaced the critical concern for the aesthetic in favour of the anthropological survey, and ideological interpretations. Consequently, the shift of the popular culture from margin to an elusive centre is to be observed constantly in the negotiation of this space and the traditional perception of the artistic creation in contemporary products, fiction included. If one adds a third dimension, that of regional/local, respectively Scottish, to a crime story, the result is not only a fusion of styles, registers, visions, but also a blurring of the boundaries between the literary genre and the narrative of the particular ethos. It is what readers grasp when experiencing Scottish crime fiction at the level of a symptomatic reading, which means “reading first the manifest text, and then, through the lapses and distortions, silences and absences in the manifest text, to produce and read the latent text, the problematic”, to deconstruct that text in order to establish “its relationship to its historical conditions of existence” (John Storey, 1996: 31).

## 2. The hard-boiled investigator

The Caledonian hard-boiled investigator originates in the so-called “hard man”, an angry, quick-tempered individual, sometimes violent both physically and verbally, permanently fighting to solve his problems, dissolved in an unfair battle between “a preempted position in the society and the personal aspiration between socialism and existentialism” (Magda Danciu, 2003:9), best described in the McIlvanneyan fiction. His Glaswegian hero, Jack Laidlaw embodies the resistance to dehumanization within the environment of the West of Scotland, somehow arresting the degradation process of urban life in this bleak depressing industrial city. He is like those American lonely rangers whom “the city hated” (William McIlvanney,1977:3), misread by his co-citizens: “Admit yourself, the just hatred of every other person. Nowhere in all the city could there be anyone to understand what you had done, to share it with you. No one, no one” (4). His being a Detective Inspector posits him to acknowledge the paradox of his true nature:

He felt his nature anew as a wrack of paradox. He was potentially a violent man who hated violence, a believer in fidelity who was unfaithful, an active man who longed for understanding. He was tempted to unlock the drawer in his desk where he kept Kierkegaard, Camus and Unamuno, like caches of alcohol. Instead, he breathed out loudly and tidied the papers on his desk. he knew nothing to do but inhabit the paradoxes. (5).

His missions consist mostly in investigating missing persons, usually dead people, as this is “the raw materials of justice, corpses that are precipitates of strange experience, alloys of fear and hate and anger and love and viciousness and bewilderment” (39-40); in his position, this most often means sensing the Evil as a struggle against the powers of darkness, that is, ignorance, fear, threat, as components of turbulent, insecure world which provides a context for moral dilemmas, for frequent slips to insanity, ethic disorder, eventually revealing the human fallibility.

Like regular hard men, Laidlaw gradually becomes aware of the fact that life has lost its meaning, direction and authenticity:

”He was drinking too much - not for pleasure, just sipping it systematically, like low proof of hemlock. His marriage was a maze nobody had ever mapped, an infinity of habit and hurt and betrayal down which Ena and he wandered separately, meeting occasionally in the children(...). Guilt was the heart of this kind of mood, he reflected, and it surprised him again to realize it. The need to be constantly sifting the ashes of his past certainly hadn’t been inculcated in him by his parents. They had done what they could to give him himself as a present. Perhaps it was just that, born in Scotland, you were hanelled with remorse, set up with shares in Calvin against your coming of age, so that much of the energy you expended came back quilt.”(6).

Laidlaw, the eponymous character, usually angry and outraged, trying to find “somebody else to blame” when his anger, this primeval feeling, “didn’t stop at people” (William McIlvanney, 1977:8), belongs to the large Glaswegian family of dissolute selves, living in a society which locates evil among capitalist individuals and structures, marked by a frustration emerging from poverty and lack of freedom, historylessness and isolationism, becoming a cynic, living in a condition of “inertia and consuming anxiety, fuelled by enduring frustration” (Timothy Bewes,1997:56).

He is an “abrasive man” (William McIlvanney, 1977: 55) who thinks that “criminals are underprivileged” (61), he may be a good man, “Even kind to animals, probably. But he’s not a good polis-man” as he “doesn’t know which side he’s on. He’s pig in the middle. Not clever” (62), vacillating between Them and Us, he is a “slow developer. His ideas haven’t shaved yet” (62), he was “so hard to live with. It was the demands he put on people that she (Ena) found most difficult. Moral aggression (...) He worried everything into bone and then moved on” (77-78), he has a tough face, “Curling the Upperlip” (99), he belongs to the kind of professionals who create “a commitment so intense that the earning of a living happens by the way” (172); his dynamism shows his “determination to do something as well as it can be done” (172), his capacity to bring constant doubt to what he was doing and still try to do it. He is the image molded by the coarseness of Glasgow “this gray but old city” “gloomy and near sunless”, he lives in Glaswegian violence and easily Glasgowsifies whatever happens in the life of the town or of his own, that is he improvises “every situation into a crisis” (254), an exhausting trait that emerges from his antagonistic nature from his serendipity. “A crime you’re trying to solve is a temporary mystery. Solved, it’s permanent.”(273) and continues housing the monster within people, that Foucauldian monster evolving within the legal/biological framework as an extreme, rare case, a combination between the forbidden and the impossible, breaking the law, displaying violence and a conspicuous will of destruction.(see Michel Foucault, 1999: 123 et al.)

The Edinburger, the apparently more refined version of investigator, John Rebus, the multiple hero of Ian Rankin’s series of detective novels, ambitious, confident, an acute observer of darker life facts, starts a similar mission of investigating a missing person, which eventually turns into a crime mystery, interspersing his examination with political issues in the book *Strip Jack*

(1992), when the case is that of MP Gregor Jack's wife's unexpected and unexplainable disappearance. John Rebus, "an s.o.b." (Ian Rankin, 1992: 11), known as "a clever man who could have been cleverer, given the breaks" though "he had never gone to university, and never would. He wondered how different he would be if he had or could" (15), "more Pessimisterian than Presbyterian ... still clung to faith" (76), gradually realizes that, at a closer examination, there are hardly any cultural or class distances between people of high or lower walk of life: Rebus liked Gregor Jack's background, so similar to his own, that is,

Born in Fife, and given a comprehensive education. Except that back then they'd been called secondary and high schools. Both Rebus and Gregor Jack had gone to a high school, Rebus because he passed his eleven-plus, the younger Jack because of good grades at his junior high. Rebus's school had been in Cowdenbeath, Jack's in Kirkcaldy. No distance at all, really. (25).

Thus it is of common knowledge to assess your country's reconfiguration in terms of landscape, character, dialect, in a rapidly changing world, though, as an insightful practitioner, the hero has been trained to look beyond the surface, to look further into things: "A small country, thought Rebus, yet so various. At school, his geography teacher had taught that Scotland could be divided into three distinct regions: Southern Uplands, Lowlands, and Highlands ... something like that. Geography didn't begin to tell the story. Well, maybe it did actually" (113).

The place tells the story of its people, the town structures its inhabitants, the job shapes the individual's personality; like Laidlaw, private life is much influenced by the commitment and absorbing, time and energy consuming tasks so that there is no wonder that

Rebus knew more divorced and separated policemen (himself included) than happily married ones. It wasn't just the hours worked, it was the way police work itself gnawed into you like a worm, burrowing deep. Eating away from the inside. As protection against the worm, you wore armour plating – more of it, perhaps, than was necessary. And that armour set you apart from friends and family, from the 'civilians' (30).

His friend, Dr. Patience Aitkin provides his relaxation area and time, insisting on relaxation techniques to somehow counteract daily routine of early wake-up, dog feeding, hasty breakfast of "tea and toast" (245), driving to his office or to some crime scenes, and most often obliged to reside in his own "neglected" flat, inside which "the atmosphere managed to be both chill and stale. A coffee mug beside the telephone resembled Glasgow insofar as it, too, was a city of culture, an interesting green and white culture" (92) – one might sense the deep-rooted and inherited rivalry between the two emblematic cities of Scotland! – and living a life deprived of thrill and excitement, in favour of chasing the bad guys and fighting the evil.

### **3. The female crime detector**

John Storey uses Tania Modleski's assertions about how feminine narratives tend to adopt three possible positions: "dismissiveness; hostility – tending unfortunately to be aimed at the consumers of the narratives; or, most frequently, a flippant kind of mockery" (John Storey, 1996: 46), when they draw the readers' attention on the real problems and tensions in the lives of both society and women. The publication of detective fiction authored by women represents "an attempt to articulate popular genres for feminist politics" (John Storey, 2006: 9), juxtaposing defining elements of popular culture with the cultural feminist interventions in order to broaden the perspective on both power issues and genre relevance in postmodernism.

When it comes to Scottish writing, one might consider that there is a particular tradition to be perceived in fiction of any genre, and that apparently emerges from inhabiting an ambiguous landscape of legend, folktale and myth which has so much influenced the Scottish imagination and has given a certain flavour to the Scottish novel all along its history, a certain resonance, generating a specific vision of the world. Both an insider and an outsider might think of Scotland consisting of



tartan, kilts, heather, misty landscapes, Lochness, Mary Queen of Scots, Bonnie Prince Charlie, Balmorality, Jekyll and Hyde, and more recently, of Dolly, the cloned sheep.

Val McDermid's *Blue Genes* definitely alludes to this late coined symbol of Caledonia, at least because of one of the cases the female detective Kate Brannigan has to investigate, that is, "making a baby from two women", similar to cloning, as "all you need to make a baby are a womb, an egg and something to fertilize it with"(Val McDermid, 1999:61), ironically bringing forth the idea of dying and killing for a cause:

I (Flora, the murderer) wanted desperately a child, but Sarah (a.k.a. the victim) didn't. I knew subfertility treatment was close to the stage where it would be possible to make a child from two women. And she refused point-blank to do it with us. She said she wasn't prepared to experiment with my body. That is the experiment produced a monster, or even a handicapped child, she wouldn't be able to live with herself. Me, I thought it probably had more to do with the fact that she absolutely didn't want to share her life with a child. I eventually came to the conclusion I'd rather have the possibility of a child than the certainty of life with her.(230)

Doing the "dirty job"(10) of a private eye means that she is commonly dealing with "total scumbags" as in case of the couple who "cash and disappear" from the houses of bereaving families after having promised them "unique opportunity, special shipment of Italy marble or Aberdeen granite"(14) for "high quality memorials for loved ones who pass away"(19), eventually "leaving your clients to pick up the pieces when the headstone remains a ghostly presence"(15); it also means to realize the difference between one's feeling towards maternity and the urge of dominating one's friend, implying the resulting conflicts when investigating cases such as the fertility doctor Sarah Blackstone's murder, already mentioned, a case so strongly connected technological development in the field of genetics; or, it means to accept the challenge of the less familiar situations when approaching the show business to identify who is "trying to see off" the "Glasgow's top nouveau punk band, Dan Druff and the Scabby Heided Bairns."(26) who are sabotaged in the following way:"Every time we're doing a gig around the town, some bastard covers all our posters up. Somebody's phoning the promoters and telling them not sell any more tickets for our gigs because they're already sold out. And then we get to a gig and there's hardly any genuine fans there."(29).

Kate's reason for having become a private investigator was her concern "to know the reasons why things happen. I understand the difference between the law and justice. I know that handing people over to the police isn't always the best way of ending things."(227), similar to Mma Precious Ramotswe's," the only lady private detective in Botswana" (Alexander McCall Smith, 1998: 1), "good detective, and a good woman. A good woman in a good country, one might say" (2), running "No.1 Ladies' Detective Agency" (3), in the well known tradition of Agatha Christie, asserting the fact that "Women are the ones who know what's going on. They are the ones with eyes. (...) A woman sees more than a man sees. That is well known."(57). She was good at school, "the best girl in this school"(42), which she unfortunately left "at the age of sixteen"(44) for the sake of a more challenging and creative freedom.

Her involvement in the mysteries of other people's lives is but an instance to prove that no matter where in this world, including Botswana, women should start refuting the obsolete situation when they "were absent from models of collective and public cultural expression" (Morag Shiach, 1998: 337) and assuming a proactive attitude.

Cases in Gaborone, Botswana, are of less imaginative and more practical nature, ranging from situations such as, money theft - her first case, the clerk stealing money from "the cousin's husband"(44); fake identity - Happy Bapetsi's long lost daddy's return, "and impostor" who "heard about our family from my real Daddy before he died and is now just pretending"(8); missing spouses - Peter Matatsi, forty, with a "business selling furniture", a Christian and Church singer who "disappeared on a Sunday...with one of the Christians'(61-2; or vanishing children - Thobiso, the 11-year old boy of the Pakotati family, who disappeared in the bushes; suspicious secret teenage lovers - Nandira Patel "is seeing some boy in secret" against her parents' advice (96); committing

“dreadful things”- Rra Pekwane’s driving a car that was given to him by a man “who had two Mercedes Benzes and only needed one”(122) ; or being adulterous – Kremlin Busang’s cheating on his wife Alice. All these critical situation get to be solved in Agatha Christie’s way but in a purely African version, which Mma Ramotswe was so keen to preserve:

Mma Ramotswe did not want Africa to change. She did not want her people to become like everybody else, soulless, selfish, forgetful of what it means to be an African, or, worse still, ashamed of Africa. She would not be anything but an African, never, even if somebody came up to her and said ‘Here is a pill, the very latest thing. Take it and it will make you into an American’. She would say no. Never. No thank you. (207),

quite similar to what any Scots would say about their abandoning their peculiarities that made them differ from the others.

As one may notice that, even if Scottishness is not always explicitly rendered, the Scottish sense of life and history is constantly displayed, as demonstrated by the novels referred to so far, through the tremendous energies and the freedom of imagination which writers commonly juxtapose with the spirit of old legends, myths, beliefs, and the contemporary background. Nowadays writing imbeds both the elusive syndrome of Scottishness through their restlessness, pride, resistance to clearances, and the novelty coming from experiments, thus challenging the technological present in the true fashion of postmodern ways of surpassing boundaries and narrowings of any kinds: cultural tradition, aesthetic priorities, genre domination, narrative authority and authenticity, set against a bizarre but real hyperconsumerist society.

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## Irish Immigrants and Canadian Destinies in Margaret Atwood's "Alias Grace"

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**Résumé:** Parmi les écrivains canadiens contemporains d'expression anglaise, Margaret Atwood se distingue par le fait qu'elle explore d'une manière très habile la fragilité de l'existence humaine dans le contexte exceptionnel offert par l'immense territoire canadien, très varié et parfois hostile et par le paysage littéraire qui lui appartient. Le roman „Alias Grace” ne représente pas seulement la reprise d'un cas de délit criminel commis vers la moitié du 19<sup>e</sup> siècle à Toronto, mais aussi une histoire de survie et d'intégration et un nouvel examen des valeurs. L'histoire de la jeune fille appelée Grace représente, en même temps, une réécriture de l'histoire et de l'analyse des destinées de nombreux immigrants irlandais du Canada obligés à assumer une nouvelle identité dans leur tentative de s'adapter aux conditions imposées par un nouveau pays et par une nouvelle expérience de vie.

**Key Words:** Irish, Canada, immigration, identity

**Motto:** Great hatred, little room  
Maimed us at the start  
I carry from my mother's womb  
A fanatic heart  
(W.B. Yeats)

The Irish have a long and tormented history in Canada dating back centuries. The first recorded Irish presence in the area of present day Canada dates from 1536, when Irish fishermen from Cork traveled to Newfoundland.

After the permanent settlement in Newfoundland by Irish in early 1800s, coming from Waterford mainly, increased immigration of the Irish elsewhere in Canada began in the decades following the War of 1812. Between the years 1825 to 1845, 60% of all immigrants to Canada were Irish; in 1831 alone, some 34,000 arrived in Montréal.

The 2001 census by Statcan, Canada's Official Statistical office revealed that the Irish were the 4th largest ethnic group with 3,822,660 Canadians with full or partial Irish descent or 12.9% of the nation's total population. (apud [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Irish\\_Canadian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Irish_Canadian))

But the peak period of entry of the Irish to Canada occurred during and shortly after the Great Irish Famine in the mid 19th century. Because the fare to Canada was much lower than that to the United States, Australia or New Zealand, during this time, Canada was the destination of the most destitute Irish people, who came in the hundreds of thousands. The crossing was done under miserable conditions, many of the immigrants getting seriously ill or even dying along the way. Most survivors were sent to Montréal, but many of these immigrants continued on to settle in Canada West (formerly Upper Canada, now Ontario) or the United States.

Compared with the Irish in the United States or the United Kingdom who fled famine, a great number of the Irish in Canada settled in rural areas and not in the cities. The Irish in Canada still faced a large amount of racism and persecution, both from the Irish Republican Brotherhood's raids on British army posts in Canada (then known as British North America) from the United States, and due to long-standing feelings of anti-Irish racism among Canadian Protestants.

In the years after the War of 1812, an increasing number of Irish, many of them Catholic, were venturing to Canada to obtain work on projects such as canals, roads, railroads and in the

lumber industry. Settlement schemes offering cheap (or free) land brought over farmer families. Ulster and Munster (particularly Tipperary and Cork) were frequent sources of these migrants.

The Great Irish Famine 1845-1849, had a large impact on Ontario. Immigrants arrived in desperate circumstances on steamers from Quebec to Ottawa and to ports of call on Lake Ontario, mainly Kingston and Toronto, in addition to many other smaller communities across southern Ontario. An economic boom and rapid growth in the years after their arrival allowed many men to obtain employment on the expanding railroad network, construction in the cities or in the logging industry. Women would often enter into domestic service. Others farmed the relatively cheap, arable land of southern Ontario. There was a strong Irish rural presence in Ontario, but they were also numerous in the towns and cities. Later generations of these poorer immigrants were among those who rose to prominence in unions, business, law, the arts and politics. Irish-Canadians have been a bit less visible than the Irish-Americans, but clearly they had a significant influence on the history of the country.

The immigrants' main problem, besides earning their living, was that of their identity. In French Canada, for instance, the orphaned children were adopted into Quebec families and accordingly became Québécois, both linguistically and culturally. In English Canada many children were sent to work, others were adopted, but in many cases they had to cope with the new situations and assume new identities in the process of trying to stay alive, exposing them to traumatic experiences of all kinds.

*Alias Grace* by Margaret Atwood is a novel in which the problem of lost and reconstructed identity gets special dimensions. The main character of the novel is a very young Irish woman whose unusual Canadian destiny became the source of many speculations at the time when the events took place.

Among the contemporary authors writing with distinctive Canadian voices, Margaret Atwood deftly explores the fragility of human life within the huge context of the immense, varied and sometimes hostile environment provided by the Canadian scenery and literary scene. Much of Atwood's writing explores history making in colonial and postcolonial situations.

Her novels certainly cover issues of postmodern determinism, from "self" to "nation", from "form" to "content" and discuss the (in)compatibilities thereof. Paradigms that are gender-driven (Canada as "feminine" representation, as female victim) can be made congruent to (post)-colonial paradigms wherein "power" is the operative word.

Most characters in Atwood's books are women facing approximately similar problems: growing up, earning a living, bringing up children, fighting against discrimination in a male dominated society. Restricting the area to Canada and following Northrop Frye, Atwood argues that "every country or culture has a single and informing symbol at its core" (Atwood, M., *Survival*, 31) and goes on to identify "*survival / la survivance*" as the pervading symbol for Canadian literature. She states that Canada perceives itself as a collective victim of colonization, the mental and cultural effects of which have inevitable impact upon literature. Subsequently, Atwood's heroines are, generally speaking, Canadian women trying to survive one way or another, victimized or victimizing, accepting to be perpetual victims, struggling to get free and become independent, or even proclaiming their right of victimizing others. One can observe a transfer of power from the male to the female universe, especially when discussing Atwood's villainesses, and then the feminist issues of her novels become even more obvious.

Going back to the history of survival in Canada, Atwood was first of all fascinated by Susanna Moodie's writings. Susanna Moodie used her skills as a writer and poet to chronicle her new life, the life of a young English woman who departed to Canada with her family way back in 1832, when the land was still vastly unbroken. Margaret Atwood's reading of Susanna Moodie was rewarding in many respects: first of all Atwood decided to turn Moodie's whole experience, using actual excerpts, into a hypnotic mind and sense disorientation trip and the result was *The Journals of Susanna Moodie* (1970).

On the other hand, it was in Moodie's diary that Margaret Atwood read for the first time about Grace Marks and a sensational murder case, which offered the starting point for her celebrated ninth novel, *Alias Grace*.

In *Alias Grace* Margaret Atwood takes us back in time and into the life of one of the most enigmatic women of the nineteenth century English Canada. The factual basis of the story is that Grace Marks, an Irish immigrant, a young servant working near Kingston, Ontario, was convicted in 1843 of murdering her employer, Thomas Kinnear and his housekeeper-mistress, Nancy Montgomery. While Grace's accomplice, her Irish fellow servant James McDermott, was hanged for his part in the murders, Grace – a girl of about 15 at the time of the trial - was imprisoned until her Pardon in 1872. Some believed Grace was innocent; others thought her evil or insane. Serving a life sentence after a stint in Toronto's lunatic asylum, Grace herself claimed to have no memory of the murders.

When Atwood first wrote about this case in the 1970s (a television play *The Servant Girl*, broadcast by the CBC in 1974; and a stage play *Grace*, which was never produced or published), her texts were based exclusively on Susanna Moodie's account. Susanna Moodie met Grace Marks on two occasions, during visits to the Provincial Penitentiary in Kingston and the Lunatic Asylum in Toronto. The story provided by Moodie is lurid and melodramatic. She didn't like Grace and didn't feel pity for her, regarding her as a manipulative criminal. In her version the "celebrated murderess" incited McDermott to killing both master and housekeeper because she was jealous of Nancy Montgomery, and McDermott agreed in the hope of being accepted as Grace's lover. The description given by Moodie in her *Life in the Clearings* mentions Grace's good looks, as well as her cruel expression: "Her eyes are bright blue, her hair auburn, and her face would be rather handsome were it not for the long curved chin, which gives, as it always does to most persons who have this facial defect, a cunning, cruel expression." (Atwood, *Alias Grace*, 19)

For *Alias Grace*, Atwood researched extensively into Grace Marks's case, and discovered alternative accounts which were significantly different from Moodie's. Atwood commented: "I have not changed any of the known facts, although the written accounts are so contradictory that few facts emerge as unequivocally 'known'." (<http://www.litencyc.com/php/sworks.php?rec=true&UID=6784>)

*Alias Grace* has its origins in the undiscoverable elements of Grace Marks's story. Atwood's Grace is not a stable, consistent character, such as might be found in a Victorian realist novel, but rather a composite of other people's ideas, which comes quite natural, taking into account both a series of contradictory descriptions belonging to various people who came into contact with her and Grace's own hesitations in defining herself and her personality. Grace's character is never fully illuminated in the novel, but Atwood certainly treats her much more sympathetically than she did in her two earlier works, which might point at a better understanding of Grace's case after having considered the available data.

Dr Samuel Bannerling, Atwood's fictional version of a medical expert who had Grace under his care in the Asylum, claims that her madness was a fraud and an imposture. The gendered voice of nineteenth-century science is accurately captured in Dr Bannerling, who dismisses the opinions of several of the female characters on the grounds that they are "hysterical". A younger doctor, Simon Jordan, is more sympathetic to Grace, seeking to understand her mental disorder by using various pre-Freudian devices designed to recover her repressed memories. The complex and potentially misleading operations of memory are explored as Grace, over the course of several weeks, gives a detailed account of her life to Simon, who gradually becomes fond of her. Grace is keenly aware of her own power to manipulate Simon's view of her and lets him know only what she considers fit to be revealed.

The question of Grace's madness or sanity is never resolved in the novel. She appears, at one point, to be possessed by the spirit of her dead fellow servant and confidante, Mary Whitney. This episode is variously interpreted as actual possession, mental delusion, and consummate acting, but none of these competing explanations is finally endorsed by the novel. Actually Mary Whitney is one of the new identities assumed by Grace on Canadian soil, but it is rather a new dimension of her spiritual identity than a new ethnical identity.

Basically a psychological study, *Alias Grace* can also be regarded as a historical novel offering vivid glimpses of both Ireland and Canada in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

As Grace was an Irish immigrant and not a Canadian born woman, her reasons for leaving her native country and her passage are minutely described, parts of her story being probably typical for hundreds of Irish immigrants to Canada in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Her Irish recollections are those of most Irish children forced to live in poverty and then compelled to start a new life in a new country at a rather early age. The problem of Irishness and Irish Protestantism is tackled by the author in a direct manner when she makes Grace speak about her childhood.

I did indeed come from the North of Ireland; though I thought it very unjust when they wrote down that both of the accused were from Ireland by their own admission. That made it sound like a crime, and I don't know that being from Ireland is a crime; although I have often seen it treated as such. But of course my family were Protestants, and that is different. (Atwood, *Alias Grace*, 116)

Here the author underlines the manner in which Irish, and especially Irish Catholics, were treated in North America. According to historian George Potter, the media often stereotyped the Irish in America as being boss-controlled, violent (both among themselves and with those of other ethnic groups), voting illegally, prone to alcoholism, and dependent on street gangs that were often violent or criminal. Potter quotes contemporary newspaper images:

You will scarcely ever find an Irishman dabbling in counterfeit money, or breaking into houses, or swindling; but if there is any fighting to be done, he is very apt to have a hand in it." Even though Pat might "meet with a friend and for love knock him down," noted a Montreal paper, the fighting usually resulted from a sudden excitement, allowing there was "but little 'malice prepense' in his whole composition." ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Irish\\_American#cite\\_note-9](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Irish_American#cite_note-9))

It was common for Irishmen to be discriminated against in social situations. After 1860 the Irish sang songs about signs reading "HELP WANTED - NO IRISH NEED APPLY", which were also referred to as "the NINA signs." The song had a deep impact on the Irish sense of discrimination. The issue of job discrimination against Irish immigrants apparently continued into the 20th century, especially in the USA.

Grace Marks' trial reveals some of these discriminating ideas: *both of the accused were from Ireland* is made to sound like a crime, but unlike McDermott, Grace was not a Catholic. She was not even 100% Irish, as - according to her confession - her mother and aunt were the daughters of an Irish clergyman, they had some education, they could embroider and play the piano but having no money they both married beneath them. "As for my father he was not even Irish. He was an Englishman from the north of it, and why he had come to Ireland was never clear [...] he must have been in some trouble in England [...] Marks may not have been his real name ..." (Atwood, *Alias Grace*, 118)

They were a numerous family, with nine living children, not putting in those who died at an early age, and they were living in poverty, as the situation in the country grew worse and worse from an economical point of view.

"Our village was once larger, but many had moved away, to Belfast to the mills, or across the ocean." (Atwood, *Alias Grace*, 120)

Grace's elder sister left to go into service, her elder brother went to sea on a merchant ship, never to be heard from again. Their father, a former stonemason, got drunk more and more frequently and got the reputation of not being reliable, so there was less and less money in the house. The kids started begging in the harbour for fish, and from time to time their mother's sister came to help them.

Then their father got into some political trouble too and apparently he got involved in some arson and murder cases.

After a time he got into doubtful company, and was seen about with some Orangemen of bad reputation, and there was a house burnt down twenty miles away, of a Protestant gentleman that had taken the side of the Catholics, and another one was found with his head bashed in [...] For a time there was money, but things did not improve. (Atwood, *Alias Grace*, 123)

Most probably the author alludes here to the violent (and sometimes deadly) riots of the Orange Order and the Ribbonmen in the north of Ireland, especially active between 1835 and 1855 and in the Tithe War.

The only solution left for the family is to immigrate to Canada on one of the 'coffin ships' that sailed the Atlantic ridden with disease, short on provisions and long on people.

Atwood did not forget that Ireland has always been a land renowned for its belief in superstitions. Besides hares and rabbits, other animals, as well as birds, provided rich fodder for superstitious country folk. Crows flying directly over a home were also an omen of death. If a bird flew into the house, it was a portent of death.

While preparing to get on board ship, Grace's mother saw three crows and immediately knew she would never set foot on Canadian soil. "I saw three crows sitting in a row on the crossbeam of the mast, and my mother saw them too, and she said it was bad luck, for three crows in a row meant a death." (Atwood, *Alias Grace*, 129)

Indeed, the voyage proved to be a real ordeal. The conditions could but favour diseases of all kinds. "It was everyone together, crammed in like herrings in a box, and no windows or any way of letting in the air, except the hatchways that led down[...] The ship was after all only a sort of slum in motion, though without the gin shops" (Atwood, *Alias Grace*, 130-134)

The only positive aspects of this nightmarish voyage implied a change of attitude towards the religious problem.

There was one good effect of all the suffering. The passengers were Catholic and Protestant mixed, with some English and Scots come over from Liverpool thrown into the bargain, and, if in a state of health they would have squabbled and fought, as there is no love lost. But there is nothing like a strong bout of seasickness to remove the desire for a scrap; and those who would cheerfully have cut each other's throats on land, were often seen holding each other's heads over the scuppers [...] and I have sometimes noted the same thing in prison, as necessity does make strange bedfellows. (Atwood, *Alias Grace*, 134)

When Grace's mother fell ill and then died the only person to be of any help to the children was an elderly Catholic Irish woman called Mrs. Phelan, who was taking her grandchildren to Montreal.

Life in Toronto was hard for what was left of the family, especially because Grace's father kept on drinking and was not able to find a job and soon Grace, aged about 13 at the time, was employed as a servant in the house of a well-to-do family. She was interviewed by the housekeeper who was relieved to find out that the girl was not a Catholic: "This reminded Mrs. Honey to ask if I was a Catholic, as those from Ireland generally were; and if so, she would have nothing to do with me, as the Catholics were superstitious and rebellious Papists who were ruining the country ..." (Atwood, *Alias Grace*, 147)

While working for Mr. Kinnear Grace is taken by Nancy Montgomery to a Presbyterian church, actually the only church in the surroundings. "It was the only church built there so far, and many who were not by right members of that church attended it, as being better than nothing; and it had the only graveyard in town as well, so held a monopoly of the dead as well as of the living." (Atwood, *Alias Grace*, 298)

By this time, Grace's religious ideas had come to be more flexible and tolerant. She realizes that all the fighting and the trouble comes from men and not from God, from people's cold, distant, mean and often hypocritical attitude. "They are hypocrites, they think the church is a cage to keep God in, so he will stay locked up there [...] But God is everywhere, and cannot be caged in, as men can." (Atwood, *Alias Grace*, 300)

Grace's alienation, started the moment she left her country, was deepened by the experiences of several years of service. The loss of her native country, then the loss of her mother, the separation from her father, brothers and sisters (that she was never to see or even hear from again) had a strong impact on the development of her personality.

Psychologically speaking, each person holds a set of assumptions about life, morality and relationships which is supported by a particular cultural context, and each set of assumptions is, to some extent, incompatible with the others. What Atwood insists on in her novel is a kind of postmodern loss of identity.

Without a foundation in truth we are in a position of not really knowing why we do what we do, or why we believe what we believe. It's all a matter of where, and with whom, we happen to be at the moment. Consequently, *we lose a sense of who we are* - we lose a sense of identity - in a world of equally valid, but dissonant, alternatives.

(apud <http://www.xenos.org/ministries/crossroads/dotpsy.htm>)

This is what happens to Grace Marks: in order to replace what she had lost, to reduce the dissonance, she surrenders to the culture of the moment - she exchanges a consistent self-identity for shifting cultural identities. This is why she assumes either Mary Whitney's or Nancy Montgomery's identity to such an extent that for rather long periods of time Grace is but an "alias". She realizes increasingly that who and what she represents is not so much the result of her "personal essence" (real feelings, deep beliefs, and the like), but of how she is constructed by various persons or in various social groups.

The loss of self-identity has been associated with some of the most unsettling findings in the entire psychology research literature. The loss of self-identity isn't only frightening. It can be tragic. Loss of personal identity and truth may lead to devastating problems, such as loss of individual freedom, mental illness, dysfunctional behaviour (apud <http://www.xenos.org/ministries/crossroads/dotpsy.htm>).

Accordingly, Grace ceases being Irish and a Protestant, she even ceases being a normal human being, getting involved in the murders organized by James McDermott.

As for McDermott, he is described by William Harrison in his "Recollections of the Kinnear Tragedy", written for the *Newmarket Era*, 1908 as "... morose and churlish. There was very little to admire in his character... [He] was a smart young fellow, so lithe that he would run along the top of a zig zag fence like a squirrel, or leap over a five-barred gate, rather than open or climb it ..." (Atwood, *Alias Grace*, 213)

He is a Catholic and does not attend the Presbyterian church in Richmond Hill, he just drives the girls there and then returns to pick them up. He sided with the ruling class (Tories) during the Rebellion, at least he boasts as much to Grace:

He'd enlisted again for a soldier, with the Glengarry Light Infantry, which had got such a bad reputation among the farmers, as I knew from Mary Whitney, having burnt a good many farmhouses during the Rebellion, and turned women and children out into the snow, and done worse to them besides, that was never printed in the newspapers. (Atwood, *Alias Grace*, 267)

McDermott had the reputation of a bad egg, but the newspapers did not publicize the crimes of his military outfit.

Grace also is told by McDermott that: "... his family was respectable enough, being from Waterford in the south of Ireland and his father had been a steward [...] he himself had been a scapegrace, and never one to lick the boots of the rich". (Atwood, *Alias Grace*, 266) but she is not quite sure he is telling the truth for he had a strong reputation as a liar and a braggart. His is rebellious but not for noble reasons and his hatred for the English pushes him towards insane gestures:



At these times he would say that he hated all Englishmen, and though Kinnear was a lowland Scot, it was the same thing, they were all thieves and whores, and stealers of land, and ground down the poor wherever they went; and both Mr. Kinnear and Nancy deserved to be knocked on the head and thrown down into the cellar ... (Atwood, *Alias Grace*, 304)

After their unsuccessful attempt at escaping to the USA, McDermott and Grace are trialed and he is sentenced to death, while she is sent to prison. Her life in prison and in the lunatic asylum was marked by the customary treatment of abuse and frustration that female prisoners were subject to.

Although Grace was an accomplished seamstress, the dream of having her own quilt made by her own hands was to wait until her liberation. Quilts in Atwood's novel are miniaturizations of destinies, made up of odds and ends, joys and sorrows. Grace's multiple personality takes the shape of a quilt representing the Tree of Paradise in which she puts together pieces of cloth from the dresses that once belonged to all her "aliases". She tries to summarize her whole life experience and include all her acquired identities, as a token of her coming to peace with all the other selves that had completed her identity, the new identities transplanted on the initial one.

*Alias Grace* uses post-modern narrative techniques to explore the instability of personal identity and historical knowledge. It is a multi-voiced intertextual novel using many sources, embedding genuine letters exchanged by some of the characters, and several other kinds of texts in the narrative. Each of the writers quoted by Atwood offers a particular view of the Kinnear murders or of insanity and crime in the nineteenth century, and the novel mediates between all these differing interpretations, allowing them to comment on one another.

As for Grace's figure, she remains mysterious from beginning to end, a puzzle made up of many contradictory pieces, a portrait that was painted taking into account the descriptions of various people who all saw her in different ways:

I think of all the things that have been written about me – that I am an inhuman female demon, that I am an innocent victim of a blackguard forced against my will and in danger of my own life, that I was too ignorant to know how to act and that to hang me would be judicial murder, that I am fond of animals, that I am very handsome with a brilliant complexion, that I have blue eyes, that I have green eyes, that I have auburn and also brown hair, that I am tall and also not above average height, that I am well and very decently dressed, that I robbed a dead woman to appear so, that I am brisk and smart about my work, that I am of a sullen disposition with a quarrelsome temper, that I have the appearance of a person rather above my humble station, that I am a good girl with a pliable nature and no harm is told of me, that I am cunning and devious, that I am soft in the head and little better than an idiot. And I wonder, how can I be all of these different things at once? (Atwood, *Alias Grace*, 23)

Grace's story is just one of the many telling about the destiny of an Irish immigrant to Canada, a story constructed out of many pieces of evidence but still uncertain. But doesn't history itself mean effacement and mingling of records, isn't it clearly marked down as a semiotic of uncertainty?

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## Le mythe d'Electre réécrit par Marguerite Yourcenar

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**Abstract:** *The French writer M. Yourcenar is known as a novelist. She is equally a great dramatist. Her theatre is very important for understanding the writer's relation with the ancient myth. Rewriting the myth of Electra, M. Yourcenar changes the data of the situation and gives us a new interpretation of this myth. It means that in a very relatif world, everyone must try to remain himself.*

**Mots-clés:** *mythe, théâtre, réécriture, Electre, quête de soi-même*

M. Yourcenar est connue surtout comme romancière. Elle s'est imposée définitivement dans le monde littéraire à la fin de l'année 1951, lors de la parution des *Mémoires d'Hadrien*. La réception critique de cet ouvrage a été très favorable dès le début<sup>1</sup>. Les oeuvres qui ont suivi<sup>2</sup>, n'ont fait qu'augmenter et confirmer sa réputation littéraire, en finissant par lui assurer une place parmi les „Immortels” de l'Académie française le 6 mars 1980.

Peu d'importance a été accordée, en échange, à son oeuvre dramatique qui comprend six pièces: *Rendre à César*, *La Petite Sirène*, *Le dialogue dans le marécage* et trois pièces qui reprennent des mythes antiques: *Electre ou la chute des masques*, *Le mystère d'Alceste* et *Qui n'a pas son Minotaure*. Le théâtre de M. Yourcenar est en fait rarement joué, quoique les mises en scène deviennent de plus en plus nombreuses ces derniers temps. Même s'il est rarement joué, il l'est pourtant, et il l'a été dès le début<sup>3</sup>.

Une preuve évidente de ce traitement inégal de cette composante de l'oeuvre yourcenarienne est aussi le fait qu'elle n'a pas été traduite en roumain, par exemple. On a même qualifié le théâtre comme une „occupation secondaire” de l'écrivain. En réalité, une seule page de lecture ou une seule représentation, si on a la chance d'y assister, suffisent pour se rendre compte, tout de suite, que M. Yourcenar est là, toute entière. A cette révélation vient s'ajouter ses propres remarques sur son oeuvre dramatique. En refusant le qualificatif d'occupation secondaire, elle avoue: „j'ai mis à la fois plus de jeu et autant de vérité que dans mes autres livres, mais sous une forme qui elle-même donne souvent l'impression du jeu”<sup>4</sup>. En parlant avec P. Rosbo de son théâtre, c'est toujours elle qui attache beaucoup d'importance à ce genre littéraire. Trois scènes de la pièce „*Qui n'a pas son Minotaure*” et une du *Mystère d'Alceste* sont vraiment représentatives pour la pensée et pour la vision du monde de l'écrivain: ”En fait, trois des scènes de cette pièce; la scène des condamnés à mort dans la cale du navire, Thésée errant parmi ses mensonges, et Ariane rencontrant Bacchus (Dieu) comptent, avec le dialogue entre Hercule et la Mort dans *Le Mystère d'Alceste*, parmi ce qu'il m'importe le plus d'avoir écrit”<sup>5</sup>.

Le théâtre acquiert une valeur particulière pour la compréhension de la relation de l'écrivain avec le mythe, et par celui-ci son rapport avec l'Antiquité gréco-romaine, qui nourrit en

<sup>1</sup> cf. De Decker, J., Goslar, M., 2002.

<sup>2</sup> Il s'agit de *L'oeuvre Au Noir*, Gallimard, 1963, *Denier du Rêve*, Gallimard, 1971, *Nouvelles Orientales*, Gallimard, 1963, *Anna Soror*, Gallimard, 1981, *Comme l'Eau Qui Coule*, Gallimard, 1982, etc.

<sup>3</sup> v. Bibliographie relative au Théâtre de Marguerite Yourcenar dans *Bulletin de la SIEY*, nr. 7, pp.115-116.

<sup>4</sup> cf. Yourcenar, M., 1980, p. 197.

<sup>5</sup> cf. Rosbo, P. de, 1980, p. 155.

profondeur son écriture. Rémy Poignault a le mieux défini la signification et la présence de l'Antiquité dans l'oeuvre yourcenarienne:

... une Antiquité qui n'est pas figée comme un objet de musée, fût-il exposé de la manière la plus éblouissante, mais qui demeure toujours vivante, renouvelée dans une vision personnelle, et continue à nourrir une réflexion d'actualité. L'Antiquité a encore beaucoup à nous dire; ce n'est pas une collection d'exemples exsangues, une langue morte, mais une matière vive qui permet à qui veut pénétrer cette culture d'approfondir sa perception du monde et de l'homme<sup>6</sup>.

M. Yourcenar apprécie le fait que le mythe offre à l'artiste la possibilité de s'exprimer par un langage universel, surtout parce que, fixé depuis longtemps en ce qui concerne le sujet, le décor, les personnages, la trame, le créateur se permet le luxe de s'occuper de l'essentiel, d'exprimer son point de vue, de laisser vibrer sa sensibilité ou frémir son horreur devant le monde. En réécrivant les mythes antiques, M. Yourcenar s'inscrit à côté d'Anouilh, Giraudoux, Gide, Cocteau, Sartre et d'autres, dans cette tendance, qui s'est manifestée dans la littérature dans la première moitié du XXe siècle, de reprendre et de réécrire les grands mythes gréco-romains. On a assisté à une revalorisation des mythes antiques, mais de quelques-uns seulement. On a beaucoup écrit sur le mythe de Prométhée en exploitant son ambivalence, les écrivains mettant en discussion la condition humaine ne pouvaient en faire abstraction. En repensant la liberté de l'être et le conflit de celui-ci avec la société, ils se sont heurtés aux mythes d'Electre et d'Antigone. L'homme, sans dieu, en proie à soi-même, a fait revivre le Minotaure.

De la légende grecque, M. Yourcenar a choisi le mythe d'Electre, le Minotaure et le mythe du sacrifice de la vie par amour conjugal.

En ce qui concerne le mythe d'Electre, c'est tout d'abord la figure de Clytemnestre qui semble l'avoir attirée. Cette héroïne mythique apparaît pour la première fois dans l'oeuvre de Yourcenar en 1935, dans *Feux*, avec le titre de „Clytemnestre ou le Crime”.

Rémy Poignault, en s'occupant de ce mythe, a remarqué que l'intérêt de l'écrivain s'est déplacé de Clytemnestre vers Electre. Ce qui est vraiment important, c'est „comment l'auteur se réapproprie dans les deux cas le mythe pour le rendre porteur de significations nouvelles...”<sup>7</sup>.

M. Yourcenar s'est retournée vers le mythe parce qu'ainsi elle a retrouvée la Grèce, dont elle rejette l'image formulée au cours du XIXe siècle par Renan, celle d'un monde parfait. Ce qu'elle reconnaît en échange à cette partie du monde c'est la diversité des réponses offertes par ses penseurs à tous les problèmes de l'homme: „la Grèce a su formuler au cours des siècles toutes les vues possibles sur la métaphysique et la vie, le social et le sacré, et offrir aux problèmes de la condition humaine des solutions variées, convergentes ou parallèles, ou souvent diamétralement opposées; entre lesquelles l'esprit peut choisir”<sup>8</sup>. La mythologie grecque a offert ensuite à chaque écrivain la possibilité d'exprimer ses angoisses, ses rêves et ses douleurs. ”De Virgile à Paul Valéry, elle leur a ouvert à tous la porte d'un pays assez vaste pour que chacun y ait sa province, assez désert pour s'y promener nu, peuplé pourtant de fantômes qui chantent”<sup>9</sup>.

La pièce est précédée d'un avant-propos, où l'écrivain fait une analyse détaillée de la destinée du mythe d'Electre et de ses interprétations à travers les siècles. C'est comme si elle avait voulu inventorier tout ce qu'on a fait jusqu'à elle. Elle remarque que les écrivains du XXe n'ont trouvé aucune solution pour les malheurs des Atrides, offrant seulement diverses images pour la haine et cherchant des motivations dans l'instinctif ou l'inconscient. Ensuite elle nous expose ses intentions:

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<sup>6</sup> Poignault, R., 1995, p.17.

<sup>7</sup> Poignault, R., 1991, p. 25.

<sup>8</sup> Yourcenar, M., 1991, «En pèlerin et en étranger», dans *Essais et Mémoires*, Gallimard, Paris, p. 431.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibidem*.

Je me posais à mon tour un problème qu'on peut à peu près énoncer comme il suit: que deviendraient l'indignation, la haine et leur succédané, la vengeance, que le vengeur se plaisait à décorer du beau nom de justice, si la position dans laquelle ce vengeur croyait se trouver par rapport à ses ennemis apparaissait subitement sous un jour nouveau<sup>10</sup>.

En essayant de changer les données de la situation, l'auteur se rend compte que son interprétation devient différente de celles de ses contemporains: Sartre, Giraudoux et O'Neill. De même, elle nous emmène dans un monde régi par d'autres "complexités et rigueurs". En motivant les actes de ses personnages, leur auteur s'est vu obligé finalement de montrer combien ces êtres faits "d'instinct et de volonté" luttent pour rester eux-mêmes. D'ailleurs même le titre nous propose une autre lecture. Dans sa formulation, *Electre ou la chute des masques*, le lecteur est avisé dès le début, qu'il a le choix, c'est à dire, qu'il peut lire *Electre* comme il la connaît, créée par les tragiques grecs, ou il peut pénétrer dans un autre monde ou il s'agit sûrement d'un élément de surprise annoncé par les mots: la chute et le masque.

La signification de cet avant-propos serait selon Rémy-Poignault:

Il semble à lire son „Avant-propos" à *Electre ou la chute des masques*, qu'à l'occasion de cette pièce l'auteur cherche à s'inscrire différemment dans la tradition issue du mythe, en en subvertissant le sens sans tomber dans la dérision. La légende antique lui fournit une trame dont elle peut modifier certaines données pour étudier une question relative au comportement humain<sup>11</sup>.

Dans l'avant-propos, M. Yourcenar reconnaît ce qu'elle doit aux sources antiques: le décor, les personnages et la situation d'*Electre*, qui est mariée à un paysan. Le modèle antique est Euripide. Les raisons de cette inspiration seraient que ce dramaturge nous a transmis la tragédie la plus réaliste, parce qu'il est le premier à avoir ouvert la „boîte de Pandore pleine des richesses inépuisables et puantes du subconscient". Dans „Examen d'*Alceste*", l'avant -propos de la pièce *Le mystère d'Alceste* nous avons une présentation d'Euripide et de l'importance de son œuvre. Il y a là les vraies raisons pour lesquelles le poète grec a été préféré à ses devanciers. Euripide, apprécié plus par la postérité que par ses contemporains, est plus près de nous par l'introspection de l'âme humaine, par la description des ravages de la passion et par son attitude critique envers les divinités de l'Olympe. M. Yourcenar doit avoir apprécié chez ce poète l'attention qu'il a accordée aux gens simples et aux femmes. Elle le considère comme le vrai précurseur du théâtre moderne, le modèle et l'ancêtre de Shaw, de Tchekhov, de Hofmannsthal, de Giraudoux et de tout créateur de drames ou de comédies.

Bien qu'elle déclare que son point de départ est Euripide et qu'elle a très peu emprunté à la tragédie grecque, les exégètes de son œuvre ont découvert plusieurs emprunts à l'antique. En ce qui concerne l'action dramatique R. Poignault souligne les correspondances suivantes: „l'image chtonienne d'Oreste, qui semble provenir des entrailles mêmes de la terre" serait l'équivalent du rêve de Clytemnestre qui apparaît dans les *Choéphores* d'Eschyle ; la prière adressée au père rappelle l'invocation d'Agamemnon de la même pièce ; puis le sang du grand roi qui coule sous la porte fait penser toujours à Eschyle où les flots de sang d'Agamemnon coulent aussi ; *Electre* est appelée par Yourcenar „louve" et dans la vision d'Eschyle elle a un cœur comparé à un loup carnassier. En ce qui concerne les emprunts à Sophocle, le même exégète a découvert: la comparaison d'Agamemnon lorsqu'il tombe à un chêne qu'on abat ; la confrontation d'*Electre* et de sa mère.

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<sup>10</sup> Yourcenar, M., 1971, *Electre ou la chute des masques*, Avant-Propos, Gallimard, Paris, p. 18.

<sup>11</sup> Poignault, R. *Electre ou la chute des masques*, op. cit., p. 340.

A côtés de ces emprunts, il y a bien des différences par rapport aux tragiques grecs. Dans la pièce de Yourcenar on ne retrouve plus de personnages présents dans la tragédie d'Euripide, par exemple: le vieillard, le messager, les Dioscures et les dieux.

Le laboureur mycénien et le chœur antique sont représentés par un personnage, qui, cette fois-ci, a un nom, Théodore. Il joue dans la pièce de Yourcenar un rôle beaucoup plus important que dans la pièce d'Euripide. Ce qui manque encore est: l'attente d'Electre et la scène de reconnaissance de la sœur et du frère. Les autres écarts sont: l'étendue de la scène d'ouverture, le rêve d'Electre, le comportement des deux époux, Electre et Théodore, l'un envers l'autre, la raison de l'inimitié d'Electre envers Egisthe, l'origine de la ruse, la scène entre Electre et Pylade, le rôle de Pylade, le manque de confrontation entre la mère et le fils, le portrait d'Oreste, la mort de Clytemnestre tuée par sa fille par suffocation.

Pierre Brunel considère que les grands moments de la trame dramatique de ce mythe sont: l'attente d'Electre, le retour d'Oreste, le songe de Clytemnestre, la reconnaissance, la ruse, la mort d'Egisthe, la mort de Clytemnestre, la folie d'Oreste et la mort d'Electre.

Ces moments dramatiques ne se retrouvent pas tous dans la pièce de Yourcenar, qui garde: la scène d'ouverture entre Electre et Théodore, l'accueil d'Oreste et de Pylade, la ruse, les confrontation ente Clytemnestre et Electre, le double meurtre et les réactions après la vengeance. L'action dramatique respecte en grandes lignes le mythe antique.

Ce que M. Yourcenar y change, c'est qu'Egisthe devient le père d'Oreste.

L'originalité de la réécriture yourcenarienne consiste surtout dans la construction des personnages et dans la lumière que l'auteur fait tomber sur eux. Théodore et Pylade reçoivent des rôles plus consistants que dans la tragédie antique, parce qu'ils symbolisent des valeurs très chères à leur auteur.

M. Yourcenar emprunte, il est vrai, les personnages, le décor et la trame dramatique à l'antique. Mais ce n'est qu'un moule qu'elle remplit de chair et de sang moderne. Pour exprimer sa vision du monde, le mythe lui offre le prestige et le cadre extérieur. La réécriture nous met face à face avec le désordre, les conflits, les déchirures et les voies du salut moderne.

Tout d'abord, la vie est conçue comme une pièce de théâtre, le monde étant la scène où se joue le spectacle. Le seul personnage qui se rend compte qu'il s'agit d'un spectacle, c'est Pylade qui demande dès son apparition sur scène: «Qui se trompe, ou qui trompe-t-on ici, Electre ?» Dans la deuxième scène, Pylade reconnaît le rôle de metteur en scène d'Electre: „c'est qu'immobile à ton poste tu a secrété lentement les fils de cette nécessité» (p. 40). Dans la deuxième partie, toujours dans la scène avec le même numéro, après avoir étranglé Clytemnestre, Pylade compare la tête de la morte avec «un spectacle de guignol». Dans la scène suivante de la même partie, lorsque Electre doit accueillir Egisthe, en avouant son impossibilité d'esquisser un sourire, le même demande: «Les acteurs sont-ils à leurs places?» Les personnages portent tous des masques. Le vrai problème se pose en ce qui concerne le masque. Qu'est-ce qu'un masque ? Un masque est confectionné de l'image qu'ont les autre de nous mêmes, d'une part, et d'autre part, de l'idée que nous avons de nous-mêmes, de la cécité qui nous caractérise lorsque nous nous jugeons. Toute la pièce est construite sur deux registres: le premier, c'est celui du vrai visage et le deuxième, celui du masque, du faux visage. Prenons par exemple Electre: dans l'opinion de Théodore, elle est une innocente victime de l'injustice „je t'ai vue bêchant dans le jardin sous la pluie, voûtée comme une vieille, grise et noire comme une femme qui creuse une tombe. Tes mains crevassées saignaient ; tu portais sur le dos une robe dont une servante n'aurait pas voulu. Et c'est alors que j'ai compris l'injustice” (p. 29). Pour lui, Electre est „petite”, „douce”. Oreste, lui aussi, s'attendrit sur les conditions de vie de sa sœur: „Mais comment as-tu fait pour y vivre, pour y manger tes repas, pour te pencher sur le

miroir en tressant tes cheveux...je comprends maintenant d'où te vient ce teint brun de paysanne, et cette voix douce, fêlée, rauque fruit des hivers sans feu... Et cette âpreté qui m'attristait déjà durant tes visites à Argos, et qui n'est pas due qu'au malheur...Elle sent le fauve et la mort, ta maison, pauvre sœur, comme une trappe et comme une tombe ?" Egisthe et Clytemnestre croyaient Electre «brisée». D'ailleurs Clytemnestre s'adressant à Electre emploie l'adjectif *pauvre*. Le seul qui entrevoit le vrai visage d'Electre est toujours le seul personnage lucide de la pièce, Pylade, qui est pourtant surpris quelques fois. Le vrai visage d'Electre a des traits virils, elle est, en fait, la plus forte de tous les personnages, sous la souffrance imposée et acceptée couve le braisier de la haine et de la vengeance.

C'est un être passionné, elle vit sa haine dans toute son ampleur, elle sait extraire du milieu où elle vit la nourriture pour sa haine: „tout ici m'est un reproche, les trous de tes habits, et les yeux des vaches malades." Elle vit comme dans une tombe, dont elle „a décoré les murs de grandes fresques rouges", comme pour ne pas oublier. Elle vit enfermée dans sa haine comme dans une prison. Elle fait partie de la race des révoltés, des gens qui luttent et qui sacrifient tout à leur passion. Elle transformera Théodore en une victime, malgré l'aide qu'il lui a offerte, malgré l'amour et la compréhension qu'il lui a témoignés. C'est aussi une femme très lucide, elle évalue son mariage et expose à Théodore les raisons de leur foncière incompatibilité. Elle a régi toute seule l'accomplissement de l'acte de vengeance et y implique aussi son frère. Elle est consciente de sa force en s'appelant elle-même „Furie". Clytemnestre est le deuxième personnage qui nous aide à découvrir le vrai visage d'Electre. Elle l'appelle „bête flaireuse", „figure de louve" et Egisthe voit en elle „une vipère". Clytemnestre nous révèle la curiosité nubile de sa fille où se cachait le désir d'être aimée d'Egisthe comme sa mère. Electre est ce qu'elle est parce qu'elle a tout vu, parce qu'elle a participé au crime comme témoin, un souvenir auquel elle ne peut plus échapper, malgré son désir ardent de pureté. La messe noire célébrée par le trio Electre, Pylade et Oreste et qui commence dans la scène nr. 4 avec la prière adressée au père a la signification d'une purification demandée par les déesses du sang, Electre expliquant qu'il s'agit surtout des liens de sang.

Finalement, Electre la victime s'avère être le bourreau. Dans la pièce de Yourcenar, où Oreste déclare que nous vivons dans un monde où règne le désordre et la confusion, tout peut se transformer en autre chose que ce qu'il savait être. C'est pourquoi, Oreste découvre qu'au lieu d'être un exilé, il était en fait „un enfant promené de cage en cage", Clytemnestre et Egisthe, le couple criminel, deviennent les défenseurs d'un amour innocent et du fruit de celui-ci. D'ennemi Egisthe devient protecteur, parce qu'il est le père d'Oreste. Le personnage qui incarne le plus beau sentiment humain, l'amitié, s'avère à n'être qu'un banal entremetteur. Qu'est-ce qui reste à l'homme dans un monde où tout est relatif ? Où „rien ne dure sans changer ?" La réponse de M. Yourcenar serait un acharnement acerbe à rester soi-même, c'est pourquoi Oreste ne peut pas tuer sa mère. C'est comme s'il voulait tuer sa propre enfance, parce qu'il est plus attaché aux souvenirs que lui fournit cette femme, qu'à elle-même, être distinct et singulier, qu'il ne connaît pas d'ailleurs. C'est pourquoi, il choisit de rester fidèle à son rôle, celui de tuer Egisthe, même s'il découvre que de la sorte il tue son père. Il agit poussé par la même nécessité de rester ce qu'il est, le fruit des événements, l'enfant du temps, plutôt que celui d'Egisthe et de Clytemnestre.

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## Mocking the Monk with Damian Stănoiu

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**Résumé:** *Damian Stănoiu, ancien moine devenu écrivain, est très intéressant, même savoureux, quand il dévoile les tentations auxquelles les moines se confrontent, limités par les canons de la vie monacale, qu'ils transgressent après de grandes hésitations, en se soumettant après cela à des mortifications, avec l'espoir d'être sauvés, après la mort sinon sur la terre. Il arrive souvent que les moines miment seulement une conduite calme, en invoquant les textes sacrés qui ne condamnent ni les vivres ni le vin. La pratique du jeûne surtout provoque des souffrances affreuses, mais aussi des voluptés. En connaissant de sa propre expérience cette manière de vivre et ayant une culture ecclésiastique riche, le prosateur nous familiarise avec le monde innocent des moines, qui luttent de toutes leurs forces contre les tentations de la terre qu'ils ont quittée. Cet univers clos est regardé avec humour et présenté dans un langage approprié. Néanmoins, l'auteur passe à la satire en exagérant les habitudes des héros devenus des délinquants communs.*

**Key-words:** *monks, nuns, mockery, caricatures*

Damian Stănoiu, former monk, who later became a writer, is interesting, even charming when he tells about the earthy temptations of the monks, so enclosed by the monastic canons which they break after many hesitations, forcing different kinds of mortifying on themselves afterwards, convinced that they could be forgiven, if not on earth, at least after death. The monks often mime the permitted behaviour, calling upon the sacred texts which do not forbid either food or wine. The practice of fasting causes awful agony, but expiatory pleasures too, according to the temptations. Being familiar with this way of living from his own experience and having a vast ecclesiastical knowledge, the writer introduces us in the innocent life of the monks who fight very hard against the earthy attractions, which they left off. This closed universe is regarded with humor and exposed in an adequate language. The author gets to satire, emphasizing the heroes' manners, who became common delinquents.

Paulin Lecca used to say about this author: "If Damian Stănoiu had had the wit of repentance, he would have painted – like Dostoievski or Gala Galaction – the positive characters of our Orthodox monasticism."<sup>1</sup> Stănoiu published 14 such volumes: *Monks and Temptations, The troubles of Father Ghedeon, The Nuns' Confessor, Codin's Demon, The Penitence of the Abbot, The Abbess' Election, St. Anton's Novices, Eros in the Abbey, One Day of a Bishop's Life, The Case of Nun Varvara, Storm in Hell, Priest without Will, Satan's Game, and An Investigation.*

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<sup>1</sup> Lecca, Paulin, *De la moarte la viață*, Ed. Paideia, București, 1975, p. 87, (my own translation).

The novel *The Case of Nun Varvara* contains a real gallery of characters which all begin to move when a nun discovers a hanged Tom cat at the door of her cell, triggering a great uproar which troubles the peace of the Țânțăreni abbey.

Nun Varvara, who discovers the horrid murder “is over 60 and either beautiful. She even misses an eye and is lame from her hip, and never for about 50 years since she’s been living at Țânțăreni, gave any reason for passion or madness...”<sup>2</sup> Nun Leonida, her neighbour, but without being her friend, who is peeping the scene from behind the curtains, hopes from the bottom of her soul to see her sister in Christ “fighting at least with a wolf if not with a looter.”<sup>3</sup>

The abbey is ruled by nun Epiharia who, because she only drinks sheep milk mixed with goat milk, is supposed to have taken the nature of the two animals: “here you can see her mild like a creature from the flock, here she has an attitude that upsets the nuns from the committee, and frightens those simple and not daring nuns.”<sup>4</sup> Because she doesn’t want to read from the books written in Cyrillic letters, she is accused of heresy and, taught by sister Lămâița, her novice, gets sick whenever she wants to escape undesirable duties. Against all these, the abbess has a remarkable soul, and her sorrow

doesn’t lower the roof of her mouth. As soon as she stopped talking, no trace of it remained. This is because, the face of her all pious, ugly even on the sunny weather, but with an ugliness that wouldn’t move one away, is writhing as if she was hiding some devilish soul. Her eyes rise up towards the eyebrows, her chin is looking for quarrel, her tongue muddles through the holes left instead of her fallen teeth, and the words are coming out as if from a broken grinder.<sup>5</sup>

Nun Epiharia doesn’t know how to tell jokes but she likes to listen to them and to laugh at them, and against all these, she has another gifts given by God which help her become loved and close.

She is mild, hardly ever angry or quick tempered, and she listens with endless patience any complain. She calms down people with a word or gesture, and she is extremely tolerant and forgiving with the little misbehaviors of those weak and those who believe of themselves to be strong. She has the look of the dearest of the grannies ever on earth ... And even when she is angry, she’s nice. Because she blusters only with her tongue and lips, her eyes always staying kind and her heart forever warm and patient.<sup>6</sup>

And yet, with all the love and patience that surrounds herself, sister Epiharia isn’t short of enemies. The most feared is sister Epraxia, on her laic name Katherine, tireless hunter of the prior’s

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<sup>2</sup> Stănoiu, Damian, *Cazul maicii Varvara*, Ed. Porus, București, 1991, p. 97, (my own translation).

<sup>3</sup> Idem; p 9, (my own translation).

<sup>4</sup> Idem, ibidem, p. 32, (my own translation).

<sup>5</sup> Idem, ibidem, p. 107, (my own translation).

<sup>6</sup> Stănoiu, Damian, *Cazul maicii Varvara*, Ed. Porus, București, 1991, p.126, (my own translation).

chair who, being younger and sounder, tramps, dripping venom and poison from the lips instead of words. Sister Epraxia

has the age of all nuns who passed thirty but haven't got yet fifty. You can give her thirty-two, you can give her forty-nine, sure you're close to the truth, but still so sure you're very far. With the same certainty and uncertainty, the birth certificate gives her forty-six. She is tall, almost thick, brunette, big eyed and with bushy eyebrows, and she has from God a voice that is entirely inappropriate to her courageous look: shrill and sharpened. Seems like a coachman talking from his box, or a little boy whose voice hasn't changed yet. ...She lacks however the youth of her mind,

and therefore she can not use quotations from Scripture. For this reason, sister Epraxia hates sister Sevastia, who is very witty, but who finds it too difficult to gather the words and to bind them together. Of all the nuns in the convent, this one is always gloomy, being concerned only with the holy writings.

Her dry and hollow-cheeked face, her forehead, rippled like a sponge, her nose bent and translucent, her eyes wondering in other sights without any joy or movement in their lights, shows the monk's endless struggle with Satan, but also in the eternal question on the end of the final battle. She only speaks verses from the Scripture and odd fragments from the teachings of the Holly Fathers."<sup>7</sup>

Although her words are not convincing, she succeeds in terrifying her interlocutors.

Total opposite to sister Sevastia is sister Serafima who doesn't miss any opportunity to laugh or to make the other ones laugh. "She is eighty-four, of which seventy-two in Țânțăreni, and she hasn't reached the bottom of the bag of anecdotes. Being also a little lisping and always full of a catching, healthy laugh, she raises good humor only by opening her mouth and only by laughing by herself<sup>8</sup>.

In the same good mood is mother Xenia , the treasurer.

Fat as a watermelon, as she feeds herself well, she walks a lot in fresh air, and never complains of the burdens she faces in obeying his holiness, when she laughs – and she laughs at anything – her belly dances and tears well up in her eyes. She doesn't have sister Serafima's inexhaustible bag, but when she tosses one out, when you least expect it,, and especially when she shouldn't do it, it's something that is not forgotten for a long time.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>Idem, *ibidem*, p.24, (my own translation).

<sup>8</sup> Idem, *ibidem*, 1991, p.124. (my own translation).

<sup>9</sup> Stănoiu, Damian, *Cazul maicii Varvara*, Ed. Porus, București, 1991, p.125. (my own translation).

Mother Trifilia, with her ever mischievous spirit,

pulls pranks for a laugh, and not to burden her mind. Only when her jokes end up hurting someone, something not that rare, she repents and asks for forgiveness. The next moment, if she has the chance, she'll plan another comedy more precipitous than the last... From a simple, private reproof to banishment, Her Reverence suffered all that is written in the canons and the laws for the disobedient monks. But it was all in vain. No one and nothing can keep her from the devilish and at the same time childish pleasure of making fun of everyone and of all laws. She plays tricks that make you stand and make the sign of the cross as to how she dared and how did she think of it, with the world's most innocent look. When she's searched and lectured, she opens her eyes wide, or lowers them, surprised and dismayed that she's not allowed to play. Like a child more frolicsome than others is allowed to do.<sup>10</sup>

In all this crowd of nuns, and above all, rises sister Lămâița, the second novice and the abbess' secretary, who ravel and unravel all the tangled threads in the monastery and is actually controlling the abbess' life as well as the monastery's affairs. She's a twenty year old girl, of whom it is said that she is too smart and who "thanks God for having enough brains to plan many things and carry them out successfully. Her advice is sought and listened to, like that of an elder with a toiled life."<sup>11</sup> The abbess does nothing without consulting sister Lămâița, and that is why it is said that the latter is in fact the real abbess, and mother Epiharia is Lămâița's novice. She is „pious and obedient. She's doesn't even dress more lavishly than the other sisters, nor does she stuff herself at the lectern without the fastidious ones' blessing, nor quarrel with sister Ierofteia, the other novice at the priorship. It's understood then how much she's loved, and not gossiped or hated at all."<sup>12</sup> But, besides all these qualities, sister Lămâița has her flaws, one of them being curiosity.

Having detective skills, she lets some things get tangled up, sometimes on purpose, only to put her mind to the test unraveling them, reason for which the abbess tells her that her place would be in the police and not in the monastery.

The novel *St. Anton's Novices* presents two main characters His Reverence Ghervasie, always jolly and playful, and his friend and neighbour Ghelasie. Father Ghelasie is quiet and very well organized and was born under the same sign as Ghervasie, but the last one uses to step aside the way and is too stubborn.

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<sup>10</sup> Idem, ibidem, p. 54 , (my own translation).

<sup>11</sup> Idem, ibidem, p. 104 (my own translation).

<sup>12</sup> Stănoiu, Damian, *Cazul maicii Varvara*, Ed. Porus, București, 1991, p.104. (my own translation).

Both of them are kind, with pure hearts, highly initiated in all that belongs to the Church, and very hardworking in their households. The fact that Ghervasie drinks a little more, wouldn't be a problem, because Ghelasie has his part too...he sleeps heavily. But they are all the same in what concerns food, taste and quantity. All the fats though, lay on Ghervasie's body while Ghelasie stays always thin, without suffering of anything, neither of lack of sleep, nor of bad heart. ... As for their age, Ghervasie's ticket is a little older. Only with two months and twenty six days,<sup>13</sup>

Ghervasie's laic name is Gheorghe and Ghelasie's is Grigore. Ghervasie was born in Vâlcea county, near Drăgășani, and Ghelasie in Olt county, near Drăgășani too.

Ghervasie entered the monastery at the age of twenty six, after a broken marriage. Ghelasie was brought by an uncle when he was sixteen. After his uncle's death, hieromonk and confessor, he inherited his cell, in which Ghervasie will live later on.

Besides these two main characters, a real gallery of other representatives of this class are depicted.

Arsenie, the ecclesiarch, "is tall and fat. His snubbed nose, with a little cut on one of its nostrils, seems not to be placed in the middle of his face which is wrinkled by red veins. His eyes are small and colorless, his eyebrows- long and bushy, and his beard reddish and pretty short"

Porfirie, the archimandrite, former abbot and high official of a saint episcopate, "has a wrinkled, purple face, long, rare, white- yellowish beard, and a sharp nose. Seeing him like this... one might think that he's either saint or drunk."<sup>14</sup>

Daniil, the pious, the cashier of the monastery, "is tall and thin, with big eyes, wrinkled by red veins, with a beard that's more bluish than white, long, thick and uselessly straight."<sup>15</sup> Another monk who doesn't know his age, who is neither young nor old, is father Pimen, the chef. He is skinny, dirty and hairy, "qualities" that no one would like to see in a cook. The author wonders if he has ever washed himself, but he strongly doubts that his face could ever be bleached. The monk who is in charge with all the barrets and camps, is a short man skinny and pale as if he has never tasted the wine in his life.

In the short story entitled *Monks and Temptations* the protagonists are Artemie and Averchie, two brothers living in the same monastery in close cells. They both entered the monastery

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<sup>13</sup> Stănoiu, Damian, *Ucenicii Sf. Antonie*, Ed. Porus, București, 1991, p. 197, (my own translation).

<sup>14</sup> Stănoiu, Damian, *Ucenicii Sf. Antonie*, Ed. Porus, București, 1991, p. 176, (my own translation).

<sup>15</sup> Idem, p. 176, (my own translation).

at an early age. Artemie, who is now forty three, is hieromonk, while Averchie, who is a simple monk is soon turning fifty.

Their whole characterization is a long chain of comparisons, which would make one think that they are ill-matched, although they complete each other perfectly. Artemie is pretty tall, brown eyes and long, chestnut hair, wide forehead and thick beard. Averchie is short, has tangled hair and beard and green, keen eyes. Artemie knows how to read, while Averchie, who doesn't, just listens to the other. Artemie knows how to fish and has all the necessary things to do it, but he doesn't have any clue of how to cook it. Averchie is afraid of water, but is a wonderful cook. Artemie is the shoemaker, while Averchie is the tailor. The first one likes wine, while the second likes plum brandy and so on.

The novella *Nun Natalia Had a Quarrel with Nun Vitalia*, the two nuns that hold the line are sisters not only in Christ, but in their behaviour too. They are both young, kind hardworking and skillful but unfortunately, god gave them both very little brain. They are both singing in the monastery's choir completing each other. Of course Satan is present here too, instigating the young sisters against one another.

The way in which the whole episode is described, is proper for the way in which Stănoiu wrote all his works. His writing style is florid and poetic, with a strong comic touch and many of his character's names provide the reader with a hint as to the roles played in advancing the storyline.

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## La Roumanie et l'Europe chez Dumitru Tsepeneag

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**Abstract:** *Our study intends to present some highlights of post-revolutionary Romania, together with aspects of the immigrants' life in the West. The focus is on the image of a decadent Occident, ethnocentric and hostile, in a way that bespeaks D. Tsepeneag's deconstruction of the West as El Dorado.*

**Mots-clés:** *Occident, terre natale, exil, immigrant, racisme, ethnocentrisme, désenchantement, identité, isolement, liberté.*

Fondateur du courant onirique en Roumanie vers 1966, boursier à Paris entre 1970-1972, critique acharné du régime politique installé dans le pays par l'adoption des fameuses „thèses de juillet” (1971) et de la société totalitaire, l'écrivain D. Tsepeneag a eu un destin particulier. Son combat politique contre le régime communiste de Bucarest, pendant son séjour en France, provoque la réaction dure des autorités ; par un décret présidentiel il est déchu de sa nationalité roumaine, ses livres en Roumanie sont mis à l'index et la communication avec ses lecteurs roumains est coupée. Après une longue période de silence, l'écrivain cherche un autre „auditoire” dans l'espace de l'exil où il veut reconstruire une nouvelle identité culturelle. Il s'exerce à écrire d'abord un roman bilingue, *Le mot sablier*, roman unique comme écriture. Le début en est écrit en roumain, puis le passage se fait petit à petit du roumain vers le français qui devient dominant à la fin. Après cet

exercice intellectuel surprenant, Tsepeneag continue à écrire seulement en français ; il s'agit de deux romans, *Roman de gare* et *Pigeon vole*, qui forment, avec le premier, l'étape française de son oeuvre.

La Révolution roumaine de décembre 1989 marque le début d'une nouvelle étape dans sa vie. Après la chute du dictateur Ceaușescu, il revient en Roumanie accompagnant en qualité d'interprète une équipe d'aide humanitaire envoyée par l'organisation „Médecins sans frontières”. C'est de cet élément autobiographique qu'il est parti pour écrire son roman *Hôtel Europa* qui puise dans la réalité roumaine et européenne extrêmement contemporaine d'après la chute du Mur de Berlin. Cette oeuvre marque aussi la rentrée de son auteur à la littérature roumaine après une longue interdiction en Roumanie. Interviewé par le critique littéraire roumain Ion Simuț sur son statut d'écrivain bilingue, Tsepeneag souligne l'idée qu'après 1989, sa relation avec la Roumanie n'est plus politique, elle est devenue fiction dès le moment où il a rompu avec le français (même si *Pigeon vole* est paru en 1989) se mettant à écrire en roumain et s'impliquant aussi dans la vie littéraire en Roumanie. Ion Simuț apprécie que *Hôtel Europa* et *Pont des Arts* peuvent être considérés romans de l'émigration.<sup>1</sup> En effet, on y découvre une affluence de personnages, des émigrants roumains à travers l'Europe, à la recherche d'une vie meilleure à l'Ouest.

Notre ambition est de présenter leur périple à travers l'Europe tout en relevant des images de la Roumanie post-révolutionnaire et des séquences de leur vie dans l'espace occidental, décevant et hostile.

C'est un truisme le fait que l'Occident soit indissociable d'une culture du pouvoir, de la richesse et de la suprématie, ce qui a créé le mythe de l'Ouest comme Eldorado, comme la Terre Promise.

Mais qu'est-ce que l'Occident ? En quoi consiste sa supériorité ? La définition généralement connue réunit sous ce nom le groupe de pays de l'Europe de l'Ouest et de l'Amérique du Nord qui dominent par leur économie, par leur politique et par leur morale.

Dans son ouvrage *Qu'est-ce que l'Occident ?*, Philippe Nemo en fait une vaste description que nous nous contentons de résumer pour comprendre en quoi consiste le mirage de ce monde

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<sup>1</sup> Simuț, I., « Interviu cu D. Tsepeneag », in *Familia*, n°9/2000.



convoité depuis toujours. Il se définit génériquement par l'Etat de droit, la démocratie, la liberté intellectuelle, la rationalité critique et par une économie de liberté fondée sur la propriété privée. Son contenu trouve ses racines dans cinq événements essentiels: le miracle grec, l'apport romain, l'éthique et l'eschatologie bibliques, la révolution papale entre XIe et XIIIe siècles et l'avènement des démocraties libérales.

Si tous ses personnages du roman *Hôtel Europa* se dirigent vers l'Ouest, l'écrivain D. Tsepeneag fait un mouvement inverse vers l'Est de sa langue et de sa mémoire, pour revoir ses endroits après une absence de plus de quinze ans. C'est ce qu'il avoue dans une interview accordée à Corina Mersch: „Je suis allé à Bucarest pour charger ma mémoire, comme si j'avais besoin de chercher des personnages. Ion, Ana, Maria, Petrisor et les autres, ce sont les jeunes que j'ai connus là-bas et pour qui j'ai essayé d'imaginer une destinée.»<sup>2</sup> Il est connu le rôle des jeunes intellectuels roumains dans les événements de 1989 quand ils ont participé directement aux manifestations au risque de leur vie. En juin 1990, ils ont été de nouveau au premier rang, pendant plus de trois mois, dans toutes les actions organisées Place de l'Université contre ceux qui avaient confisqué la Révolution.

Dans une discussion avec sa femme, le narrateur-écrivain d'*Hôtel Europa* évoque des circonstances de la réalité mouvementée en Roumanie, mettant en scène les actions des étudiants:

Le gouvernement est déjà contesté; il y a sans arrêt des manifestations. Depuis quelques jours, les étudiants occupent la Place de l'Université...Le soir, ce sont des meetings, des discours anticommunistes, on chante en chœur, on scandé toutes sortes de slogans, par exemple plutôt anarchiste que communiste non, attends, je me plante. Plutôt golan c'est-à-dire voyou...J'ai oublié de te dire que le chef du gouvernement provisoire a traité les manifestants de golans.<sup>3</sup>

Après la minériade de juin 1990, lorsque les mineurs ont réprimé les étudiants, ont saccagé les salles de cours et les laboratoires de l'Université, faisant le jeu des dirigeants politiques, les jeunes se sentent trahis, déçus; ils décident alors d'émigrer vers l'Ouest.

Parmi eux se remarque l'étudiant en troisième année de français, Ion Valea qui se situe dans le centre d'attention de l'écrivain. Par quoi se remarque-t-il ? Par sa structure et par son comportement, Ion illustre ce que Sorin Alexandrescu appelle un „type déviant”<sup>4</sup> faisant allusion à l'émigrant et à l'immigrant qui se montre différent tant dans son pays qu'à l'étranger par tout ce qu'il fait. Sceptique par sa nature, de sorte que ses collègues lui en voulaient, disant qu'il portait la poisse, attiré par le mirage de l'Occident, Ion s'impose par son désir ardent de s'enfuir et de se diriger vers Paris. Il veut être le premier Roumain ayant un passeport et les visas, le premier signe officiel de la liberté de voyager:

Et il s'agit d'une décision grave n'est-ce pas ? “ lui demande son copain Tiberius Ludosan.- Moi, je me suis décidé brusquement. – Comment ça, tu t'es décidé brusquement ? Tu n'as pas demandé d'abord un passeport?...-J'ai couru faire la demande dès janvier. J'étais l'un des premiers, je te jure: J'espérais même être le premier, comme ça pour crâner. Je me suis levé à cinq heures du matin...<sup>5</sup>

D'ailleurs, Ion se fait mieux connaître par une lettre qu'il envoie au narrateur-écrivain et qui est reproduite intégralement dans *Hôtel Europa*, même si elle est rhétorique et mélodramatique. Il présente en détails la grande „empoignade” dans la Place de l'Université entre les grévistes d'un côté, les flics et les mineurs de l'autre, évoquant aussi des scènes cruelles:

Ils ont fait un vrai massacre, les mineurs. Je les ai vus de mes yeux assommer un étudiant en géologie. Il saignait comme un porc égorgé. Des hommes sont venus et l'ont jeté dans un camion

<sup>2</sup> Interview de D. Tsepeneag par Corina Mersch in *Bücher-Livres*, n° 12 /20 décembre, 1996.

<sup>3</sup> Tsepeneag, D., 1996, *Hôtel Europa*, Ed. P.O.L., Paris, p. 76.

<sup>4</sup> Alexandrescu, S., 2000, *Identitate in ruptură*, Ed. Univers, Bucuresti, p. 295.

<sup>5</sup>Tsepeneag, D., *Hôtel Europa*, p. 122.

comme un sac de patates, par dessus d'autres corps inertes. J'avais reçu un coup de gourdin dans le dos et quelques coups de poing dans la nuque...<sup>6</sup>

Révolté contre les actes des mineurs mais aussi contre l'attitude d'une partie de la population qui applaudissait leurs faits, Ion déclenche une véritable attaque contre la mentalité de son peuple, contre son „mioritisme”:

Pendant les journées de décembre, je me prenais à espérer que notre mioritisme, s'il n'était pas un mot creux inventé par des intellectuels enlisés dans la philosophie de la culture ou ils cherchaient désespérément une identité plus large que l'identité strictement individuelle, s'il exprimait donc une réalité nationale ou éthique, eh bien, qu'il aurait des effets bénéfiques au contact du régime arbitraire, imposé par le communisme de type russe...La mamaliga explosait ! Des gens se sont sacrifiés en décembre ! Car si le mioritisme signifie entre autres la négation de l'instinct vital ou peut-être même l'indifférence face à la mort, pourquoi ne pas nous sacrifier pour une cause d'autant plus noble qu'elle est celle de la nation toute entière aspirant à la liberté ? En décembre la plupart des gens sont restés dans leurs pantoufles devant la télé. Et quand ils sont enfin descendus dans la rue, ils venaient pour des réjouissances, pas pour se sacrifier !<sup>7</sup>

Déçu pour s'être trompé, Ion arrive à éprouver une véritable haine contre son peuple, contre „ce pays pitoyable et gouailleur à la fois” et prend la décision de le quitter: „Je ne peux plus, je ne veux plus rester dans ce pays. Je vais partir n'importe où.”<sup>8</sup> Pour illustrer davantage son envie de partir, l'écrivain lui donne un nom suggestif: il l'appelle Ion Valea. „Valea”, comme nom de famille, renvoie en français au nom commun „vallée” qui fait allusion à son paysage natal, l'espace mioritique, cette alternance de vallées et de plaines. Mais en même temps on pourrait l'associer à la forme impérative du roumain populaire „valea !” et par la suite au verbe français „décamper” comme le suggère N. Bârna dans la préface de l'édition roumaine du roman *Hotel Europa*.

Si, dans la majorité des cas, les raisons des émigrants de quitter leur pays natal sont de nature économique, Ion fait figure à part, adhérant à „une nouvelle mode” apparue chez les intellectuels roumains de l'entre-deux guerres. Mircea Eliade l'appelle le phénomène “ne plus être Roumain” et l'expose dans son livre *Océanographie*. Selon lui, les jeunes qui adhèrent à cette mode regrettent tout simplement d'être Roumains et préfèrent être n'importe quoi d'autre: „Tout, sauf Roumains. Ils en ont par-dessus la tête de leur destin: être et rester Roumains. Alors ils cherchent toutes sortes d'arguments (historiques, philosophiques, littéraires) pour prouver que les Roumains forment une race incapable de penser, d'être héroïques, de philosopher, de créer dans les arts.”<sup>9</sup>

Ces propos rappellent ceux d'un autre grand exilé roumain, E. Cioran qui, paradoxalement, d'un grand amour pour son peuple et pour son pays est arrivé à le haïr pour l'indolence, la passivité, le scepticisme, la religiosité mineure pour n'énumérer ici que certains traits négatifs de l'identité roumaine à côté de beaucoup d'autres que Cioran expose dans *Transfiguration de la Roumanie*.

Pour les héros de Tsepeneag la France et surtout Paris constituent le bout de leur périple occidental. Comme nous l'avons déjà montré, D. Tsepeneag s'est enfui à Paris tout comme d'autres grands exilés roumains – Brâncusi, Tzara, Ionesco, Cioran- parce que cette ville a symbolisé pour les intellectuels roumains la certitude ; pour l'homme politique ou pour l'artiste en danger, ce fut le centre du monde où tout pouvait commencer et recommencer. „C'est là-bas que les choses se passent” (n.t.) comme le dit Tsepeneag dans son journal<sup>10</sup> parce qu'à Paris les échos s'entendent vite quels que soient le domaine et l'endroit d'où ils viennent. Le choix de la France comme terre d'accueil par beaucoup d'intellectuels roumains s'est basé aussi sur l'origine latine commune du français et du roumain de même que sur la longue tradition des rapports culturels et historiques entre les deux pays. Un grand nombre de jeunes Roumains se sont rendus à Paris pour étudier et

<sup>6</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 92.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 93.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 93.

<sup>9</sup> Eliade, M., 1993, « Ne plus être Roumain », in *Océanographie*, Ed. de l'Herne, Paris, p. 163.

<sup>10</sup> Tsepeneag, D., 1993, « Acolo se petrec lucrurile », *Un român la Paris ( pagini de jurnal)*, Dacia, Cluj-Napoca, 1993, p. 58.

c'est là-bas qu'ils se sont organisés politiquement pour promouvoir dans leur pays natal les idéaux révolutionnaires de 1848. Pendant plus d'un siècle et demi le sentiment de francophilie s'enracine parmi les Roumains de sorte qu'un grand nombre d'entre eux ont choisi l'emploi du français et de la culture française comme un garant d'une formation intellectuelle complète et fidèle aux principes de liberté promus par la France.

En vertu des mêmes idées, la majorité des jeunes intellectuels du roman *Hôtel Europa* de D. Tsepeneag traversent les pays de l'Occident pour s'arrêter à Paris. Le personnage Fuhrmann, un vieil allemand, le type de l'immigrant intégré dans la société de l'Ouest, s'avère capable d'analyser l'exode des jeunes après la chute du mur de Berlin et éprouve des sentiments contradictoires à leur égard:

Fuhrmann prenait en pitié ces malheureux qui avaient quitté famille et amis, langue et coutumes, pour partir à l'aveuglette. Que voulaient-ils, que cherchaient-ils ? S'il y avait un désespoir authentique dans leur exode vers le mirifique Occident, beaucoup s'illusionnaient bêtement... Lorsque les émigrés sont des jeunes attirés par l'aventure, curieux d'approcher ce qu'ils ont vu au cinéma, passe encore. Les jeunes doivent bouger, découvrir d'autres lieux que celui où ils sont nés, contempler d'autres paysages, connaître d'autres coutumes. Comme on dit, les voyages forment la jeunesse...<sup>11</sup>

En effet, tous ces jeunes rêvent à l'Eldorado, ils se sont tous fait des illusions comme le montre l'image ironique que l'ancienne étudiante roumaine Ana s'en fait et qui est reproduite dans *Pont des Arts*: „J'ai quitté le pays comme tant d'autres, attirée par les alouettes que nous croyions tous voir, en Roumanie, tomber rôties dans le bec des Européens.”<sup>12</sup> Leur itinéraire entrecroise celui du héros principal, Ion Valea qui avait commencé son périple à travers l'Europe dans l'espoir „d'une vie nouvelle, merveilleuse...dans cet Occident mirifique qu'il voyait miroiter comme un gigantesque mât de cocagne...”<sup>13</sup> Dans ses discussions sur l'Ouest, il associe souvent son image à des choses très concrètes, représentatives pour la civilisation occidentale: „- Eh, mon gars, sais-tu ce que c'est que l'Occident ? – Du beurre et des Mercedes, répète Ion.”<sup>14</sup>

Mais le fait que Ion soit étudiant en français explique la fascination que la France exerce sur lui ; il choisit comme destination finale Paris qu'il connaissait déjà de ses lectures comme autant de gens de partout qui ne l'ont pas vu mais qui nourrissent pour la grande ville et pour la France un certain amour. A l'en croire T. Todorov, exilé lui aussi à Paris, il s'agit d'une „image de Paris et de la France qui provoque une certaine nostalgie”.<sup>15</sup>

Dans la plupart des cas, les exilés trouvent pour abri un foyer pour les immigrés ou un hôtel. Si la maison symbolise la permanence, l'endroit intime, sacré, l'hôtel suggère l'idée de passage, de transition, de précarité et d'incertitude. Le manque d'espace privé est perçu comme une frustration ou, comme le suggère René Gutman, une source d'étrangeté: „L'aliénation de l'homme c'est avant tout, le fait de ne pas avoir de demeure. Ne pas avoir de chez soi, ne pas avoir d'intérieur, c'est ne pas communiquer véritablement avec autrui et de là, être étranger à soi et à autrui.”<sup>16</sup>

Les émigrants de Tsepeneag se trouvent eux aussi dans un état provisoire qui semble devenir permanent. Pour eux, le temps paraît suspendu: il n'y a pas de déroulement, pas de continuité, pas d'historicité, tout est transit, passage. Ils ne finissent pas d'arriver, de s'installer, de se fixer: c'est un déplacement continu qui prend la forme de départs successifs de différents pays, jamais suffisamment accueillants, toujours décevants et hostiles. Tout un monde de personnages étranges mis en situations insolites foisonne dans l'espace d'émigration présenté dans *Hôtel Europa* comme le montre aussi D. Oster dans une chronique du roman:

<sup>11</sup> Tsepeneag, D., 1998, *Pont des Arts*, Ed. P.O.L., Paris, p. 67.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 60.

<sup>13</sup> Tsepeneag, D., *Hôtel Europa*, p. 143.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 137.

<sup>15</sup> Todorov, T., 1996, *L'homme dépaysé*, Ed. du Seuil, Paris, p. 216.

<sup>16</sup> Gutman, R., « Les droits de l'autre homme », in *Secolul XX*, n° 10-11-12/1999, n° 1-3/2000 (*Europele din Europa*) pp. 425- 426, (n.t.).

Un fascinant va-et-vient d'une quantité de personnages rocambolesques- truands, amoureuses, philosophes, aventuriers de tout poil- dont chacun est pour l'autre obstacle ou adjuvant, dont les destins, les figures et les identités se croisent, se confondent, se séparent. La virtuosité picaresque de l'auteur fait merveille ici, dans ce déplacement continu, vibrionnesque et héroï-comique qui sature la carte de l'Europe où le narrateur met de petits drapeaux- car c'est lui qui tient plus ou moins les commandes, les mouvements des uns et des autres.<sup>17</sup>

Les émigrants envahissent l'espace européen depuis Budapest jusqu'à Paris. Des ressortissants de l'Europe centrale et de l'Est se rencontrent, des jeunes gens impliqués dans des réseaux clandestins de la drogue, de la prostitution, du vol, de la mendicité. Pendant son voyage, Ion fait halte dans divers hôtels „Europa” mais il ne se sent pas libre ; il est poursuivi de rackets, d'anciens agents de Securitate, organisés en véritables bandes de la Mafia russe comme le Trompette et Gagarin, ex-colonel dans l'armée soviétique et maintenant chef de la bande. Le monde de la prostitution, formé de filles roumaines (Sonia), polonaises (Hanka), croates ( Nemira) et de beaucoup d'autres nationalités est coordonné par deux arabes, George le Libanais et Karim.

Arrivé à Strasbourg, capitale de la grande Europe, Ion découvre la cathédrale magnifique et la richesse „ostentatoire” des environs qui contrastent avec l'image triste des malheureux, le monde des mendiants, des handicapés, des estropiés. Il loge à l'hôtel „Europa”, un euphémisme ironique pour un hôtel désaffecté, minable où foisonnent des exclus, des marginaux, des émigrants à la dérive, inadaptés, sans abri. C'est aussi le monde de la délinquance, situé dans l'ombre, un monde „d'underground.”. Le voyage des émigrants roumains vers la lumière de l'Ouest finit dans l'Enfer, dans un espace hostile, glauque, cauchemardesque. „Hôtel „Europa” n'est qu'un ancien chenil, réaménagé par les malheureux qui se logeaient pêle-mêle avec d'autres mecs, dans un sous-sol puant la pisserie et qu'ils partageaient avec les rats et les cloportes”.<sup>18</sup> L'un des marginaux avait écrit à la bombe de peinture sur tous les murs HOTEL EUROPA, puisqu'il abritait des émigrants de tout le continent.

Il s'impose quand même de souligner que ce „topos” qui réunit des émigrants provenant de l'Europe centrale et de l'Est porte le même nom, „Hôtel Europa” fût-il un hôtel minable à Budapest ou d'autres locations portant ce nom en Allemagne ou ailleurs.

C'est un endroit de passage, peuplé par des personnages de passage qui vivent intensément. Tout se trouve sous le signe du transitoire, l'amour même en est affecté puisque la plupart d'entre eux a des expériences érotiques passagères. Ils oscillent entre euphorie et désespoir, entre gain et perte ; il ne faut que rappeler dans ce contexte le cas de Ion qui gagne beaucoup d'argent dans un casino à Vienne, pour perdre tout après avoir été volé par son meilleur „ami” roumain, Petrisor. La vie de ces émigrants est une question de chance jouée à la roulette ; leurs projets s'écroulent, leurs rêves s'anéantissent. Tout est sous le signe de la précarité, d'une transition sans destination précise, sans aucun but. Par ces images tristes, le mythe de l'Occident comme Eldorado est détruit, ce n'est qu'un „Eldorado de pacotille” comme le qualifie Marianne, la femme de l'écrivain-personnage dans *Pont des Arts*. Même si les jeunes intellectuels de Tsepeneag ont quitté la Roumanie post-révolutionnaire dominée par la corruption et la fraude, ils regrettent partiellement leur choix, déçus par la terre d'accueil:

Je ne sais que faire, cher Auteur, où diriger mes pas. Maintenant je regrette de ne pas être resté dans mon foutu pays. J'ai quitté le pays comme tant d'autres attirée par les alouettes que nous croyions tous voir, en Roumanie, tomber rôties dans le bec des Européens. Des spectres... Pourquoi l'amour de la patrie ne nous a-t-il pas empêché de partir ou pourquoi ne nous pousse-t-il pas à rentrer ? Mais l'amour de quelle patrie, mon cher Auteur ? De notre patrie post-socialiste qui rêve d'un capitalisme de type sud-américain ? L'amour de son pays ? Quel pays ? Ne voulons-nous pas bâtir l'Europe ?<sup>19</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Oster, D., « Inquiétante étrangeté », in *Quinzaine littéraire*, 1er décembre/1996.

<sup>18</sup> Tsepeneag, D., *Hôtel Europa*, p. 318.

<sup>19</sup> Tsepeneag, D., *Pont des Arts*, p. 102.

Tous ces jeunes de l'Est découvrent un Occident en déclin, repoussant et décevant. La portée de l'écrivain est bien plus large: il tire un signal d'alarme avertissant sur le sens que prend l'Europe de l'Ouest, qui n'est plus le Paradis idyllique „où les alouettes tombent toutes rôties dans la bouche” car „au bout d'un certain temps cela devient simple comme bonjour. Le seul inconvénient c'est que, à un moment donné, on en a assez des alouettes. On a envie d'autre chose.”<sup>20</sup>

En outre, on rencontre dans *Hôtel Europa* de nombreuses situations où les émigrants se confrontent à l'attitude ethnocentriste et raciste des gens de la terre d'accueil. Avant d'analyser ces exemples il convient d'opérer une distinction entre l'ethnocentrisme, d'une part, et le racisme, de l'autre. Le racisme se réfère à une hiérarchie d'entités humaines fondées sur des caractéristiques biologiques, tandis que l'ethnocentrisme consiste à privilégier un groupe, un peuple par rapport aux autres.

Est-ce que l'ethnocentrisme est seulement un trait des Occidentaux ? Pour y répondre nous avons eu recours à l'opinion de David Ohana qui souligne que ce concept est universel puisque les communautés humaines, primitives ou évoluées, occidentales ou non, étaient narcissistes du point de vue culturel, méfiantes envers les étrangers et habituées à considérer l'autre comme inférieur.<sup>21</sup> Il faut souligner aussi que l'ethnocentrisme est toujours accompagné par l'étroitesse d'esprit, le provincialisme ou la xénophobie. Même si ce concept est universel, sa manifestation est toujours évidente en Occident, se basant sur sa supériorité économique et culturelle.

L'attitude ethnocentriste, raciste même des Français se manifeste envers tous les étrangers par leurs actes ou par le langage, comme le montrent en beaucoup de situations les romans de D. Tsepeneag. En fait, toute l'Europe de l'Ouest affirme une identité qui prétend être supérieure à différents Autres qu'elle continue de discriminer et de minimiser. Ridiculeusement, l'Occident semble avoir peur de l'Autre, de toutes ces gens de l'Est qui sont venus en masse après la chute du mur de Berlin. C'est bien cela qui pourrait expliquer leurs attitudes. Les émigrants roumains de Tsepeneag se heurtent au mépris et à l'ironie dans tout l'espace européen depuis Budapest jusqu'à Paris. A Vienne ou à Munich, l'étudiant Ion Valea est appelé tout simplement „Tziganeur” tandis que d'autres Roumains sont „de chauds lapins mais des froussards”.<sup>22</sup>

Pour renforcer ses idées, l'écrivain attache des fragments de la presse européenne sur le racisme ; un journal autrichien d'extrême droite qualifie les Roumains de „youpins de l'Europe actuelle” ou „les pestiférés de l'Europe”.<sup>23</sup> A Paris, Ion avec un autre émigrant roumain, sont facilement reconnus d'être Roumains par le patron d'un café qui les traite avec mépris. „Vous n'étiez pas ensemble ? Je vous ai entendus baragouiner en romanichel. Allez, vous payez maintenant ! Ou alors j'appelle la police.”<sup>24</sup>

Le narrateur remarque que l'attitude des Français à l'égard des Roumains a changé totalement au cours des dernières années. La sympathie et l'admiration du lendemain de la Révolution se sont transformées en mépris et en suspicion: „Pourquoi les Français sont-ils aussi remontés contre les Roumains ?...Pourquoi certains contrôleurs dans certains bus parisiens méprisent tellement les Roumains, les détestent même à tel point que tout étranger qui leur déplaît se fait traiter Roumain ?”<sup>25</sup>

On trouve l'explication par la voix d'un immigrant, le peintre onirique Vasile de Maramures: puisque les Français veulent éviter le mot „tzigane” qui trahirait un racisme ordinaire tout comme „youpins”, ils les nomment également „roms” ou „romanichels”. Il y a eu d'abord dans l'esprit général une sorte de contamination de sorte que la confusion s'est généralisée. Malgré cette explication à l'air tolérant, il y a des exemples où l'attitude raciste des Français est évidente envers tous les étrangers.

<sup>20</sup> Tsepeneag, D., *Hôtel Europa*, p. 161.

<sup>21</sup> Ohana, D., 2002, « Réflexions sur l'essai d'Albert Memmi: Le racisme » in *Lire Albert Memmi: déracinement, exil, identité*, textes réunis par David Ohana, Claude Sitbou et David Mendelson, Ed. Fata Morgana, Paris, p. 34.

<sup>22</sup> Tsepeneag, D., *Hôtel Europa*, p. 168.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 198.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 323.

<sup>25</sup> Tsepeneag, D., *Pont des Arts*, p. 41.

Dans *Pont des Arts*, il y a une scène où le contrôleur d'un bus parisien se met en colère contre un couple d'Iraniens qu'il avait remarqués par leurs traits extérieurs et surtout par leur accent. Il veut les humilier en leur demandant les papiers pour contrôler leur identité même s'ils n'ont fait rien d'illégal. Au refus des étrangers de payer une amende, le contrôleur s'emporte contre eux et le narrateur résume la situation: „Le toupet de ce métèque qui baragouinait à peine le français a mis le contrôleur hors de lui. Excédé, il a dit tout ce qu'il avait sur le coeur à propos des étrangers: il en avait ras la casquette, surtout des Roumains, cette race de voleurs qui a envahi l'Europe.”<sup>26</sup>

Dans son essai *Etrangers à nous-mêmes*,<sup>27</sup> J. Kristeva explique cette attitude des Français envers les étrangers. Elle considère que la France ne possède ni la tolérance du protestantisme anglo-américain, ni la capacité d'assimilation des Latino-Américains, ni l'attitude de rejet des Allemands ou des Slaves. Les Français possèdent une fierté nationale qui exclut les étrangers et tout cela provient d'un type de civilisation qui croit aux valeurs créées le long du temps, à l'abri des grandes invasions et mélange des peuples, renforcées par l'absolutisme monarchique et plus tard, par le centralisme républicain. Quoique acceptés légalement et administrativement, les exilés se sentent toujours étrangers par l'emploi maladroit du français. Ils se voient discrédités dans les yeux des Français qui s'identifient plus que d'autres peuples avec leur langue soignée.

On a remarqué que l'univers fictionnel du roman *Hôtel Europa* est peuplé d'un grand nombre de personnages dont les tribulations sont poursuivies le long de leur périple. Le narrateur oscille tout le temps entre le plan public et le plan privé. On peut y remarquer une similitude entre son évolution et celle de son héros principal: à mesure que la déception post-révolutionnaire devient plus évidente, le jeune émigrant Ion Valea se sent plus déçu de ses expériences à l'Ouest. Le plan public et celui individuel du narrateur sont complétés par un autre plus général, celui de l'Europe. Il est évoqué par plusieurs procédés parmi lesquels on remarque d'abord l'introduction d'articles de presse sur la situation politique des pays comme l'ancienne Yougoslavie, l'Albanie, l'Allemagne de l'Est, la Bulgarie ou sur des manifestations racistes en Allemagne, en France contre les immigrants de ces pays. On y rencontre ensuite des personnages émigrants de l'Europe centrale et de l'Est qui s'entrecroisent à différents moments avec les Roumains trouvés eux aussi en route vers l'Eldorado.

Dans *Hôtel Europa*, le narrateur-écrivain pourrait s'identifier à l'auteur réel D. Tsepeneag. Par la technique de la mise en abîme, il se met en scène et devient la figure centrale du roman dans le roman, le roman en train de s'écrire. Il apparaît dans la posture d'un général dans son coin de création, en Finistère où il a fixé une carte de l'Europe sur laquelle il déplace de petits drapeaux pour marquer l'itinéraire de chaque émigrant. Des fois, il réussit à maîtriser le mouvement des personnages à tel ou tel endroit, d'autres fois il se montre complètement perdu et il a de la peine à placer ses petits drapeaux. Toutes ces jeunes gens ont perdu leur identité sociale et culturelle, ils ont perdu les amis, ils n'ont aucun statut, se retrouvant en marge. L'étudiant en français, Ion est poursuivi par les vieux démons, des agents de Securitate et des représentants de la Mafia. Ils lui prennent l'argent gagné dans un casino à Vienne, le frappent, lui adressent de gros mots, l'emploient comme un objet pour camoufler leurs illégalités. Ion ne veut pas s'y impliquer et c'est pourquoi il est condamné à l'isolement et à l'aliénation.

Il est visible que l'expérience de l'émigration de ces jeunes roumains, anciens collègues et amis est un échec. Ils n'ont pas réussi à refaire le puzzle de leur vie brisée, au contraire, ils ont tout perdu, ils ne représentent rien pour personne. Ils ont dû renoncer à leur dignité finissant dans la solitude et la délinquance. Ils deviennent les laissés-pour-compte de la société de consommation.

Pour relever l'état de ses personnages, l'écrivain veut se mettre devant ses lecteurs roumains après une longue absence, pour leur faire comprendre son statut d'écrivain en exil et ses conceptions sur la vie et sur la société. Assumer le “je” narratif est donc une manière de se replacer au centre du monde, de mieux cerner son passé et son avenir. C'est aussi de cette manière que l'écrivain explique les relations entre les “voix” narratives de l'oeuvre et la fonction de l'auteur:

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<sup>26</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 47.

<sup>27</sup> Kristeva, J., 1991, *Etrangers à nous-mêmes*, Gallimard, Paris, p. 39.

Ion pourrait me reprocher de parler plus de moi que de lui dans ce roman où, quand même il est le personnage principal. Assurément, il serait facile que je lui réponde que ce n'est pas lui qui décide... Mais ce ne serait pas, je le reconnais, une réplique digne d'un auteur qui déteste d'apparaître devant ses lecteurs comme un Dieu, comme un père envers ses personnages... Peut-être que je devrais lui parler de la fonction du narrateur, ce mystérieux intermédiaire entre moi et lui, entre lui et le lecteur... L'auteur est comme le Saint esprit, plein d'idées mais invisible... Il tire toutes les ficelles, c'est vrai... il a besoin de personnages...<sup>28</sup>

Comme écrivain-personnage, Tsepeneag devient dans la fiction l'écrivain préoccupé de l'écriture de son roman et il a ainsi la facilité de communiquer avec ses personnages. Nous devons remarquer la présence de Marianne, sa femme et son meilleur confident à laquelle il dévoile tous les détails sur le roman en train de s'écrire. Il se montre très proche de ses personnages car, selon son expérience d'exil, il comprend mieux que personne leur désir de fuir la Roumanie; ils lui demandent des conseils, lui écrivent des lettres et, des fois, ils lui font des reproches. Mais l'écrivain met de l'ordre dans leur destin par l'écriture. Le flux de leur existence, souvent chaotique et imprévisible est arrêté par le discours narratif. C'est ainsi que le puzzle de leur vie devient visible et cohérent. Le récit s'avère être dans ce cas le seul refuge contre les vicissitudes de l'Histoire. Par l'écriture, la Roumaine post-révolutionnaire et les expériences des émigrants à travers l'Europe s'avèrent crédibles tandis que le narrateur trouve une identité transculturelle par le retour à ses outils d'écrivain, ce qui lui assure en fait un double destin: privé et publique.

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<sup>28</sup> Tsepeneag, D., *Hôtel Europa*, p. 153.

## Locating the Self in Walker Percy's *The Moviegoer*

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**Résumé:** Notre étude montre que le roman de Percy, inspiré de la philosophie existentialiste, est un commentaire de la dialectique de l'isolement et de la réintégration, puisque le héros est engagé dans ce qu'il appelle „une quête verticale”, voire son fort ancrage moral dans un monde moderne, défini par le changement et le consumérisme.

**Key words:** identity, stoicism, everydayness, escape, search, return

Little known in Romania, Walker Percy (b. 1916, in Birmingham, Alabama; d. 1990 in Covington, Louisiana) authored two volumes of essays and six novels, of which, the first, *The Moviegoer* (1961) won the National Book Award. Percy is usually considered an existentialist writer of the New South, although he rejected both labels as either vague, inadequate, or irrelevant. Since Southern life had already become less and less distinct from the rest of the country, he prefers to be considered, simply, an American writer.

However, in themes and concerns, his work can be placed within a long tradition of thinkers collectively dubbed 'existentialists' if, by that, we understand a preoccupation for the problems of modern existence, a focus on the anxieties and alienation of contemporary life in which the individual seems to drift in a sort of quiet, if desperate, search for some self-supporting values.

The statement that Walker made about *The Moviegoer* applies to the theme and structure of all his novels: "I begin with a man who finds himself in a world, a very concrete man who is located in a very concrete place and time. Such a man might be represented as coming to himself in somewhat the same sense as Robinson Crusoe came to himself on his island after his shipwreck ..." (Book Week, 9)

John Bickerson ('Binx') Bolling, the protagonist and narrator in *The Moviegoer* is such a man who, at 29, is very specifically located in Gentilly, a middle class suburb of New Orleans where he is a 'stock and bond broker'. On the surface, he lives a rather uneventful life, divided as it is between the concrete reality of his daily business, going out with all his secretaries, visiting his aunt and, mostly, going to the movies. The words he uses to describe one such movie could be taken as his self-imposed existential task: that of the 'alienated I' which sets out to explore the 'It'.

My self-imposed task in this paper is to examine the way(s) in which he embarks upon this endeavor, focusing primarily on the issue of time as instrumental in his attempt at self-definition and self-understanding. As Lawson was quick to notice, direct reference to time frame the narrative, and the opening words - 'This morning, I'...- express the narrator's awareness of time and also his concern regarding how to deal with it. When, on the last pages, we hear him wondering: 'Is it possible that- it is not too late?' (M, 202) we are made to understand that, after an arduous search, he may have found a grounding in time and a renewed awareness of his condition.

In-between, however, he lives with an acute feeling of inadequacy, desperate to extricate himself from the oppressive condition of 'everydayness'. Kierkegaard's words, chosen as the motto of the novel, are telling for the condition of a restless soul, eager to find anchorage in time: '...the specific character of despair is precisely this: it is unaware of being despair'. Binx Bolling, the offspring of an old and respectable Southern family, seems unable to live up to the standards of his forefathers, carried on by the stern and austere Mrs. Emily Cutrer, the aunt who had housed him for fifteen years, after the death of his father. She is a patrician-like figure, living with Jules, a successful businessman and with her step-daughter, Kate, a brilliant, if somewhat neurotic young lady.



In this respect, Binx can be taken as the alter-ego of Walker Percy. The writer himself grew up in the house of his distant relative, to whom his first novel is dedicated. The benefactor is William Alexander Percy, one of the most admired men of the modern South, whose family had been prominent in the Mississippi Delta for more than a century. William Alexander Percy was virtually a Renaissance man: teacher, military officer, lawyer, poet, plantation owner and author of *Lanterns on the Levee* (1941), an unconventional biography, but also an account of himself and of his ancestors. The work is dedicated to Walker Percy and his two brothers and the climactic chapter, entitled 'For the Younger Generation' is meant not only to enlighten the minds of his young proteges, but also to pass on to another generation 'the steady simple wisdom of the South'.( LL, 74-75).

Embittered by what he sees in the New South: moral decadence, violence, fraud and ruthlessness, he finds comfort in the old values and in a particular philosophy which had always been part of the strand of the white southern fabric:

There is left to each of us, no matter how far defeat pierces, the unassailable wintry kingdom of Marcus Aurelius, which some more gently call the Kingdom of Heaven. However it be called, it is not outside, but within, and when all is lost, it stands fast. To this remaining fastness I knew I should help the children find their way.... (LL, 313).

That way, Percy believed, should be modeled on the tenets of classical Stoicism, and on the Aurelian conviction that the self is the only kingdom known to human existence which has the possibility of both freedom and control. The Emperor saw man's duty on earth to be not only one of serene detachment and acceptance of the blows of fate, but equally one of never resting action, even against impossible odds, with the purpose of improving, by gradual stages, man's lot in the world.

Walker Percy, one of his three adopted sons who followed him into the profession of letters, must have been impressed by his foster father's existential philosophy, for one of his first public statements was the essay "Stoicism in the South". Acknowledging that the Stoic way was "remarkably suited to the agrarian South of the last century", he further elaborates on the idea by pointing out that "the greatness of the South, like the greatness of the English squirearchy, had always a stronger Greek flavor than it ever had a Christian' and even quotes..... the words of the Emperor: 'Every moment think steadily, as a Roman and a man, to do what thou hast in hand with perfect and simple dignity, and a feeling of affection, and freedom, and justice' " (SS,343). Admirable as these words may appear, Walker Percy cannot accept them whole-heartedly since, he believes, Southern stoicism, based as it was " on a particular hierarchical structure' and characterized by a mood of "poetic pessimism", could not survive ... change".

The conflicting feelings, of admiration for the Stoic attitude as it was embodied in William Alexander Percy and his class, and rejection of that attitude as irrelevant to the present generation provide the essence of the relationship between the protagonist and the representative of the past, the father figure, in Percy's first novel, *The Moviegoer* (Lawson, 48). Even though that figure is a woman, his aunt, the character is still based on William Alexander Percy. More important than the similarity between the biographical reality and the fictional situation is the philosophy shared by William Alexander Percy and Mrs. Cutrer. Out of a feeling of responsibility, the aunt wants to transmit the values of the old Bollings to Binx, the inheritor of the tradition. Late in the novel, disappointed with the kind of life Binx had chosen, she has the young man listen to her outburst of despair and helplessness:

All these years I have been assuming that between us words mean roughly the same thing, that among certain people, gentlefolk I don't mind calling them, there exists a set of meanings held in common, that a certain manner and a certain grace come as naturally as breathing. At the great moments of life - success, failure, marriage, death -our kind of folks have always possessed a native instinct for behavior, a natural piety or grace.... Whatever else we did or failed to do, we always had that.... I did my best for you, son. I gave you all I had. More than anything else I wanted to pass on to you the one heritage of the men of our family, a certain

quality of spirit, a gaiety, a sense of duty, a nobility worn lightly, a sweetness, a gentleness with women - the only good things the South ever had and the only things that really matter in this life. (M, 196)

Especially striking is the similarity of Aunt Emily's final statement to Percy's definition of the authentic Southern tradition, in yet another essay, "A Southern View," as "a tradition which at its best enshrined the humane aspects of living for rich and poor, black and white. It gave first place to a stable family life, sensitivity and good manners between men, chivalry toward women, an honor code, and individual integrity" (428).

The most salient resemblance between William Alexander Percy and Aunt Emily, though, is their use of Marcus Aurelius as the supreme moral guide in life. In the note she sends Binx, summoning him to her house we have a clear expression of the tradition of the Southern Stoic: "Every moment think steadily as a Roman and a man, to do what thou hast in hand with perfect and simple dignity, and a feeling of affection and freedom and justice. These words of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius Antoninus strike me as pretty good advice, for even the ornieriest young scamp" (M, 67).

However, such advice has never helped Binx find his way through the world. For ten years he has looked at the portrait of his father and his uncles on his aunt's mantelpiece, trying, but failing to understand it. There is no doubt that he appreciates the tradition, and loves his aunt, the detainer of that tradition. Yet, he simply cannot get sustenance from the past.

The present, offers no comfort, either and the pervasive feeling is that of being 'cut loose, metaphysically speaking'. His sense of alienation is often present in the manner in which he describes other people, individuals who are complacently at home in the world, like, for example, the efficient, but dull businessman, Eddie Lovell who looks at the world and sees no mystery. "He understands everything out there and everything out there is something to be understood." Percy's narrator, on the other hand, despite his conventional outward appearance, has the acute feeling of being a Jew: "We share the same exile. The fact is, however, I am more Jewish than the Jews I know. They are more at home than I am" (M, 77). He appears as an outsider, a man alienated from his neighbours and acquaintances, unable to subscribe to their values and allegiances. Consequently, he engages on a quest for a creed by which he could live. 'This morning', he says, 'there occurred to me the possibility of a search' which he defines as something that 'anyone would undertake if he were not sunk in the everydayness of his own life' (M, 7). Because, he adds, 'to become aware of the possibility of the search is to be onto something. Not to be onto something is to be in despair' (M, 10). The search he conducts takes two forms and it is closely related to his favourite pastime and the dominant metaphor of the book: that of the moviegoing. There is, first, the 'vertical search', motivated by the desire of discovering the governing laws of life from books like Schrodinger's *The Expanding Universe*, Einstein's *The Universe as I See It*, or *The Chemistry of Life*. With the vertical search you approach that Universal Law: "as you get deeper into the search, you unify. You understand more and more specimens by fewer and fewer formulae." (M, 71). He takes then a neo-platonic stance that would transcend the world of the visible and reach the realm of the intelligible, the domain of immutable laws. Except that the inquisitive mind of the perceiving individual is left out, in the sense that these laws could not "explain the mystery of his own presence". So he moved to the horizontal search, now persuaded that 'what is important is what I shall find when I leave my room and wander in the neighborhood'. (M, 60)

His decision to move to the horizontal search is akin to Thoreau's resolution to turn away from the Universal Law and seek for truth in particular instances, or to Emerson, who in one of his essays asserts that 'If the whole of history is in one man, it is all to be explained from individual experience' (Emerson, *Essays: First Series. History*) It is this need to situate himself in the present time, to certify his identity that urges him to mark his cinema seat with his thumbnail, so that he can be 'Some where at Some time', and not 'Any where in Any time'. It is for this reason that he is a moviegoer, that he remembers incidents from films more vividly than he can recall incidents from his own life. It is not only that films add some romance to a dreary existence, nor that they offer escape into a dream world. Thinkers like Henry Bergson, or Arnold Toynbee, spoke of moviegoing

as a form of neo-Platonism, likening the wall-watching in Plato's cave to watching the actors on the screen in the modern cave that is the movie house. Films render fixed and inevitable what in life seems to him to be fleeting, contradictory, or sometimes incomprehensible and chaotic. In particular, if you see your own world in a film, then your world is "certified." He explains: 'Nowadays when a person lives somewhere, in a neighborhood, the place is not certified for him. More than likely he will live there sadly and the emptiness which is inside of him will expand .... But if he sees a movie which shows his very neighborhood, it becomes possible for him to live, for a time at least, as a person who is Somewhere and not Anywhere.. The fact that one "needs movies to have one's own reality certified indicates, by contrast, the painful sense of unreality that the modern alienated seeker lives with" (Tanner, 11).

Movies are a kind of aesthetic repetition, a condensation of the past into a sequence of meaningful moments. In movies, time as duration, freezes into timelessness. They, movies, are used by Binx as "the reenactment of past experience toward the end of isolating the time segment which has lapsed in order that it, the lapsed time, can be savored of itself and without the usual adulteration of events ..." (M, 80).

Yet, the shadows on the walls of the cave, or on the screen, only create the temporary illusion that time can be frozen and experienced in its pure form. For when he leaves the cave he does not/cannot leave the cinema, no more than any person can. As Bergson had pointed out, duration, in which we live our lives, goes on whether or not we are conscious of it: it is only condensed duration that our intellect can control and freeze into meaningful sequences. Visiting the cinema in order to re-live the past is only an illusion, for, according to Bergson, if everything is in time, everything changes and the same concrete reality cannot occur again.

Engaged in the contemplation of the perfect actors moving on the screen, he experiences ever greater alienation and, eventually, has to reject Plato's myth of the Cave as the model of man's relation to his world. The world is not to see, but to use. The meaning of existence is not in the vertical search, i.e. the knowledge of the great books, nor on the screen of the cinema, but in what Heidegger calls the 'care relationship'. Binx wants to care for others and even considers the idea of opening a service station. At the climax, when he has an acute feeling of suffocation, he is saved by the responsibility of caring for Kate, someone who is a worse sufferer than he is. He has thus become an ethical man, in Kierkegaardian terms, fighting physical and mental illnesses. He now appears to have found his own time and place. By marrying Kate, he indirectly suggests that no transcendence is possible, irrespective of his vertical or horizontal search, that only sensation is achievable, here in the form of another human being in a particular place, at a particular time. Binx can now see faith and love not as shadowy Platonic Forms, but as concrete human actions. The realization of it strikes Binx all of a sudden: "Is it possible that - it is not too late?" (M, 202).

The Epilogue, where he reports on his marriage, also makes clear that Binx, having suffered in his search for the realm of the Intelligible and blind rationality, turns to the realm of the Sensible and decides to accept the fullness of duration that is not comprehended by mere intellect. The model is not Plato any more but rather St. Augustine and his comments on time in Book XI of *The Confessions*, Chapter XXIII: "I have heard from a learned man that the motions of the sun, moon, and stars constituted time, and I assented not." (Lawson, 120). Time, as Augustine describes it, is an individual experience which occurs within the soul/the consciousness or the psyche. What is universal is not the past, nor the present, nor the future, but the soul which joins them to make time.

Thus, John Bickerson 'Binx' Bolling finally gets to create his own time, and locate his self in the realm of human emotion and suffering, which gives purpose and meaning to his future existence.

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## Aucassin et Nicolette - l'imaginaire collectif

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**Abstract:** *The Romanian reader of this story will be surprised to discover here unexpected coincidences regarding scenes, attitudes and customs, which can be found both in Romanian stories, such as "Ivan Turbincă", "Ileana Simziana" and in birth rituals from our country and those of the primitive tribes from Amazonia.*

**Mots-clés:** *reconsidération, enfer, paradis, la femme errante, la couvade masculine, influence littéraire, l'imaginaire collectif.*

Le lecteur roumain de la chantefable *Aucassin et Nicolette*<sup>1</sup> sera déconcerté d'y découvrir des coïncidences surprenantes concernant des scènes, attitudes, coutumes présentes dans les contes roumains *Ivan Turbincă*<sup>2</sup>, *Ileana Simziana*<sup>3</sup> et dans des rituels d'accouchement de chez nous et des tribus primitives d'Amazonie. Il s'agit:

1. de la reconsidération de l'enfer et du paradis ;
2. du motif de la femme errante ;
3. de la *couvade* masculine auprès du nouveau-né.

La contiguïté géographique des pays d'origine de certains récits et le contact culturel au-delà des frontières peuvent favoriser les emprunts et les ressemblances des motifs, thèmes et sujets littéraires. Si ces conditions manquent, on peut les expliquer par le recours aux sources de l'imaginaire collectif.

Dans notre cas l'aspect surprenant est déterminé par l'éloignement temporel de l'apparition de ces récits et par l'éloignement géographique des pays qui les ont engendrés.

On ne saurait pas dire exactement où, quand et par qui a été écrite l'histoire d'amour d'Aucassin et Nicolette. Pour son auteur, il faut préciser que la plupart des romans de l'époque sont anonymes. J.Ch.Payen<sup>4</sup> considère que l'anonymat et l'oubli qui ont couvert l'écrivain et son œuvre pendant plusieurs centaines d'années sont la conséquence du grand risque assumé par le trouvère qui parlait des délices de l'enfer et des ennuis du paradis. Ainsi, a-t-il vu disparaître les copies de son texte, puisqu'il n'existe, de surcroît, qu'un seul manuscrit de la chantefable.

„Une œuvre unique, un chef-d'œuvre unanimement admiré depuis des décennies semble avoir été oubliée au Moyen Âge tandis que la chanson de geste *Beuve de Hantone*, dont on y retrouve facilement les influences, nous est connue par une version anglo-normande, trois versions françaises, d'autres en franco-italien et en vénitien, en *ottava rima* et en prose, des adaptations et traductions en anglais, en gallois et en vieux norrois, des contes roumains et russes”<sup>5</sup>.

On parle de versions en français parce que la langue de Beaucaire était le provençal. Charles Camproux part de l'étymologie des noms propres pour démontrer l'appartenance de la chantefable à cette région: „Aucassin serait un diminutif d'*auccasa*, lui-même dérivé d'*auca*, *oie*, tandis que Nicolette viendrait de *nicola*, senti lui-même comme diminutif de l'occitan *nica*, employé dans l'expression populaire *faire la nica*, *faire la nique*, *se moquer*, *être plus rusé qu'autrui*: ce serait donc la futée”<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> \*\*\* *Aucassin et Nicolette*, 1984, Éditions Flammarion, Paris.

<sup>2</sup> Ion Creangă, *Povești, povestiri, amintiri*, 1981, Editura Ion Creangă, Bucuresti, p.163 – 182.

<sup>3</sup> Petre Ispirescu, *Basmele românilor*, 2005, Editura Regis, Bucuresti, p. 75-121.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Jean Dufournet, *Préface* au volume *Aucassin et Nicolette*, p.8.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibidem*, p.8.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Jean Dufournet, p.10.

La connaissance intime des romans de Chrétien de Troyes nous fait penser qu'*Aucassin et Nicolette* est de la fin du XIIe siècle plutôt que du début du XIIIe, affirme Jean Dufournet (1190-la mort de Chrétien de Troyes ; 1172- *le Chevalier de la charrette* ; 1173 *Yvain ou le Chevalier au lion*).

Quant aux contes roumains, *Ivan Turbincă* est une création littéraire dont l'auteur, Ion Creangă<sup>7</sup>, l'avait publiée en 1878, tandis que *Ileana Simziana* appartient à la tradition orale. Raconté par Panait Nicolescu, qui habitait Craiova (ville du sud de la Roumanie), publié en 1874 par un typographe, ce conte est repris ensuite par Petre Ispirescu en 1882 dans son volume *Les Légendes ou les récits merveilleux des Roumains*.

1. **La reconsidération de l'enfer et du paradis** est présente dans *Aucassin et Nicolette* et dans *Ivan Turbincă* sous forme de satire antireligieuse, très nette.

Menacé par son père de la damnation éternelle pour aimer une Sarrasine, Aucassin ne s'en effraie guère. Selon la vision qu'il a de l'au-delà, l'enfer est préférable au paradis. C'est une opinion qui „offusque le confort intellectuel du public médiéval..., qui bouscule trop de poncifs, même si la provocation s'y dissimule sous un dehors bon enfant”<sup>8</sup>.

Le jeune chevalier offre une explication bien hardie pour son choix: „En paradis qu'ai-je à faire ? Je ne cherche pas à y entrer, à condition que j'aie avec moi Nicolette, ma très douce amie que j'aime tant, car en paradis ne vont que les gens que je vais vous énumérer. Ceux qui y vont, ce sont ces vieux prêtres, ces vieux éclopés, ces manchots (...), et ceux qui portent de vieilles capes râpées et de vieilles hardes, qui sont nus, sans souliers ni chausses, qui meurent de faim, de soif, de froid et de misère. Tels sont les gens qui vont en paradis: avec ceux-là je n'ai rien à faire. Mais c'est en enfer que je veux aller, car c'est en enfer que vont les beaux clercs, les beaux chevaliers (...), les belles dames assez courtoises pour avoir deux amis ou trois en plus de leur mari ; y vont aussi l'or et l'argent (...) ; y vont encore les joueurs de harpe, les jongleurs, les rois de ce monde: c'est avec ceux-là que je veux aller... (p.59).”

Nous retrouverons la même conception dans le conte roumain *Ivan Turbincă*. Si Aucassin était chevalier, Ivan est aussi homme d'armes, mais moins instruit, un simple soldat d'une sympathique rudesse. Aucassin est jeune et il n'a pas encore pris part aux combats, Ivan est vieux et il en revient. La conception exposée par le personnage roumain à l'égard du paradis et de l'enfer est unique dans l'univers des contes de chez nous. Elle revêt le même *dehors bon enfant*. L'ancien soldat russe parle avec courage et sérénité joyeuse. Si le paradis ne peut lui offrir de réconfort après une vie si dure (c'est-à-dire à boire, à fumer, des distractions et une belle compagnie féminine), *cette âpre pauvreté* n'est pas pour lui. Ivan se dirige vers l'enfer et il y trouve tout ce qu'il désire: „Ivan demande qu'on lui apporte très vite de la vodka, du tabac, des violoneux et de belles femmes parce qu'il a envie de faire la noce (p.171).»<sup>9</sup>

Quelle est la source de cette ressemblance d'attitude ? L'écrivain roumain pouvait-il connaître, avait-il lu *Aucassin et Nicolette* ? Nous y pensons en suivant l'affirmation de Corneliu Bărbulescu<sup>10</sup>: „Creangă avait appris le français et cela lui permettait de lire et d'en traduire facilement.” Nous y ajoutons les considérations que Jean Dufournet avait formulées dans une citation antérieure. Il soutenait que l'influence de la chantefable a été ressentie, par l'intermédiaire de la chanson de geste *Beuve de Hantone* „dans les contes roumains et russes”.

Si l'écrivain roumain a choisi comme personnage un soldat russe c'est soit pour suggérer une source d'inspiration indirecte, soit pour éviter les répercussions du message transmis par Ivan.

Malheureusement, tout comme le conteur français, l'écrivain roumain a souffert des conséquences de sa hardiesse.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Corneliu Bărbulescu, *Postface* au volume Ion Creangă, *Amintiri din copilărie*, 1957, Editura Tineretului, Bucuresti, p.17.

<sup>8</sup>J.Ch. Payen dans la *Préface d'Aucassin et Nicolette*, p.9.

<sup>9</sup> La traduction des citations de contes roumains appartient à l'auteur de l'article.

<sup>10</sup> Corneliu Bărbulescu, *op.cit*, p.10.

2. **Le motif de la femme errante**, présent dans *Aucassin et Nicolette* nous le retrouvons dans le conte *Ileana Simziana*. Au XIIe ou au XIXe siècle, une femme errante, c'est une apparition tout à fait exceptionnelle. Jusqu'à la deuxième moitié du XXe siècle elle était le symbole de la stabilité, de l'immobilité. Il y a peu d'écrivains qui ont repris l'image de la femme errante. Pour arriver au bout de son aventure, le plus souvent elle doit feindre, avoir un aspect et une attitude masculine.

Dans la chanson de geste la femme ne joue aucun rôle et dans le roman d'aventures elle n'est que le symbole de la stabilité par rapport au chevalier qui part à la recherche de la gloire. Avec *Nicolette* tout change. C'est la jeune fille qui escalade la fenêtre, franchit le fossé, vient chercher Aucassin. Si le chevalier montre sa faiblesse en pleurant et s'abandonne à la tristesse et à l'immobilité, *Nicolette* trouve sa liberté grâce à la fuite et le voyage révèle sa personnalité.

Le conteur français avait marqué de façon évidente le nouveau rapport entre homme et femme: si *Nicolette* est enfermée en haut „dans une chambre, à un étage élevé” (p.53), Aucassin est emprisonné „en bas dans un cachot souterrain” (p.75), comme Danaé.

Le jeu de parallélismes montre la supériorité de la jeune fille. „Force de la vie, par son courage, son esprit de décision et son adresse, elle mène le jeu sans pleurer ni se laisser abattre par l'infortune, même si elle éprouve angoisse et peur: à la crainte succède toujours l'action”<sup>11</sup>.

Dans la littérature roumaine, il y a un conte unique dans son genre, dont l'héroïne, *Ileana Simziana*, princesse comme *Nicolette*, décide de quitter la maison natale en quête de la dignité et de la gloire. La jeune femme doit protéger son père, l'empereur, qui est vieux et n'a plus la force de livrer combat contre son voisin, un roi cruel, injuste et grossier. Faute de fils, l'empereur voit sa fille essayer de paraître chevalier afin de défendre l'honneur et les terres de la famille.

Pour voyager seule en quête de son bien-aimé, *Nicolette* se dissimule: „Elle se fit faire une tunique, un manteau, une chemise, une culotte, et se déguisa en jongleur” (p.151). Le déguisement est parfait puisque même Aucassin ne la reconnaît plus et la croit homme: „Mon très cher ami», fit-il (p.159).

Le conteur roumain n'insiste pas autant sur les vêtements d'*Ileana*. Il souligne la sobriété de sa tenue. Les préparatifs les plus importants concernent son cheval. C'est lui qui donnera, à côté de ses armes, une belle et imposante allure, du poids à son apparition.

La joie du départ et le goût de l'aventure d'*Ileana Simziana* impriment de la fraîcheur au récit: „La fille sortit de la cour tel un éclair ; elle ne pouvait plus contenir sa joie...» (p.81), car „elle n'avait jamais jusqu'ici quitté la maison et elle était éblouie de voir les beautés de la prairie” (p.89).

Les belles descriptions du paysage donnent de l'éclat à la narration tout comme dans *Aucassin et Nicolette* (p.105). Les éléments décoratifs sont les mêmes: fleurs, oiseaux, ruisseaux (*Ileana Simziana*, p.90).

Le bouvier de la chantefable a un correspondant dans le conte roumain, un ogre. Les voir, cela donne le frisson, mais ils sont capables de sentiments humains.

Dans la forêt, *Nicolette* éprouve *angoisse et peur*. Elle craint le loup, le sanglier et le lion: „Si je vais dans le bois touffu, à coup sûr je serais mangée par le loup, les lions et les sangliers” (p.95).

Chose surprenante, la jeune héroïne roumaine doit affronter, elle aussi le loup et le lion afin de convaincre son père de ses vertus chevaleresques. La présence du lion dans le conte est tout à fait exotique et singulière. On ne le retrouve pas dans la faune des contes roumains. Le lion ne vit et n'a jamais vécu en liberté en Roumanie. „Les lions ont disparu de la Grèce, le dernier endroit où ils vivaient encore en Europe, vers l'année 100 de notre ère, mais une nombreuse population en est restée au nord de l'Afrique jusqu'au début du XX e siècle”<sup>12</sup>. Donc, si le trouvère avait tout de même un support quasi-réel d'imaginer *Nicolette* angoissée par la rencontre d'un lion au sud de la France, le conteur roumain n'a pu avoir qu'un modèle livresque.

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<sup>11</sup> Jean Dufournet, p.27.

<sup>12</sup> <http://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leu>

Nous avons mis en évidence plusieurs similitudes entre *Aucassin et Nicolette* et *Ileana Simziana*. Cela nous permet d'affirmer que l'auteur roumain a bien connu le contenu du récit français et qu'il a été influencé par celui-ci.

3. **La couvade** décrite par le trouvère se retrouvait aussi dans certains rituels d'accouchement anciens en Roumanie<sup>13</sup>. Mais la chaîne de télévision *Discovery* l'a présentée, il y a quelques années, parmi les coutumes d'une tribu primitive découverte dans la jungle amazonienne. Il faut avouer que cet aspect a constitué le point de départ de notre étude. La similitude semblait ne pas avoir de base matérielle, elle se présentait comme un cas sûr d'appel à l'imaginaire collectif.

*La couvade* est décrite dans *Aucassin et Nicolette* comme une habitude bizarre au royaume de Torelore. Dès l'accouchement de son enfant, le père devait garder le lit, tandis que la femme travaillait, ou pire, allait à la guerre. „Cette nouvelle stupéfié Aucassin” (p.129) qui interpella le roi: „Allons ! fou que tu es, que fais-tu ici ? Le roi lui répondit: Je suis couché, je viens d'avoir un fils. Quand mon mois sera accompli et que je serai complètement rétabli, alors j'irai entendre la messe, comme le fit mon ancêtre” (p.135).

En Roumanie, *la couvade* impliquait des restrictions au père qui devait faire le jeûne, être propre et ne plus quitter la maison. Pendant l'accouchement, il imitait les gémissements de sa femme. On retrouve cet usage particulièrement au sud-est du pays, en Dobroudja (ancienne Scythia Minor).

Pour la tribu d'Amazonie, le père, en dehors de sa hutte, criait et gémissait, en se frottant le ventre, alors que sa femme accouchait à l'intérieur.

„Attribué par Strabon aux Iberes, retrouvé chez les Scythes, signalé par Marco Polo dans la province de Zandandan („Quand les femmes ont enfanté, elles lavent l'enfant, le mettent dans les langes, puis se lèvent et s'occupent du ménage, pendant que le mari se met au lit avec l'enfant près de lui, et reste couché pendant quarante jours ; et tous ses parents et amis le viennent voir et lui font grande joie et grand soûlas. Ils font cela parce qu'ils disent que, si la femme a enduré grand travail, il est raisonnable que l'homme en souffre aussi sa part”), cet usage existe encore dans les tribus indiennes de Guyane”, comme le rapporte Bruno Bettelheim, dans les *Blessures symboliques*”<sup>14</sup>.

### Conclusions:

1. La ressemblance entre *Aucassin et Nicolette* et *Ivan Turbincă* a comme point de départ le contact culturel soit par l'intermédiaire des contes russes, soit par des versions de *Beuve de Hanton* qui sont signalées en Roumanie aussi. Nous pensons à un contact indirect parce qu'il s'agit d'un seul aspect qui coïncide.

Les qualités intellectuelles de l'auteur roumain, Ion Creangă, (il avait une formation pédagogique d'exception, doublée par une formation religieuse et il connaissait bien le français, ce qui le rend capable de lire et traduire des ouvrages littéraires) ont pu favoriser le contact culturel.

2. La présence de plusieurs éléments de similitude, en dehors du motif central de la femme errante, nous détermine à affirmer que le créateur anonyme du conte roumain *Ileana Simziana* connaissait très bien la chantefable française. Le XIXe siècle culturel roumain doit beaucoup à la vie artistique française, la langue roumaine en fait preuve par la multitude des néologismes français qu'elle adopte à cette période.

En dépit de l'éloignement spatial (environ 2000Km) des pays qui les ont engendrés et de l'écart temporel (plus de 600 ans), *Aucassin et Nicolette* „a contaminé” les deux récits roumains.

3. La coutume de la *couvade* présente dans la chantefable, mais aussi dans certains rituels d'accouchement roumains, nous détermine à la considérer comme un produit de l'imaginaire collectif. Surtout par sa présence dans les pratiques rituelles des primitifs de la forêt d'Amazonie, isolés et incapables de contact culturel.

<sup>13</sup> Mihai Pop, 1976, *Obiceiuri tradiționale românești*, Institutul de cercetări etnologice și dialectologice, București, p.51-57.

<sup>14</sup> Bruno Bettelheim-Psychiatre américain d'origine autrichienne (Vienne, 1903) qui a étudié les psychoses infantiles. Marco Polo (1254-1324).



4. Pour ultime conclusion, nous pouvons reprendre le vœu de Mircea Eliade: „Lorsque les historiens des religions vont entreprendre une *lecture critique* des nombreux Univers Imaginaires du folklore des sociétés rurales européennes, on pourra découvrir des parallèles *populaires* de quelques grandes créations littéraires, telles les romans du *cycle arthurien* ou *La Divina Commedia*...”<sup>15</sup>.

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## Adventure Tales or Ethnographic Novels?

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**Résumé :** *L'article présente quelques observations concernant l'évolution du roman sud-africain anglophone entre le conte d'aventure, la littérature juvénile et le roman ethnographique.*

**Key Words:** *exoticism, genre, goldmine, juvenile, savage, settler, Zulu adventure tale, ethnographic novel, exploration romance, travel narrative*

### 1. Adventure tales

In the world of the adventure tale, the important relationships were necessarily between men. Colonial writings are full of scenes of solidarity among men, figured as self-mirroring and doubling. This effect of doubling might be applied to readership too. These imperial adventure tales were meant for males.

Rider Haggard had the following dedication when he completed his 1885 novel *King Solomon's Mines*:

This faithful but unpretending record  
of a remarkable adventure  
is hereby respectfully dedicated  
by the narrator  
ALLAN QUARTERMAIN,  
to all the big and little boys  
who read it.

In fact Rider Haggard arrived in South Africa at the age of 17, so himself a boy and moved a lot among the Zulu people, learning much about their history, customs and heroes.

In Haggard's *Nada the Lily* (1892) the African is romanticized as in his other books. And like James Fenimore Cooper's tales about Red Indians, Haggard's world - the fake-legendary - interests juveniles.

This is what one can read in *The Concise Cambridge History of English Literature* by G. Sampson (1972):

The novelist who first made the English reading public familiar with the kopje and the veld was Sir Henry Rider Haggard (1925:36) who went to Natal in 1875 and returned to his native Norfolk in 1881. His first book was *Cetewayo and his White his Neighbours* (1882), but it was by his romantic novels that he won popularity. The first of these, *King Solomon's Mines* (1885), was the result of a wager between Haggard, who said he could write a better boys' story than *Treasure Island*, and his brother, who said he couldn't. Most of the succeeding novels - *She*, *Allan Quatermain*, etc - were written for adults, but they are mainly found today on the juvenile shelf.(762-763)

Coming back to *King Solomon's Mines*, this is an exiting mystery adventure, a quintessential example of the genre, the main hero, Allan Quatermain being everything all the previous heroes have been, with the exception that he is fifty-five, so an older man. As Stephen Gray puts it in *Southern African Literature* (1979): "the book remains dedicated to 'all the big and little boys who

read it' but Quatermain himself is not dedicated to remaining a British boy. With *Quatermain*, one feels, the genre itself has begun to grow up". (120).

## **2. H. Rider Haggard**

H.Rider Haggard's work is part of a fashion, which involved Kipling and Stevenson as originators of an alternative Victorian literature. Nineteenth century English literature abounds in 'exploration' romances, which may be simple adventure stories of the Boys' Own Annual variety, Kipling's more complex versions of these, or 'elixir of life' stories and variants such as Rider Haggard's *She*. The locale—the "unknown" the explorers travel into —is often Africa or India or Arabia, a jungle or a desert or other exotic setting; often "natives", hostile or charming or both, are among the obstacles or rewards encountered by the adventurers. Pushed a little further, the "exploration" story takes on overtones of another kind of journey into the unknown: the journey into the unknown regions of the self, the unconscious, and the confrontation with whatever dangers and splendors lurk there. In this case "England" or "Europe" embodies the everyday ego or the order of the rational mind as opposed to the chaos of the unconscious. The explorer must leave rational order behind. Joseph Conrad's story *Heart of Darkness*, with its jungle and its protagonist overcome by the temptations of his own self, is perhaps the best example of the adventure story as psychological exploration.

If exploration involves a primal encounter with the land and a settler is a man who attempts to clear a place for him out of the land, an Explorer is a man who travels through the land for the first time, without settling in it. He may be looking for something specific —India, the Northwest Passage, a goldmine —in which case his exploration resembles a quest; or he may just be mapping out new territory, seeing what is there. At any rate, he is venturing into the unknown.

### **2.1. King Solomon's Mines**

In the classic adventure novel *King Solomon's Mines* (1885), the explorer Allan Quatermain leads an expedition into the dangerous and mysterious heart of Africa—Kukuanaland to find his friend's lost brother and King Solomon's fabulous treasure!

Perils abound on the expedition, but the adventurers have a strong and unexpected ally—Umbopa, Quatermain's enigmatic Zulu servant. The novel was the result of a wager between Haggard, who said he could write a better boys' story than *Treasure Island* (1883) and his brother, who said he couldn't. On the contrary the novel matched the wonder and excitement of R.L.Stevenson's and received a spectacular reception. Thirty-one thousand copies were printed in the first year and in America alone thirteen separate editions came out during the year 1885. R.L. Stevenson himself found in it "flashes of a fine weird imagination and a fine poetic use and command of the savage way of talking" things which thrilled him.

The very introduction to the novel proves a convincing apology for not being " a full account of everything we did and saw", confessing that "the sense of its shortcomings both in style and contents, weighs very heavily upon" him. He chose to tell the story in a plain, straightforward manner, adding:

I am more accustomed to handle a rifle than a pen, and cannot make any pretense to the grand literary flights and flourishes which I see in novels —for I sometimes like to read a novel. I suppose they —the flights and flourishes - are desirable, and I regret not being able to supply

them; but at the same time I cannot help thinking that simple things are always the most impressive, and books are easier to understand when they are written in plain language, though I have perhaps no right to set up an opinion on such a matter. "A sharp spear," runs the Kukuana saying, "needs no polish;" and on the same principle I venture to hope that a true story, however strange it may be, does not require to be decked out in fine words. (...)

In the first chapter Haggard writes:

It is a curious thing that at my age –fifty-five last birthday –I should find myself taking up a pen to try and write a history. I wonder what sort of a history it will be when I have done it, if I ever come to the end of the trip!

If one looks through an anthology of seventeenth and eighteenth centuries English literature one can find a few novels subtitled as a "true story" or "history"; the one I can recall immediately is Aphra Behn's "*Oroonoko or the Royal Slave*" (1688) – the novelist registered in the burial record as Astrea – a romance name ( taken from the French pastoral romance *L'Astrée* by d'Urfe).

I think that both *Oroonoko* and *Solomon's Mines* contain discourses of exoticism and romance together with economics and travel narrative. Like other texts both include descriptions of natural wonders, wild and wonderful animals. R. Haggard explains in a footnote that the narrator, Allan Quatermain "discovered eight varieties of antelope" with which he "was previously totally unacquainted, and many new species of plants, for the most part of the bulbons tribe" while A. Behn mentions "little rarities; as carmosets... causeries.... little parakatoes, great parrots, muckaws".

Gold and sugar make Surinam significant for a late seventeenth century reader as a place of both exoticism and trade, and Oroonoko's double significance as a rebel slave and as an educated African prince make him a paradoxical protagonist. Behn's interests in power, desire, and storytelling are reworked to focus on the questions of difference and doubleness.

It is very important to know the significance which Surinam had for Europeans, especially the English, and the way in which her text uses these ideas. The Europeans went to the Caribbean to look for gold. When Columbus sighted the Bahamas in 1492 he remarked: "these islands are very green and fertile...and it is possible that there are in them many things I do not know because I did not wish to delay in finding gold."

Initially, fantasies about the accumulation of instant wealth eclipsed all other ideas about the Caribbean. The importance of the products of the Indies are evident in the 1596 edition of Sir Walter Raleigh's account of his voyage to and encounter with Guyana.

Raleigh attempted to stabilize the value of Caribbean gold and this is a major theme in a text, which also details what people, vegetation, minerals and other wonders are to be found in Guayana. Gold

was the leitmotif of sixteenth century accounts of the South African mainland, and the dominant motive for raids and contact with the native population. It was obtained by the competing Spanish, French and English both by trade with native peoples and by setting up mines in which native labor was cruelly exploited. The rights to the mines were disputed amongst the Europeans, who would raid one another's foot and sea-convoy – transporting gold back to Europe.

Its value on the European market, combined with the distant places where it was found and the variously grueling ways it was obtained, meant that gold was commodity, which, at the end of the sixteenth and beginning of the seventeenth centuries, had a confused representational value. To obtain gold, at an individual level, was to obtain a commodity which was better than money, in that it was not subject to fluctuations, and therefore it gave the owner not only wealth but also the power to control transactions. Gold was virtually magic, because it was both a medium of exchange and an object of exchange.

At the political level gold was crucial to relations between the increasingly capitalistic economies of Europe. Gold as Raleigh saw it disrupted and therefore transformed old relationship whereby a man would owe legality to the crown. It buys intelligence, useful and secret information.

The cultural value of gold meant that the West Indies and South America were the focus of fantasies about the wealth and difference. This persisted throughout the Stuart period to the renewed interest in the West Indies and Guyana during Oliver Cromwell's protectorate (1653 - 1658), the period in which *Oroonoko* is set, and it found new impetus in the period of colonial expansion after the restoration of Charles II.

Gold brought the West Indies to the attention of Europe, and by the restoration period it had acquired a more diverse economy, as colonization brought the establishment of plantations. This settlement spawned a literature of its own which included travel writing and prospectuses advertising life on the plantations, organized by entrepreneurs like the Lord Governor, Francis

Willoughby (a shadowy presence in Behn's narrative ). The accounts bring together descriptions of new and wonderful information which could be used instrumentally if the literature might want to read about extraordinary places, if they might be considering going there to settle. This spectrum of interests - from exoticism to economic utility- was reflected in descriptions of Guyana and Surinam.

In Haggard's novel the traders are after something worth more than gold. *King Solomon's Mines* depicts the lure of the countless diamonds stored in Solomon's treasure chamber " behind the white Death", whose evidence was a bit of torn yellow linen on which three hundred years ago, a political Portuguese refugee wrote: "Eu Jose de Silvestra que estau morrendo de fome" an extraordinary story of o treasure, leaving a map to be followed "to those mountains which no white foot ever pressed before or since"(18).

Stephen Gray claims that the narrator, Allan Quatermain by setting down the reasons for writing the book of the expedition, I undermines in fact, the confidence we have in the genre itself:

First reason: Because Sir Henry Curtis and Captain John Good asked me to. Second reason: Because I am laid up here at Durban with the pain and trouble in my left leg. Ever since that

confounded lion got hold of me I have been liable to it, and its being rather bad just now makes me limp more than ever. There must be some poison in a lion's teeth, otherwise how is it that when your wounds are healed they break out again, generally, mark you, at the same time of the year that you got your mauling? It is a hard thing that when one has shot sixty-five lions, as I have in the course of my life, that the sixty-sixth should chew your leg like a quid of tobacco. It breaks the routine of the thing, and, putting other considerations aside, I am an orderly man and don't like that. This is by the way.

Third reason: Because I want my boy Harry, who is over there at the hospital in London studying to become a doctor, to have something to amuse him and keep him out of mischief for a week or so. Hospital work must sometimes pall and get rather dull, for even of cutting-up dead bodies there must come satiety, and as this history won't be dull, whatever else it may be, it may put a little life into things for a day or two while he is reading it.

Fourth reason and last: Because I am going to tell the strangest story that I know of. It may seem a queer thing to say that, especially considering that there is no woman in it –except Foulata.

Stop, though! There is Gagaoola, if she was a woman and not a fiend. But she was a hundred at least, and therefore not marriageable, so I don't count her. At any rate, I can safely say that there is not a petticoat in the whole history.(10)

However I would argue against his thesis, I believe, in contrast, that Haggard's use of a confessional tone adds to his subtlety in really breaking the routine of mechanical reactions.

As Stephen Gray put it in the already mentioned article, Haggard was not able to drive his intentions as a novelist through to a successful fictional resolution and that is an unfortunate fact. The let-down for the reader comes as soon as Haggard's trio are underway; the account of their journey proves to be a refinement in the genre, but not its transcendence. In *King Solomon 'S Mines*, Haggard defeats his own ambitious aims, as he turns the work into no more than yet another saga of



conquest and blood-letting. In his desperate attempt to add new vitality to the pale and fading genre, Haggard can only set about outdoing his predecessors in 'special effects'. Gagool the witchdoctress, for example, is an insanely over-inflated character: her role as evil utterly personified, her baboon-like racial memory and her staggering longevity are details that overstep the enlargements of fantasy into the merely silly. The carnage, which is equivalent not to that of a Mfecane or two in the hands of a few violent warriors, but to genocidal holocaust, mounts up until it rivals earthquakes and floods (of blood) in proportion, and is sickly sensational. Truly sensational proves the death dance, which creates a horrible fascination.

Instantly there was a pattering of feet, and from out of the masses of the warriors strange and awful figures came running toward us. As they drew near we saw that they were those of

women, most of them aged, for their white hair, ornamented with small bladders taken from fish, streamed out behind them. Their faces were painted in stripes of white and yellow; down their backs hung snake-skins, and around their waists rattled circlets of human bones, while each held in her shriveled hand a small forked wand. In all there were ten of them. Then they arrived in front of us they halted, and one of them, pointing with her wand toward the crouching figure of Gagool, cried out:

"Mother, old mother, we are here."...

With a wild yell the weird party broke away in every direction, like fragments from a shell, and, the dry bones around their waists rattling as they ran, made direct for various points of the dense human circle. We could not watch them all, so fixed our eyes upon the Isanusi nearest us. When she came within a few paces of the warriors, she halted and began to dance wildly, turning around and around with an almost incredible rapidity, and shrieking out sentences such as "I

smell him, the evil-doer!", "He is near, he who poisoned his mother!" ; "I hear the thoughts of him who thought evil of the king!"  
Quicker and quicker she danced, till she lashed herself into such a frenzy of excitement...(140-141)

This Kukuana witch-hunt turns into a manslaughter that is put an end to by the white men after the king of the tribe had counted one hundred and three cruel executions – corpses flung out to the hyenas and the vultures. The eclipse came to the white men's help just in due time to replace the blood-thirsty king with a good one, Ignosi who promises that: "The witch-finders shall hunt no more, nor shall any men die the death without judgment"(153)

When he split his main character into three, he had the idea that could have given the genre a new creative energy; Quatermain, the doer and scribe, is only one facet of the three-in-one

character of the expedition itself. Ballantyne had done it with respect to youths in *The Coral Island* and in other lurid African blood-letting adventures, but Haggard lets his trio be of mature adults. Sir Henry Curtis, the noble classical scholar, landlord, muscular warrior and curly-haired ancient Dane incarnate, a quite absurd conflation of all that is aristocratic and to be aspired to, and Captain John Good, the earthy, blaspheming, sensual animal, a figure of low comedy with his trousers perpetually off, his hairy white legs and monocle. They are foils to Quatermain, his upper and lower selves. Although there are occasionally situations which cause one or the other to come to the fore, they are never shown to march out of step with one another, nor are any wider personality-cleavages exploited. The agreeable interfaces they maintain are no more than a symbol of solidarity; they never diverge into expressing the doubts Haggard professes to feel.

A key illustration of this is in the way Captain John Good is observed by Quatermain when a threatening love interest arises. Despite the fact that Quatermain states there is “not a petticoat in

the whole history” (10), it is full of scant peltries and curvaceous hips. When Foulata, the beautiful maiden of Kukuanaland, saved by the trio from a grisly tribal sacrifice, nurses Good back to health, pouring her own warm life force into his waning body, Quatermain pulls himself up at the prospects:

Women are women, all the world over, whatever their colour. Yet somehow it seemed curious to watch this dusky beauty bending night and day over the fevered man's couch, and performing all the merciful errands of the sick room as swiftly, gently, and with as fine an instinct as a trained hospital nurse.(214)

In *King Solomon's Mines*, when all is said and done, Haggard offers only one excuse for the disruption of Kukuana tribal life that his invaders effected. For Kukuana read Matabele, and the historical allegory makes sense. Quatermain says:

I remarked that Ignosi [the puppet they install in place of the supposed usurper of the Kukuana throne] had swum to the throne in blood. The old chief shrugged his shoulders. 'Yes,' he answered; 'but the Kukuana people can only be kept cool by letting the blood flow sometimes.' Many were killed, indeed, but the women were left, and others would soon grow up to take the places of the fallen. After this the land would be quiet for a while at least until *Prester John* (213)

The cosmetic improvements on the old order they leave in their wake are expressed in Quatermain's farewell words to Ignosi: "If thou art grateful to us, remember to do even as thou didst promise; to rule justly, to respect the law, and to put none to death without a cause." (p 197) That is, 'no man's blood should be shed without trial, and . . . witch-hunting should cease in the land' (162). Their legacy is a framework of European law and order which is geared to maintaining a friendly alliance with those who obey the constitution of Greater Britain. When their heroes are given a conqueror's farewell, Quatermain remarks "It really was very affecting, and not the sort of things one is accustomed to meet with from natives" (270) and he speaks more truth than he knows. In return, Kukuana land has given the heroes not only a rattling good time, but diamonds 'of the finest water', enough of them to 'flood the market'(206). Not one of the three characters feels that the effects of their actions call for comment.

## 2.2. She

In their *Perspectives on South African Fiction* (1980) Sarah Christie, Geoffrey Hutchings and Don MacLennan wrote that:

As novel followed novel Haggard was variously criticized for carelessness of execution, faulty characterization and bathos, but, like the creator of James Bond, he was praised for invention and imaginative talent. Not that he fails to tell a good story: what interests us, reading his novels eighty-five years later, is the transparency of the cultural lenses operating in them. This nexus of myths may be called the 'allegory of imperialism'; it has three elements or ingredients, which are the concern of Haggard (as well as of other writers of the period, like Henty, Doyle, Mitford and Ballantyne). These are:

1. the pursuit of the past into myth, or the projection of mystery into the present;
2. the moral and technical superiority of the Anglo-Saxon race;
3. the expression of, or indulgence in, sexual fantasy.

In an oblique way the last eighty-five years of South African fiction in English has been an extensive debunking of this set of myths.... Haggard's allegorical battle of love and hate, light and dark, energy and entropy, the cry of the smothered soul for release from rational anguish—all these are still with us. His work is visionary, touching on the primordial experience: 'In more restricted and succinct form, this primordial experience is the essential content of Rider Haggard's *She* and *Ayesha*.(20,21)

What gave Haggard's romance novelty at the time was that it was based on the then recently available documents on African exploration. But it takes these otherwise modest works a step further, for it sets Western intelligence, will and purposefulness against an African lack of impetus. Not only is there a cultural disparity between black and white, there is also a natural moral disparity between the two. Thus the formula of this novel is the popular appeal to the Europeans' sense of superiority over the savages, and the strange fantasy, explored more thoroughly by Conrad in *Heart of Darkness*.

Haggard noted after Foulata's death which seemed to have moved Good greatly, that he never was quite the same:

I am bound to say that, looking at the thing from the point of view of an oldish man of the world, I consider her removal was a fortunate occurrence, since, otherwise, complications would have been sure to ensue. The poor creature was no ordinary native girl, but a person of great, I had almost said, stately beauty, and of considerable refinement of mind. But no amount of beauty or refinement could have made an entanglement between Good and herself a desirable occurrence; for as she herself put it, "Can the sun mate with the darkness, or the white with the black?"(263)

Although the Anglo-Saxon believes in the superiority of his race, he is highly critical of his civilization. He is, in many ways, quite genuine in his admiration of tribesmen because they are not over-cerebral, sophisticated or commercial. The tribe is, curiously enough, an aristocratic surrogate, for in one sense at least, romance is a neurosis of the bourgeoisie in search of an aristocratic world.

In spite of its clumsiness, fetishism, prudery and arrogance, and in spite of its serious ignorance of the social and political realities of Africa in the nineteenth century, the novel is actually trying to say something. Haggard's main theme is the need for release from bondage, particularly that of materialism, so his tale is about a rediscovery of something basic, alive, emotional and sacred beyond the confines of constitutionality and rationality. Yet at the same time Haggard so little understands this irrationality that it is also a grim prophecy of what was to come in later South African attempts to 'understand' the irrational.

An important point made in his novel *She* is that She is white, i.e. even in the heart of Africa the prevailing mystery of the unknown does, upon inspection, prove to be very similar to what we already know. It is a theme carried over into several of his works: that the worst savages are to be found in the West or East ends of London, that in principle there is no difference between 'them' and 'us':

Scratch the polish, and there you have the best raw Zulu human nature. Indeed to anybody who has taken the trouble to study the question, it is simply absurd to observe how powerless high civilization has been to do anything more than veneer that raw material which remains identical in each case.[Haggard 1894:134]

In other words, Haggard had at least registered the problem of moral relativism besetting his own culture:

... by what exact right do we call people like the Zulus savage? Setting aside the habit of polygamy, which, after all, is common among very highly civilized peoples in the East, they have a social system not unlike our own. They have, or had, their kings, their nobles, and their commons. They have an ancient and elaborate law, and system of morality in some ways as high as our own, and certainly more generally obeyed. They have their priests and their doctors; they are strictly upright, and observe the rites of hospitality.[Haggard 1913:74]

What we can say positively is that Haggard exploited two important areas: the one, a sense of the mystery of psychologies different in some way from our own; the other, a notion that the truth of our situation may be got at obliquely through myth. It would be an exaggeration to say that he was prophetically claiming a greater authority for the unconscious mind in human action than any skeptics were prepared to allow, but, after all, he was in his perverse way also in the company of Tolstoy: "We are forced to fall back on fatalism as an explanation of irrational events (that is to say, events the reasonableness of which we do not understand). The more we try to explain such events in history reasonably, the more unreasonable and incomprehensible do they become to us".[Tolstoy 1961:257]

### **3. The 'ethnographic' novel**

Let us, in conclusion, take one more look at the origin of this entire genre. By 1870 many English writers had taken up the theme of travel in distant, exotic lands. The 'ethnographic' novel became popular perhaps just because it was so different from the Victorian drawing room literature

of the previous thirty years.[Killam 1968:10] Curtin remarks, 'Thereafter, when the new generations of explorers or administrators went to Africa, they went with a prior impression of what they would find. Most often, they found it and their writings, in turn, confirmed the older image –or, at most, altered it only slightly.[Curtin 1963:7]

But popular literature inevitably distorts the image it presents of 'primitive' man, and the sad truth is that for many Englishmen 'Africa became the Africa of *King Solomon's Mines*. We see this in John Buchan's *Prester John*(1910), where Davie presents certain ideas on English rule of South African natives with which the reader is expected to sympathize.

I knew then the meaning of the white man's duty. He has to take all the risks. That is the difference between white and black, the gift of responsibility, the power of being in a little way a king, and so long as we know and then practice it, we will rule not in Africa alone but wherever there are dark men who live only for their bellies. [Buchan,1970: 365-366]

Sir Henry Curtis, who first appears in *King Solomon's Mines*, represents the merging of the accepted intellectual superiority of the Englishman with great physical qualities: the natives acknowledge his courage and strength in battle, and when he dons the dress of the 'savages' for fighting, he looks as noble and as savage as their own leader, Umbopa. He thus joins Edgar Rice Burroughs's Tarzan (1917) in reconciling English superiority with romantic primitivism by representing what is noble in the savage as being also British![Street 1975:20]

Like so much writing of its kind, the writing of Rider Haggard is so loaded with the habit of allegory that as a lens for the sensibilities it thoroughly distorts the realities of the African experience.

#### **4. Adventure story or psychological exploration?**

If an author is going to send his character into the 'unknown' for the purposes either of a simple adventure story or of a psychological exploration, he has to rule out the hidden Ancient-Egypt type of exotic civilization Rider Haggard or Wilbur Smith specialized in. Theirs and other of the adventure tales writers also modeled in part on the quest patterns of the explorer narratives in general circulation at the time. Margaret Atwood in *Survival* (1972: 115-116) refers to "exploration" as a recurring motif in Canadian literature, for reasons that she believes are not uncommitted with the "Where is here" dilemma: that is , if a writer feels himself living in a place whose shape is unclear to him, a " world but scarcely uttered"... one of his impulses will be to explore it, another will be to name it. (Mention of charts or maps –those direction-finding devices which attach names to place diagrams–is one clue that you're dealing with an exploration poem).

Atwood makes a guess as to what the Canadian patterns of the exploration theme are. She identifies two main ones:

- exploration that doesn't "find" anything
- doomed exploration; that is, the explorers find death.

I dare say that the patterns hold true for other literatures as well. With South African explorer stories I can add a third type

- exploration that does "find" something, the perfect illustration being Haggard's *King Solomon's Mines* in which both the diamonds and the lost brother are found in the end though the "millions of pounds' worth of gems that lie in the three stone coffers will never shine around the neck of an earthly beauty" (265), thus enhancing the mystery.

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# Drawing Moustaches to Mona Lisa. Rewriting: Postmodernism in Action

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**Résumé:** *Le but de cet article est de démontrer comment le postmodernisme facilite le processus de réécriture des textes antérieurs. Pour ce faire il faut distinguer nettement entre l'intertextualité, en général, et l'intertextualité postmoderne, en particulier. Nous nous poserons aussi la question de savoir si cet éternel retour aux textes antérieurs est une marque d'originalité ou un simple acte d'imitation.*

**Key words:** *postmodernism, rewriting, intertextuality, parody, originality.*

## 1. Postmodernism – ontologically oriented towards the eternal return

Postmodernism is contemporaneity, being just as Margaret Ferguson claims “the best umbrella term for the cultural, social and theoretical dimensions of our period”<sup>1</sup>. Our postmodern age seems marked by the ontological urges of the eternal return, because stories are known to “improve with retelling” and to be endlessly “*told in order to be retold*”<sup>2</sup>. Even critics like Terry Eagleton admit that the rewriting of all literary works is unconsciously done by the societies which read them. He also added that “there is no reading of a work which is not also a ‘re-writing’”<sup>3</sup>, and that our society excels in the reproduction, reinterpretation, repetition, and all the other re- prefixed words that define this penchant for past.

In postmodernism, this taste for recycling already used materials and the urge to invent only out of necessity are common loci of our age. Following the same pattern, Flann O’Brien considers that literature should be imagined as “a limbo from which discerning authors could draw their characters as required, creating only when they failed to find a suitable existing puppet.”<sup>4</sup> They do not only manipulate these “puppets” according to their own vision of the world, but they also try to place them in unexploited scenarios.

Thus, the flexibility, the interpretive character and the self-consciously dialogic attitude<sup>5</sup> of postmodernism offered the favouring context for rewriting, because writers had all the necessary ingredients for the revision of older recipes. However, postmodernism is more than an ideological trend, or a rigid concept, because its main value stays in the definitively ironic attitude it displays. Quite different from modernism whose works heavily relied on the tragic dimension of experience of the individual and the absolute, postmodernism revels in comedy, exalting the spirit of parody and play, favouring irony with respect to the absolute (which appears under various names: “totality,” “canon,” “centre,” “logocentrism,” “metaphysics,” etc.)<sup>6</sup>, fragmentariness, dispersion, eclecticism.

According to Brian McHale, while modernist fiction was epistemological dominant, focusing on the questions regarding knowledge just as it appears in Robbe-Grillet’s *The Jealousy*, or in Faulkner’s *Absalom, Absalom!*, postmodernist fiction is ontological dominant, being concerned with the existence of the world/s, of ourselves, questioning every little aspect of our lives. We keep asking ourselves: “What is a world?”, “What kinds of world are there?”, “How are they

<sup>1</sup> As quoted in Bacchilega, Cristina, *Postmodern Fairy Tales: Gender and Narrative Strategies*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 1997, p.20.

<sup>2</sup> Kroeber, Karl, *Retelling/Rereading: The Fate of Storytelling in Modern Times*, Rutgers, New Brunswick, 1992, p.1.

<sup>3</sup> Eagleton, Terry, *Literary Theory*, The University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, 1996, p. 11.

<sup>4</sup> O’Brien, Flann, *At Swim-Two-Birds*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1975, p.25.

<sup>5</sup> Călinescu, Matei, *Five Faces of Modernity: Modernism, Avant-Garde, Decadence, Kitsch, Postmodernism*, Ed. Univers, București, 1995, p.279.

<sup>6</sup> Epstein, Mikhail, “The Place of Postmodernism in Postmodernity”, [http://www.focusing.org/apm\\_papers/epstein.html](http://www.focusing.org/apm_papers/epstein.html), data retrieved on April, 20, 2008.

constituted?,” “How do they differ?,” “What is the mode of existence of a text and what is the mode of existence of the world(s) it projects?”.<sup>7</sup> This ontological orientation corresponds to the search for meaning in our lives, to the quest for identifying who we truly are beyond the masks we display and for admitting that there is no final or absolute answer, because we can only grasp a perspective of reality, not the whole picture. This is exactly what Lily Briscoe is trying to point out in the novel *To the Lighthouse* when she claims that she would need at least fifty pairs of eyes to understand Mrs. Ramsey’s character completely. Only then would she be privy to every possible angle and nuance: “One wanted fifty pairs of eyes to see with ... Fifty pairs of eyes were not enough to get round that one woman with, she thought.”<sup>8</sup>

Talking about the “illusions of postmodernism”, Eagleton claims that postmodernism’s rich body of work “on racism and ethnicity, on the paranoia of identity thinking, on the perils of totality and the fear of the otherness” and “its deepened insight into the cunning of power”, are considered to be of great value. Having shown what seems for him to be the positive aspects of postmodernism, he goes on arguing about “its cultural relativism and moral conventionalism, its skepticism, pragmatism, localism, its distaste for the ideas of solidarity and disciplined organization, its lack of any adequate theory of political agency: all these would tell heavily against it”.<sup>9</sup>

With all the pros and cons of postmodernism, Cristina Bacchilega underlines the fact that whether we agree or not, postmodernism has had a great impact on many of today’s configurations of Western culture and “its hierarchical distinctions among disciplines and genres, especially literature, popular culture, and folklore”. Despite the various and conflicting interpretations, what matters most is the postmodernist “anti-humanistic conceptualizations of the subject”, “the play with multiplicity and performance in narrative”, “the struggle with the sexual and gender ramifications of problematizing identities and differences”.<sup>10</sup>

In his ‘Hiding in the Light’, Dick Hebdige illustrates that whether ‘postmodernism’ is a critical concept, or just “a buzzword”, it is clearly an inextricable part of our contemporary life. He points to the fact that the ‘postmodern’ label is applied in our society to describe “the décor of a room”, “the design of a building”, “a television commercial”, “the layout of a page in a fashion magazine or critical journal”, “a new phase in commodity fetishism”, “a fascination for images, codes and styles”, “a process of cultural, political or existential fragmentation and/or crisis”, “an ‘incredulity towards metanarratives’”, “the replacement of unitary power axes by a plurality of power/discourse formations”, “the collapse of cultural hierarchies”, “the dread engendered by the threat of nuclear self-destruction”, “the decline of the university”, “the functioning and effects of the new miniaturized technologies”, “broad societal and economic shifts into a ‘media’, ‘consumer’ or ‘multinational’ phase”. By enumerating all of the above, Dick Hebdige wants to show the various usages and the variety of domains to which we apply the concept of ‘postmodernism’, but he also means to demonstrate the shallowness of this label which we take out of the pocket whenever we run into an unexpected or twisted vision of the world.<sup>11</sup>

Karl Marx’s famous remark about history repeating itself appears to be compulsory in any discussion of postmodernism<sup>12</sup>, where everything is bound to happen twice: the first time as tragedy, the second time as farce. This is precisely what Shoshana implies by stating that “repetition is not of sameness, but of *difference*”<sup>13</sup>, because what “returns” is always the other.

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<sup>7</sup> McHale, Brian, *Postmodernist Fiction*, Routledge, London, 1987, p.56.

<sup>8</sup> Woolf, Virginia, *To the Lighthouse*, Harcourt, New York, 1927, p.59.

<sup>9</sup> Eagleton Terry. *The Illusions of Postmodernism*. Blackwell, London, 1996, p.134.

<sup>10</sup> Bacchilega, Cristina, *Postmodern Fairy-Tales: Gender and Narrative Strategies*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 1997, p.19.

<sup>11</sup> Storey, John, *Postmodernism and “the other side”*, Pearson Education, London, 2006, p. 25.

<sup>12</sup> Lehman, David, “The Questions of Postmodernism”, <http://jacketmagazine.com/04/lehman-postmod.html>, data retrieved on April, 25, 2008.

<sup>13</sup> As quoted in Moraru, Christian, *Rewriting: Postmodern Narrative and Cultural Critique in the Age of Cloning*, State University of New York Press, Albany, 2001, p.14.

In this vicious circle of reiteration, contemporary fiction seems marked by the imperative of the eternal return. In contemporary fiction, telling becomes compulsorily belated, inextricably bound up with retelling. Borges's text *Pierre Menard, Author of the Quixote* shows that repetition is postmodernism in action. First class representative of postmodernism, Borges illustrates the paradigmatic postmodernist gesture being performed by Pierre Menard, who had undertaken the absurd task of rewriting Cervantes' *Don Quixote* as a product of his own creativity. Menard wanted his version to "coincide with" the original – word for word. The narrator of the Borges story explains that Menard succeeded in indoctrinating himself so thoroughly in Cervantes' culture, thoughts, and language that the finished portions of his *Quixote* exactly match the Cervantes text.

Originally, rewriting was used to designate the literal re-editing of a text. Just as Moraru signals rewriting was "re-writing in the prevailingly repetitive sense of the prefix". After evolving from a *mechanical operation* of reproduction, from an equation with translation, rewriting has come to signify "any operation of revaluation, emendation, and working over of a subject, image motif, style, aesthetic or political model, author or authors in more or less coherent series".<sup>14</sup>

Seeing the wide variety of contexts in which the notion of rewriting was applied, there is no wonder that it became so controversial as to make us question its status of being or not a genre proper, or at least a literary genre. Despite the different labels of "palimpsest" for Gérard Genette, of "palimtext" for Michael Davidson, or of "symbiosis" for David Cowart, rewriting was unanimously conceived as being NOT a literary genre, because we are dealing in fact with an *archigenre* or *hybrid practice*<sup>15</sup>.

For Cristian Moraru, rewriting is an intertextual form that requires the tight link to prior texts, which is traceable in the text and is marked by the author's deliberate choice of hypotexts. However, their "intentional" presence is not an elusive, faint "echo", because rewriting is usually there in various "degrees of obviousness and thus relates to self-referential/ self-reflexive literature in general and metafiction in particular."<sup>16</sup>

One of the features of rewriting has to do with the "critical" perspective imposed by the new version. As Barthes shows, the writers who often critique what they rewrite, intend to "transvalue" the values, myths, and other symbolic, "*superlative objects*"<sup>17</sup> hidden in the retold tales. In David Cowart's symbiotic relationship of the "parasitic" rewritten text with the host-like prior text seems to be one of sabotage, because rewriting undermines "the myth or exposes the ideology behind the language of the precursor text" (the "host")<sup>18</sup>.

With this eternal penchant for the past, Jean Baudrillard believes that our culture is submitted to an accelerated process of "agonizing revision", of "rewriting everything"<sup>19</sup>. This need of quoting other stories, of revisiting common loci is a typically postmodern "urge to retell", which everyone seems to be yielding to it."<sup>20</sup>

These are the reasons why Jameson considers the term *rewriting* simply good for business, including intellectual business, insofar as it generates more "repackaging" of ideas, discourse. Being ideologically revisionist, postmodernism's best emblem is the prodigious operation "of rewriting and reworking of an older system"<sup>21</sup>, because people need to put the basis of new systems, by detaching themselves from the previous ones and identifying the mistakes with the eyes of a

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<sup>14</sup> Moraru, Christian, *Rewriting: Postmodern Narrative and Cultural Critique in the Age of Cloning*, State University of New York Press, Albany, 2001, p.11.

<sup>15</sup> As quoted in Moraru, Christian, *Rewriting: Postmodern Narrative and Cultural Critique in the Age of Cloning*, State University of New York Press, Albany, 2001, p.19.

<sup>16</sup> As quoted in Moraru, Christian, *Rewriting: Postmodern Narrative and Cultural Critique in the Age of Cloning*, State University of New York Press, Albany, 2001, p.19.

<sup>17</sup> As quoted in Moraru, Christian, *Rewriting: Postmodern Narrative and Cultural Critique in the Age of Cloning*, State University of New York Press, Albany, 2001, p.32.

<sup>18</sup> Cowart, David, *Literary Symbiosis: The Reconfigured Text in Twentieth- Century Writing*. University of Georgia, 1993, p.59.

<sup>19</sup> As quoted in Moraru, Christian, *Rewriting: Postmodern Narrative and Cultural Critique in the Age of Cloning*, State University of New York Press, Albany, 2001, pp.172-173.

<sup>20</sup> As quoted in Moraru, Christian, *Rewriting: Postmodern Narrative and Cultural Critique in the Age of Cloning*, State University of New York Press, Albany, 2001, p.xi.

more mature person. Just as the saying goes, people learn from their own mistakes, and this is why they are so tied to their referential point, i.e. the past.

However, the aim of the postmodernist rewriting is not “haphazard ‘pastiche’, motivated only by perversity”, because the revision of matrix texts is done for specific purposes<sup>22</sup>. The revisionist writers initiate a discriminate process when selecting literary texts to attain specific objectives and there is no detail left at random in the rewriting of prior texts. By using rewriting techniques like *the performative transposition*, *the parodic development of certain “micronarratives”* or *the “doubling”*, authors intend to retextualize the work, to revisit it, or to give a critical retelling of cultural tales<sup>23</sup>.

Taking a close look at Linda Hutcheon’s observation that “intertextual parody of canonical American and European classics is one mode of appropriating and reformulating- with significant change- the dominant white, male, middle-class, heterosexual, Eurocentric culture<sup>24</sup>”, we become aware of the fact that a great part of the acts of rewriting is initiated by the minority voices of non-whites, non-males, non-middle-class representatives, non-heterosexually-oriented people, non-Europeans. Hence they found no representation of their “minority” in canonical literature, they felt responsible for displaying their own perspective on history, their own vision of the world, or their own version of the story.

But the question is why they chose to rewrite, and not just write their own stories. A possible reason might be the fact that such revisionist writers considered compulsory the response to the stereotypes and ambiguities cultivated by some canonical writers who either displayed racial clichés, sexist attitudes or homophobic opinions. The so-called minority writers intended to demonstrate how rewriting allows for a critical reconstruction of identity.

A good representative of *réécriture féminine* is Kathy Acker whose revisions of works belonging to Nathaniel Hawthorne, Charles Dickens, Mark Twain or Miguel de Cervantes are definitely an attempt to reinvent feminine identity and authorship. While rewriting, she “invents” titles such as *Great Expectations* (1982), *Don Quixote* (1986), and *Empire of the Senseless* (1988)<sup>25</sup>, because she rejects originality. To add more, she confesses that her whole life she has always written “by taking other texts, inhabiting them in some way”<sup>26</sup>, so that she could do something with them. Talking about her habit of “inhabiting” texts, Sciolino considers Acker an intertextualist “kleptoparasite”<sup>27</sup>, who plagiarizes other texts not for polemical reasons, but rather for expressive ones. Just as Richard Walsh notices, her plagiarism is “not an attempt to hide behind other texts, but to appropriate them” “for her own thematic concerns”<sup>28</sup>.

In her novel, *Don Quixote* (1986), which is quite different from Miguel de Cervantes' classic, the protagonist becomes a young woman obsessed with poststructuralist theory, taking it to a nihilistic extreme. Moreover, the Don's insanity that causes her to wander the streets of St. Petersburg & New York City was caused by an abortion. She recognizes the world's many lies and fakes, believes in nothing and regards identity as an internalized fictional construct. Marching around New York City and London with her dog St. Simeon, who serves as her Sancho Panza, Don Quixote attacks the sexist societies while simultaneously bringing in the foreground feminist mythologies.

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<sup>21</sup> As quoted in Moraru, Christian, *Rewriting: Postmodern Narrative and Cultural Critique in the Age of Cloning*, State University of New York Press, Albany, 2001, p.98.

<sup>22</sup> As quoted in Moraru, Christian, *Rewriting: Postmodern Narrative and Cultural Critique in the Age of Cloning*, State University of New York Press, Albany, 2001, p.138.

<sup>23</sup> Moraru, Christian, *Rewriting: Postmodern Narrative and Cultural Critique in the Age of Cloning*, State University of New York Press, Albany, 2001, p.xiii.

<sup>24</sup> Hutcheon, Linda. *The Politics of Postmodernism*. Routledge, New York, 1989, p.130.

<sup>25</sup> Moraru, Christian, *Rewriting: Postmodern Narrative and Cultural Critique in the Age of Cloning*, State University of New York Press, Albany, 2001, p. 145.

<sup>26</sup> As quoted in Moraru, Christian, *Rewriting: Postmodern Narrative and Cultural Critique in the Age of Cloning*, State University of New York Press, Albany, 2001, p. 143.

<sup>27</sup> Sciolino, Martina. “Confessions of a Kleptoparasite.” *The Review of Contemporary Fiction*. 9.3. (Fall 1989): 63-67.

<sup>28</sup> Walsh, Richard. *Novel Arguments: Reading Innovative American Fiction*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1995, pp.153-154.

## 2. Postmodern Intertextuality

As previously seen, the postmodern aesthetics is essentially 'quotationist'<sup>29</sup>, dealing with the enjoyment derived from the the new 'reconstructive' approach to past based on parody and multiple coding. As Călinescu points out, acquired through the multiple coding which is made of "allusions, citations, playfully distorted or invented reference, recasting, transposition, deliberate anachronism, mixing of historical or stylistic modes", the postmodern art relies substantially on intertextuality<sup>30</sup>.

Far more than being just a mere influence of writers on each other, intertextuality concerns the way in which a text is produced and interpreted through the reader's conscious or unconscious experience and awareness of other texts. To add more, every text is enriched by other texts which the reader has read and by the reader's own cultural context.

For Barthes, the intertextual codes represent the "dépà-lu" of the reader, being at the same time, the "mirage of citations" which lure the one who identifies them, but are never able to fully grasp them. "The I", writes Barthes "that approaches the text is itself already a plurality of other texts, of infinite or, more precisely, lost codes (whose origins are lost)"<sup>31</sup>. As a result of this polyphonic dimension in which all texts interact with a larger web or network of other texts, Boyarin considers that intertextuality made possible for no text to be viewed as an isolated or independent construction<sup>32</sup>, or considered self-sufficient or totally hermetic.

As Daniel Chandler implies it would be interesting to consider the issue of the "degrees of intertextuality" according to some criteria that make possible the evaluation of a "more intertextual" or "the most intertextual" text. In this practically utopist attempt of a writer to create a text that could only refer to itself, Chandler points to the fact that such an intention is bound to fail since texts are "written within genres and use of language which their authors have seldom 'invented'"<sup>33</sup>.

The features of intertextuality that Chandler proposes are: reflexivity, alteration, explicitness, criticality to comprehension, scale of adoption or structural unboundedness. Thus, in analyzing the "degree of intertextuality" of a text, it is important to notice how self-conscious its use seems to be, how noticeable the alteration of sources is, how explicit the reference to other texts (direct quotation, or mere allusions) may be, how important is the identification of the intertextuality in the process of comprehension for the reader, how incorporated is the text in the prior texts, or how it fits in the big picture of its structure as part of a genre, of a series, of a magazine.

In *Palimpsests*, Gérard Genette proposes a different classification for intertextuality, suggesting that the term "transtextuality" is a more inclusive term than "intertextuality".<sup>34</sup> Subsequently, the five subtypes he listed include: *intertextuality*, *paratextuality*, *architextuality*, *metatextuality* and *hypotextuality*. For Genette, intertextuality refers to quotations of earlier texts, plagiarism of form and content, or subtle allusions of previous readings. Paratextuality is used to denote the link between a text and its paratext which is made up of titles, headings, prefaces, epigraphs, dedications, acknowledgements, footnotes, illustrations, etc.; The term architextuality is designed to place the text in the context of a genre or genres, while the term hypotextuality (Genette's term was hypertextuality) is meant to place the text in relation with the preceding "hypotext" on which it is based but which it transforms, modifies, elaborates or extends (including parody, spoof, sequel, translation). Finally, metatextuality deals with explicit or implicit critical commentary of one text on another text.

Even though it was coined only in the 1960s, the concept of intertextuality dates back to

<sup>29</sup> Călinescu, Matei, *Five Faces of Modernity: Modernism, Avant-Garde, Decadence, Kitsch, Postmodernism*, Ed. Univers, București, 1995, p.238.

<sup>30</sup> Idem.

<sup>31</sup> As quoted in Moraru, Christian, *Rewriting: Postmodern Narrative and Cultural Critique in the Age of Cloning*, State University of New York Press, Albany, 2001, p. 15.

<sup>32</sup> Boyarin, Daniel, *Intertextuality and the Reading of Midrash*, University of Indiana Press, Bloomington, 1990, p. 14.

<sup>33</sup> Chandler, Daniel, "Semiotics for Beginners", <http://www.aber.ac.uk/media/Documents/S4B/sem09.html>, data retrieved on April, 15, 2008.

<sup>34</sup> Genette, Gérard, *Palimpsests*, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, 1997, p.10.

author” as being accountable for the “birth of the reader”<sup>35</sup>, for pointing out that what matters is not the origin of the text, but its destination. Letting aside the authorship of texts, Barthes contributes to the acceptance of intertextuality as part of a postmodern culture of textual, contextual and ideological interconnectivity.

Therefore, Barthes’s decentralization of the authorial self brought in the spotlight the reader who was given the task to solve intertextual riddles by filtering them through the previous reading experiences. By emphasizing that the writer is not the originator of a text, but the “orchestrator of the ‘already-written’”, Barthes places the reader face to face with a labyrinthic tissue of quotations<sup>36</sup>. Starring in the postmodernist production of texts, the reader does not grasp entirely the attention of the public.

In his critical study *How Postmodern Is Intertextuality?*, Pfister wonders whether there is a “specifically postmodernist type of intertextuality, or whether postmodernism employs intertextuality in a specific way, with specific strategies and functions”.<sup>37</sup> Even though one cannot account for a postmodern typology of intertextuality, it is quite facile to comprehend the attraction that intertextuality exercised on the contemporary readers, writers and critics. The reason why intertextuality was integrated so well in the big picture of postmodernism is because of the hybrid character of contemporary texts which are interspersed with more or less visible signs of relatedness to all writing. To add more, another reason which explains this appealing aspect of intertextuality has to do with the playfulness typically postmodernist. The postmodern reader indulges in the pleasure derived from the hide-and-seek games of the intertextual work, thus stimulating the authors to create multi-faceted texts both in literature and in media.

Those “always-already-read texts” which are part of our every day life, are, as Fredric Jameson argues, “apprehended through the sedimented layers of previous interpretations, or, if the text is brand-new, through the sedimented reading habits and categories developed by those inherited interpretive traditions”.<sup>38</sup>

Thus, in postmodernism, intertextuality is constantly present in our lives on a daily basis. Today, every time we read a famous novel like Homer’s *Odyssey*, look at a famous painting like Da Vinci’s *Mona Lisa*, listen to a famous song like Michael Jackson’s *Beat It*, watch a famous James Bond film, we are conscious of the contexts in which the text had been reproduced, alluded to, parodied and so on. We will always bare in mind James Joyce’s *Ulysses*, Duchamp’s parody of the *Mona Lisa* with a goatee and a moustache, “WeirdAl” Yankovic’s parody *Eat It*, or the Austin Powers series. This brainstorming of texts and their parodies are part of our consumerist society which manages to sell by updating the texts which belong to our cultural heritage.

As seen above, the interconnection between all the elements that surround us plays an important role in postmodernity. Moreover, as Kristeva points out, intertextuality characterizes any “signifying practice”<sup>39</sup>. She encouraged the people to regard every cultural experience, every page of history, every day-to-day happening, every literary piece of work as a TEXT made by them for themselves. Thus, Kristeva underlines the fact there is an interactive model applied to a wide spectrum of fields of activity. Quite obviously, the focus is placed on the importance of the interdisciplinarity in postmodernity.

The TEXT’s transmutation from literature to life was also noticed by Jonathan Culler who claims that intertextuality means more than a work’s relation to particular prior texts, rather because it designates its participation “in the discursive space of a culture”. He emphasizes the fact that intertextuality represents the relationship between a text and “the various language and signifying

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<sup>35</sup> Barthes, Roland, *Image-Music-Text*, Fontana, London, 1977, p.146.

<sup>36</sup> Idem, p.21.

<sup>37</sup> Jacobmeyer, Hannah, “Postmodernism”, <http://www.webdoc.de/edocia/esse/reviews/jacobm/jacobm.html>, data retrieved on April, 12, 2008.

<sup>38</sup> As quoted in Maley, Willy, “Salvaging Spenser: Colonialism, Culture and Identity”, [http://www.extra.shu.ac.uk/emls/o4-1/rev\\_jvic.html](http://www.extra.shu.ac.uk/emls/o4-1/rev_jvic.html), data retrieved on April, 12, 2008.

<sup>39</sup> Kristeva, Julia, *Desire in Language, A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1980, p.15.

practices of a culture and its relation to those texts which articulate for it the possibilities of that culture”<sup>40</sup>.

For Culler, intertextuality has a double function: on one hand, it calls our attention to previous texts, attaching to them an unprecedented value and significance, while on the other hand, it underlines the fact that in literature there is no such thing as the autonomy of a text, because all texts are inter-connected, the meaning of one text relying at times on prior texts. However, in the end, our comprehension of a text relies on the context, on the cultural environment which facilitates the intelligibility of a text<sup>41</sup>.

Culler goes even further in the demonstration of the powerful connection between text and context. The example he offers is that of a classical beginning of a fairy-tale: “Once upon a time there lived a king who had a daughter” which, in his opinion, is able to activate a rich range of “literary and pragmatic presuppositions”. Such an opening scene does not only “relate the story to a series of other stories”, but it also makes it easier for the reader to identify it with the conventions of a genre and demands from us to take certain attitudes towards it. The attitudes that as readers, we are forced to assume are conditioned by our sedimented layers and habits of reading which strongly imply that “the story will have a point to it, a moral which will govern the organization of detail and incident”. Culler’s point is that there are very many such sentences that act as a powerful “intertextual operators”<sup>42</sup> which manage to bring to surface our cultural heritage.

However, these “intertextual operators”<sup>43</sup> which are supposed to activate our previous readings can bring about misleading expectations in postmodernism, where the writer amuses him/herself while playing tricks on their readers. In postmodernist fiction, a beginning like “Once upon a time there lived a king who had a daughter” could represent the opening sentence of detective story, a science fiction account, a romance novel, not necessarily being connected to a fairy tale. Nothing is what seems to be in the playful game that fiction imposed in our postmodern times.

Quite interestingly, the reputation of a parody may outlast the reputation of the hypotext. For example, *Don Quixote*, which is a parody of the traditional knight errant tales, is by far better known than the novel that inspired it, *Amadis de Gaula*. Another notable example is that of the novel *Shamela* by Henry Fielding (1742), a parody of Samuel Richardson’s novel, *Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded* (1740), which was actually more popular than the text it parodied. To add more, the parody can also occur when characters or settings belonging to one work are used in a humorous or ironic way in another, such as the transformation of minor characters in *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* (1966). The absurdist, existentialist tragicomedy by Tom Stoppard expands upon the exploits of two minor characters from Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*.

Bringing into discussion all these devices that have led to the apparition of postmodern rewriting, Kuspit argues that postmodern pastiche is “criticality that has been castrated”, while Fredric Jameson claims that it is a simple “imitation of dead styles, speech thorough all the masks and voices stored up in the imaginary museum of a new global culture” and “random cannibalization of all the styles in the past”<sup>44</sup>. These critical opinions make one question whether writers have run out of originality, or whether this practice of “writing-as-experience-of-limits”<sup>45</sup>, crossing borders between genres and manipulating received themes, is imitative or authentic.

### **3 “Originality” in Postmodern Rewriting**

Originality is a concept based on the principle of individualism, being also related to notions like creativity and expressiveness, or to concepts such as authorship and plagiarism. Goldschmidt claims that these concepts did not exist in the Middle Ages, because people did not consider important the assertion of “the precise identity of the author of a book they were reading or

<sup>40</sup> Culler, Jonathan, *The Pursuit of Signs*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1981, p. 103.

<sup>41</sup> Ibidem, p.106.

<sup>42</sup> Ibidem, p.115.

<sup>43</sup> Ibidem, p.105.

<sup>44</sup> As quoted in Moraru, Christian, *Rewriting: Postmodern Narrative and Cultural Critique in the Age of Cloning*, State University of New York Press, Albany, 2001, p. 19.

<sup>45</sup> Hutcheon, Linda. *The Politics of Postmodernism*. Routledge, New York, 1989, p.16.



quoting as we do now”.<sup>46</sup> Despite all this importance that we nowadays attach to originality, people tend to hide the tracks of their ‘transactions’ from previous texts. No wonder that “the debts” of a hypertext to the hypotexts are very rarely acknowledged, thus contributing to the “mythology of authorial originality”, which is constantly brought into discussion<sup>47</sup>.

Even though writers have at times no intention to disclose the contribution of other texts in the shaping of their text, they cannot have that influence erased from the very heart of their works, because in the end it acts in fact as a form of intertextuality. The direct allusion to other texts is a very widespread phenomenon in popular culture, in media and in the remakes of various movies. This is also the case of the animated cartoons -*The Simpsons*, *Family Guy*, or *South Park*- or of the many amusing contemporary TV ads. The presence of such an intertextual trend in media is indicative of the producers’ belief that the viewers are endowed with the necessary experience to make sense of such allusions. Thus, the intention of the producers is to provide their viewers with the pleasure of recognition, which requires a sort of critical detachment. Quite obviously, the result of such an activity is the amusement derived from this process of tracking down even the subtlest allusion. This intertextual practice is a reminder of the fact that we live in a world where everything is somehow interconnected.

When talking about TV and popular culture, David Foster Wallace points to the fact that they act as “metastasis of originality” which may help the canonical works and their writers, and the mythology survive. By means of remakes, allusions, puns or parodies, the original texts become “accessible” and “popular”<sup>48</sup>. However, during this process of “popularizing”, several “sacrilegious” transformations occur in the rewriting of previous texts. Thus, the taste for replicas manifests itself in the interest in “mass circulation of the old under shocking forms.”<sup>49</sup> This is exactly what David Cowart means to imply when he suggests that “contemporary writing finds means to make the old new by rewriting it” through intertextual “symbiosis”<sup>50</sup>.

In *The Culture of the Copy*, Hillel Schwartz analyzes thoroughly the relation between originality and the acts of copying that it triggers.<sup>51</sup> He makes a clear distinction between two types of copying: copying as appropriation, which employs the structure of its prototype, and copying as reenactment, which is a sort of “stollentelling”<sup>52</sup> if we are to reproduce Moraru’s own words. What he claims is that the second type of copying is the one which might pose such problems as plagiarism or imitation, because it deliberately disguises all possible debts to the original text.

An example of rewriting which can be taken as an act of copying of an original is Michel Tournier’s book *Friday*, which reenacts Daniel Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe*. While taking a close look at these two texts, Gilles Deleuze managed to identify the points which differentiate them. For Deleuze, Tournier’s Robinson “is related to ends and goals rather than to origins.” Then, he is sexual and reacts in accordance with his “transformed sexuality”, having no preoccupation for creating a microcosm of the capitalist society he left behind<sup>53</sup>. In spite of this copying of the myth of Robinson, Tournier’s text is valuable because it rewrites the story from the point of view of a

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<sup>46</sup> Goldschmidt, E. P., *Mediaeval Texts and Their First Appearance in Print*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1943, p 88. ([www.questia.com](http://www.questia.com))

<sup>47</sup> Chandler, Daniel, “Semiotics for Beginners”, <http://www.aber.ac.uk/media/Documents/S4B/sem09.html>, data retrieved on April, 15, 2008.

<sup>48</sup> As quoted in Moraru, Christian, *Rewriting: Postmodern Narrative and Cultural Critique in the Age of Cloning*, State University of New York Press, Albany, 2001, p. 127.

<sup>49</sup> Moraru, Christian, *Rewriting: Postmodern Narrative and Cultural Critique in the Age of Cloning*, State University of New York Press, Albany, 2001, p. 128.

<sup>50</sup> As quoted in Moraru, Christian, *Rewriting: Postmodern Narrative and Cultural Critique in the Age of Cloning*, State University of New York Press, Albany, 2001, p. 8.

<sup>51</sup> As quoted in Martin, Craig, “The Kissing Point” [http://www.n55.dk/MANUALS/DISCUSSIONS/OTHER\\_TEXTS/CM\\_TEXT.html](http://www.n55.dk/MANUALS/DISCUSSIONS/OTHER_TEXTS/CM_TEXT.html), data retrieved on March, 15, 2008.

<sup>52</sup> Moraru, Christian, *Rewriting: Postmodern Narrative and Cultural Critique in the Age of Cloning*, State University of New York Press, Albany, 2001, p.89.

<sup>53</sup> As quoted in Martin, Craig, “The Kissing Point” [http://www.n55.dk/MANUALS/DISCUSSIONS/OTHER\\_TEXTS/CM\\_TEXT.html](http://www.n55.dk/MANUALS/DISCUSSIONS/OTHER_TEXTS/CM_TEXT.html), data retrieved on March, 15, 2008.

modern man, who would have other priorities, if he were to be put in the situation of being shipwrecked. This is why there is no wonder that the writer stressed other aspects of this situation.

Therefore, the credit we can give to postmodernism is that it brought indeed a change of perspective in the process of rewriting, because there was always a narrative voice which was kept under silence. I do not know if we can equate this change of perspective with originality, but this transformation was surely needed. This is why the need of a fresh approach to past things is somehow understandable. To add more, it is the era in which we live that makes us question everything we were taught, everything we were made to believe in. Did man reach the moon after all, or it was just a making-believe show for humanity? Rewriting justifies our need to investigate the past with the knowledge and wisdom of our 21<sup>st</sup> century selves. There seem to be no more topics, themes or stories left unexploited and this is why they are repeated, rewritten, or reinterpreted in a postmodern context. Quite interestingly, they all stay the same, except the narrative perspective and the HOW in which the text is written. Yet, as long as the HOW manages to keep us glued to the act of reading, interpreting and re-reading, then we can still speak of originality, or at least of creativity.

Talking about originality in our age, Baudrillard believes that the society in which we live is characteristically driven by a “recycling” mode that does not generate a valuable culture. The act of rewriting is considered to be a simple gesture of “rewinding modernity like a tape” and of revising the “modernist ‘leftovers’ ideologies, religions, and ethnic conflicts”<sup>54</sup>. In this age of cloned “self-same”, rewriting is seen as operating “at a zero degree of socio-cultural and political involvement- the degree of simulation”<sup>55</sup>. In trying to point out the fact that not all postmodern rewrites are epigonic-imitative, shallow “recyclings”, or “repetitive face-liftings” as Baudrillard intends to make us believe<sup>56</sup>, Moraru defends those contemporary writers who do not rewrite because they are no longer able to write or because there is nothing else left for them to do, as Barthes implies. What they do in exchange is make the old new.

After meditating upon the critical opinions mentioned above, one is left wondering if there is originality left in our cloning age when writers seem haunted by the eternal return to previous texts. Can we still talk about originality if we keep turning to the past to find inspiration? Do postmodernist writers prove to be original in their manipulation of previous texts?

If we are to draw a line to the appreciations of such critics as Baudrillard, then, we are forced to admit that there is no much originality left in postmodernism, because our age is that of Xerox, of replicas, of reproductions, of imitations. But in the end, why are we so bothered by imitations? After all, aren't we made in the resemblance of God, being a sort of copy of His? We have to admit that on a more general level imitation is a fundamental condition for our being. This is exactly what Hillel Schwartz shows us in the book *The Culture of the Copy*:

On the one hand, copying makes us what we are. Our bodies take shape from the transcription of protein templates, our languages from the mimicry of privileged sounds, our crafts from the repetition of prototypes. Cultures cohere in the faithful transmission of rituals and rules of conduct. To copy cell for cell, word for word, image for image is to make the known world our own. On the other hand, we are not identical, nor do we wish to think of ourselves as clones. Copying is ultimately imperfect, our errors eventually our heirs. The more widespread the act of copying, the greater the likelihood of significant mistranscription. Genetic slip or evolution, scribal mistake or midrash, whatever we call it, miscopying raises hard questions about identity, security, and integrity. The same technical advances that render our skill at copying so impressive also intensify the dilemmas of forgery. We use copies to certify originals, originals to certify copies, then we stand bewildered.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>54</sup> As quoted in Moraru, Christian, *Rewriting: Postmodern Narrative and Cultural Critique in the Age of Cloning*, State University of New York Press, Albany, 2001, pp. 172-173.

<sup>55</sup> Moraru, Christian, *Rewriting: Postmodern Narrative and Cultural Critique in the Age of Cloning*, State University of New York Press, Albany, 2001, p. 172.

<sup>56</sup> Ibidem, pp. 7-8.

<sup>57</sup> As quoted in Teilmann, Stina, “Copy: from Wrong to Right”, <http://www.copyright.bbk.ac.uk/contents/conferences/2006/cpteilmann.pdf>, data retrieved on April, 27, 2008.

Schwartz makes a good case in persuading us to take imitation for what it is: our fundamental condition of existence, our way of evolving, and our way of living our lives. Since, imitation is at the basis of each and every gesture that we make from the beginning until the end of our existence, why should we blame the postmodernist writers for lack of originality? If we still question their originality, we can at least trust their creativity, the way in which they express the HOW of their texts.

In the end, a way of making readers aware of the fact that there is a great deal of originality, or at least, creativity left in the postmodern rewriting, would be to take the example of Marcel Duchamp's parody of DaVinci's *Monalisa* in which he added a goatee and moustache. If the readers consider that this act of drawing moustaches to *Monalisa* can be taken for originality, then the case is solved.

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## Angela Carter's Blue Beard

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**Résumé:** Cet article présente la façon dont Angela Carter, partant de la version du conte de fées de Barbe Bleu écrite par Perrault et connaissant probablement plusieurs variantes orales du conte en question, crée sa propre version moderne dans sa collection de nouvelles intitulée «*The Bloody Chamber*» («*La Chambre ensanglantée*», 1979).

**Key words:** short story, Perrault, fairy-tales, feminism, blindness

The Bluebeard story seems to be very widely spread in France. Perrault's story has influenced most of the oral versions, but almost all of these also contain elements which do not appear in Perrault's transcription. He has left out of the traditional fairy-tale all the elements that didn't suit the morals of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Not surprisingly, Angela Carter must have been familiar with a few of the oral versions, since she had translated some of Perrault's fairy-tales and may have done some research prior to that translation and to writing her own collection of stories, *The Bloody Chamber*.

Carter gives prominence to her version of the Bluebeard by making it the title story of her collection. The traditional interaction between the powerful, sadistic husband, and his innocent, curious bride, is retained, although translated into the settings of rich French 20<sup>th</sup> century life, as Bluebeard has a romantic castle in Brittany, provided with a telephone on which he can call his stockbroker.

In her version of the tale, Carter imagines one character whose actions and presence alter the terms of the unequal conflict between husband and wife. It is not the brothers who arrive armed with muskets and rapiers to save Bluebeard's bride, but a figure who never appears in fairy-tales, the mother as traveling heroine. This is a mother who invests in her daughter's career rather than in her price on the marriage market, who, after an adventurous girlhood in Indo-China, "had outfaced a junkful of Chinese pirates, nursed a village through a visitation of the plague, shot a man-eating tiger with her own hand"<sup>1</sup>, before she was as old as her daughter. It is her mother's spirit, the courage of the Gothic heroines who pass unwrapped, unharmed, down into the dungeons of the castle, which pushes the girl to learn the truth about the bloody chamber.

In Perrault's original version, the bride's sister, Anne, is the one who looks out from the tower as Bluebeard sharpens his cutlass in the courtyard, and proclaims the galloping arrival of the bride's two brothers come to the rescue. In the French oral version, to which Carter's story resembles the most, the sister's role is played by the old *père Jacques*. In Carter's story, this figure becomes the blind piano-tuner, Jean-Yves, who loves the child bride not for her ambiguous beauty, but for her single gift of music.

The piano-tuner, the alternative husband to Bluebeard, is produced by the needs of the story's argument, believes Isabel Armstrong. The bride has already been too much seduced by seeing herself as the object of an erotic gaze, so that any other lover must be marked as "*not like that*", as the one who knows her in his heart and can appreciate her skills as a musician. He must, of course, be disabled in some respect, so that it is the bride's mother, not he, who rescues her. But the musical instrument which brings them together is perfectly in tune<sup>2</sup>.

According to Patricia Duncker, in the case of Bluebeard's wife it is as well that her lover cannot see her, for she carries the mark of her complicity and corruption forever, the complicity of

<sup>1</sup> Angela Carter, *The Bloody Chamber*, Harper, New York, 1980, p. 41.

<sup>2</sup> Isabel Armstrong, *New Feminist Discourses. Critical Essays on Theories and Texts*, Routledge, 1992, p. 122.

women who have been made in man's image, who have desired to be possessed, who walk after the diva of Isolde, the model of Montmartre, the Romanian Countess, who meet the reward of that complicity in the bloody chamber<sup>3</sup>.

As already mentioned, Carter's story is given a new direction using the narrative perspective of the virgin bride, instead of the impersonal 3<sup>rd</sup> person narrative. It begins with the image of the young bride, sleepless during the long journey by train, a train that "bore me through the night, away from Paris, away from girlhood, away from the white, enclosed quietude of my mother's apartment, into the unguessable country of marriage"<sup>4</sup>. Carter seems to consider trains as fatidic elements breaking-off with the familiar, cozy world of the past and taking the characters into a cold, hostile, and most often dangerous future (see also Carter's novel *The Magic Toyshop*). The train is the symbol that takes away the characters, linked to physical evolution and advancement towards a new life.

The mother's regrets are imagined: she is "folding up and putting away all my little relics", lingering over "this torn ribbon and that faded photograph" while the bride herself is so seduced by the part she is playing that she does not regret "the world of tartines and maman that now receded from me as if drawn away on a string, like a child's toy"<sup>5</sup>. She is truly looking forward to reaching that "magic place, that fairy castle", their destiny.

Carter carefully sprinkles premonitory clues in her story, giving the readers hints for what to expect about her heroine's destiny. She begins by suggesting that the husband has something to hide, a darker side, covered by a mask-like face. A bad omen is also the fact that he reminds her of a funereal lily, and that the engagement ring he gave her had an opal stone (her old nurse warns her that opals are bad luck).

The night before their marriage he took her and her mother to the Opera, to see *Tristan*. She was wearing his wedding gift: "clasped around my throat. A choker of rubies, two inches wide, like an extraordinarily precious slit throat ... the flashing crimson jewels ... bright as arterial blood"<sup>6</sup>. As the choker of rubies suggests the image of a slit throat, it is easy to guess that, as a punishment for her curiosity, he will try to decapitate her. The same idea is suggested by another image, by the way she sees him, in the dark, during their night journey by train: "I could see his white, broad face as if it were hovering, disembodied, above the sheets, illuminated from below like a grotesque carnival head"<sup>7</sup>.

In the library of the castle, the titles of the books she sees are also suggestive: *The Initiation*, *The Key of Mysteries*, *The Secret of Pandora's Box*, and even the titles of the paintings on the walls are significant: *Sacrificial Victim*, *The Foolish Virgins*, *Out of the Night We Come*, *Into the Night We Go*.

Before their wedding night, he makes her put on her choker and twines her hair into a rope, lifting it off her shoulders, and he kisses the rubies before he kisses her, like in a kind of strange, mysterious ritual known only by him, and she has to remain that way, without taking off the ruby choker or fastening her descending hair.

The next day, just like a typical Bluebeard, he tells his wife that he has to go away, handing her the bunch of keys for every door in the castle, but hesitating over one of them. When she asks him whether that one was the key to his heart, he answers as follows:

Not the key to my heart. **Rather the key to my enfer...** Every man must have one secret, even if only one, from his wife. Promise me this, my whey-faced piano-player, promise me you'll use all the keys on the ring, except that last little one I showed you... Yet all it is is the key to a little

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<sup>3</sup> Patricia Duncker, *Re-imagining the Fairy-Tales: Angela Carter's Bloody Chambers*, in P. Humm, P. Stigant, P. Widdowson (eds.), *Popular Fiction. Essays in Literature and History*, Methuen, London, 1986, p. 234.

<sup>4</sup> Angela Carter, *The Bloody Chamber*, Harper, New York, p. 7.

<sup>5</sup> id., p. 8.

<sup>6</sup> Angela Carter, *The Bloody Chamber*, Harper, New York, p. 11.

<sup>7</sup> id., p. 12.

room at the foot of the west tower, behind the still-room, at the end of a dark little corridor full of horrid cobwebs... It is only a private study, a hideaway, a 'den'<sup>8</sup>.

After receiving such precise and detailed directions, who could resist the temptation of going to the forbidden room. With nothing to do in the absence of her husband, the girl hope to discover his real self in that 'den'.

It turns out to be a torture chamber, full of funerary urns, bowls of incense, instruments of mutilation, having a catafalque in the centre. Just like in Perrault's tale, all the former wives are hidden there. The frightful thought that she was meant, in her turn, to join them, added to this horrible scene, makes her drop the key into the pool of blood – blood which she will no longer be able to scrub away, no matter how hard she tries, just as she will never be able to forget what she has found out. Only the presence of Jean-Yves, her only ally, can comfort her during the short period before her husband's return, although what the piano-tuner reveals her is not very encouraging: her husband's lust for blood seems to be hereditary; one of his ancestors used to hunt girls with dogs on the mainland, as if they were foxes.

Bluebeard is soon back and she must face him. Giving him back the keys, she prays to God his eyes would fail him, that he might be struck blind. The same image appears again the moment he has the proof of her disobedience: “he raised his head and stared at me with his **blind**, shuttered eyes...”<sup>9</sup>. Had he been blind, he couldn't see the proof of her encroaching upon the interdiction, and this recurrent image of blindness may be the clue suggesting the reader that in the end, after having escaped Bluebeard's terrible 'punishment', she will chose as her partner Jean-Yves, the blind piano-tuner, who is not able to see the mark of her sin magically transferred from the key to her forehead.

In order to stick to the traditional variant, Angela Carter ends her story in a happy note: the villain gets punished; the good characters are rewarded and go on to leading a happy life. Yet, something will always be there to remind the heroine of the awful things she has gone through: “No paint nor powder, no matter how thick or white, can mask that red mark on my forehead; I am glad he cannot see it – not for fear of his revulsion, since I know he sees me clearly with his heart – but because it spares my shame”<sup>10</sup>.

As we have mentioned above, when Perrault wrote down the orally transmitted fairy-tale, he changed some elements to make it more suitable for bourgeois children. He wanted to transmit patriarchal values through his 'fairy-tales'. Carter, however, focuses on two periods of time simultaneously: the time of patriarchy, and the time in which patriarchy is disappearing. And she does this by placing the woman in the centre of her stories.

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<sup>8</sup> id., p. 21.

<sup>9</sup> id., p. 35.

<sup>10</sup> id., p. 41.

# The Seducer's Casuistry and Humbert Humbert's Self-Reflection in Nabokov's "Lolita"

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**Resumen:** *Cualquier escritor puede sentirse reflejado en el mito de Don Juan, identificable como el eterno seductor del lector. Humbert Humbert, un estético en el sentido de Kierkegaard, seductor seducido, quiere saborear la vida sin ser limitado por reglas morales. Debatándose entre la vida y la muerte, seductor y narrador, seducido y personaje, intenta detectar los resortes de la inocencia. Él falla, pervirtiéndola. Incapaz de seducir a Lolita, la cual desafía cualquier concepto metafísico, Humbert busca compensación en la seducción de sus lectores. Para poder ser superpuestos perfectamente, escritor y seductor deben ser poseídos por el demonio del juego intelectual.*

**Key-words:** *types of game, casuistry, innocence, seducer or seduced, aesthetic stage*

Any writer might find himself more or less anamorphotically reflected by Don Juan's myth, identifiable with the eternal seducer rather than the ceaseless lover. The exertion of demiurgical valences of an author, generically speaking, could be equated with a Don Juanesque temptation to construct a suffocating intrigue around the victim, since the authentic Don Juan will never disrelish demiurgical enticement. In order to be perfectly overlapped, both writer and seducer must be possessed by the demon of the intellectual game. In Nabokov's *Lolita* and Kierkegaard's *The Diary of the Seducer* Don Juan is not only an archetype, but also the main character, seductive as narrating self, seduced as character.

For Nabokov, fiction is a game and a contest with the reader: *I want my learned readers to participate in the scene I am about to replay.* (*Lolita*, p.13). Like every other bit of existence in this book, game has in turn its right to Siamese twinning. Therefore, an essential distinction in Nabokov's fiction would be that between the two facets of the twofold game. One is the imaginative game, the other is the active one. A perennial manicheism between these disjunctive components renders the necessary tension to any game- ultimately a result of two extreme polarities playing against each other.

The imaginative game is highly-minded, aware of its own uncertainties and non-finite, because of its endless combinations of virtual realities. This is the game of fiction, the auctorial game, the Humbertian one, the *contest of minds with the reader*. Humbert is playing this game with the other Humbert, Nabokov is playing it against Humbert and Quilty, by whom Humbert might be written.

The imaginative game means perpetual replacement and recreation of realities. The so-called active game is the one engulfed by reality. This game resents the non-finite reality of mind, preferring the genuineness of the conceivable world. Humbert Humbert's game is centripetal, Lolita is centrifugal. The active game is attempting to find a way of real manifestation. For the fictional game, the outer world is too suffocating, whilst for the active game, the inner world is too broad.

Lolita's playing with Humbert, Lolita's disclaiming virginity to Charlie Holmes, the nymphic games integrating an immobile Humbert – these all belong to the active nature of the game.

By means of imaginative game, "reality" (*one of the few words which mean nothing without quotes*)<sup>1</sup> is transcended to the aesthetic level of being. Humbert shares with Nabokov the appetite for autoscopic game.

A sample of the auctorial imaginative game is the intrusion of a preface teller, illustrating the conventional moral view point, telling us what we must not understand from the novel. Dr. John Ray Jr. would not be able to recognise himself mocked – as exponent of a certain category of people – since the capacity of reflection, of playing dangerously with your double cannot be

<sup>1</sup> Vladimir Nabokov's afterword: *On a book entitled Lolita*, in *Lolita*, Penguin books, 1995, p. 312.



understood by all readers.

As a case history, "Lolita" will become, no doubt, a classic in psychiatric circles. As a work of art, it transcends its expiatory aspects; and still more important to us than scientific significance and literary worth, is the ethical impact the book should have on the serious reader; for in this poignant personal study there lurks a general lesson; the wayward child, the egotistic mother, the panting maniac- these are not only vivid characters in a unique story: they warn us of dangerous trends; they point out potent evils. "Lolita" should make all of us - parents, social workers, educators - apply ourselves with a still greater vigilance and vision to the task of bringing up a better generation in a safer world.(Lolita, p. 5)

Both Nabokov and Humbert Humbert's fictional games have no expressed target. It would be inappropriate to see it as a mere justification of a murder or of a pervert.

Fluctuating between life and death, Don Juan's game longed to explore the other type of game, the active one. The game that resents reality (imaginative) is challenged by the game that bravely assumes it (active).

Humbert the child was probably playing active games with Annabel Leigh (disclosed later as Annabel Lee with a frankness borrowed from the nymphic behaviour). That must have happened before he was aggressed by two barbarian intruders, who actually raped his androgynous clumsiness.

This moment coincides with the implicit revelation of the postponed fulfilment and with the intermission of an irreversible personality split:

My world was split. I was aware of not one, but two sexes, neither of which was mine; both would be termed female by the anatomist. [ ... ] Taboos strangulated me. Psychoanalysts wooed me with pseudoliberations or pseudolibidoes. The fact that to me the only objects of amorous tremor were sisters of Annabel 's, her handmaids and girl-pages, appeared to me at times as a forerunner of insanity.(Lolita, p. 18)

While Humbert underwent the inexorable metamorphosis into a mature schizoid, Lolita, although twofold nature herself presents the extremes of vulgarity and innocence fused together. Her personality is not painfully split. Humbert the Casuist admits that Humbert the Seducer will be allured by the genuineness of a nymphet that refuses to be shaped. A Humbert, the first or the second, we will never know, is the mirror reflection of the other one. That is why the first Humbert can charge the second Humbert with abominable features, while his true desire is to be seduced by innocence.

Lolita arrived in her Sunday frock, stemming, panting and then she was in my arms, her innocent mouth melting under the ferocious pressure of dark male jaws, my palpitant darling ! The next instant I heard her - alive, unraped- clatter downstairs.(Lolita, p. 66)

Lo as a nymphet means a permanent resuscitation of Humbert's erect attention as this erotically unevolved widow will always run away from fulfilment.

For Kierkegaard, the happy marriage or happy love is inconceivable. In the same spirit, **Lolita** illustrates the doctrine of Eros Kosmogon, saying that Eros, as a daimon, as a mediator of two principles, exists as long as these two principles fail to unify.

Therefore the moment of coupling coincides with the annihilation of Eros itself, viewed as longing of the being to be coupled with the non-being. Nabokov and Kierkegaard's casuistry reveal the dramatic condition of the over lucid Don Juan, endowed with an ontological contempt of the stereotype femininity. Don Juan accepts only an equal partner that rejects becoming a mere reflex of his own self. Thus the myth of Pygmalion is reversed.

The aesthetic pleasure is not given by the act of engulfing the feminine presence into the male self. On the contrary, Don Juan is attracted only by the ineffable type of women, respecting the noumenal part of femininity.

In this way, Lolita is a real presence, not an Humbertian alter-ego. Humbert the Seducer yearns to be seduced, as his existential game can furnish things for analysis to Humbert the Casuist only when he bumps into a corresponding replay – Lolita's game, less spiritualized, less intellectual, but closer to the generic notion of game.

As Huizinga stated, game is beyond good and evil. Vladimir Nabokov's seducer and Kierkegaard's Don Juan can be looked on as aestheticians, belonging to the first level of being, in Kierkegaard's term.

For Kierkegaard the essence of a man is defined as aesthetic and this represents the first stage of being. Consequently, the aesthete is not necessarily the artist, but someone who has discovered in pleasure the purpose of his life, denying the presence of good and evil. The aesthete's act of living is achieved through the aesthetics of his self.

Every aesthete lives so that he could voluptuously respond to all desires commanding him. Moreover, his quest tends to reveal himself more and more yearnings to be fulfilled. How the outer world reacts to this has no relevance for the aesthete.

Humbert's perversion can be seen in his attitude to the reader, rather than in his paedophilic propensities. It is the demonic glimpse which differentiates a nymph from any other adolescent and helps Humbert localise her. Humbert's intention is in fact to suspend the instant and isolate it.

Now I wish to introduce the following idea. Between the age limits of nine and 14 there occur maidens who, to a certain bewitched traveller, twice or many times older than they, reveal their true nature which is not human, but nymphic (that is, demonic) ; and these chosen creatures I propose to designate as "nymphs". Between those age-limits, are all girl-children nymphs? Of course not. Otherwise, we who are in the know, we, lone voyagers, we nympholepts, would have long gone insane. (Lolita, p.17)

Humbert Humbert's aversion to stereotype makes him an unreliable narrator. Craig Raine remarked that "Nabokov's galère of unreliable narrators (Hermann in *Despair*, Kinbote in *Pale Fire*) represent unreliability in its extreme form. They are reliably unreliable. They get nothing right."<sup>2</sup>(Craig Raine, afterword, p. 322)

A twofold nature himself, a paragon of exactitude and a miracle of meticulousness, fused with "hallucinative lucidity", Humbert Humbert abhors the Hollywood stereotype woman. Lolita is a consumer of the same type of clichés, but this does not diminish her seductive potencies. She would prefer a Hamburger to a Humburger.

Humpty has striven all way to find an equal partner, double natured. Vulgarity can coexist shamelessness and purity.

By the end of the novel, Humbert wholly regrets not having taken *the angelic line of conduct* at the "Enchanted Hunters". He sees himself now as a maniac who has derived Lolita of her childhood. Lolita, neither the saint nor the slut, but a complex mixture.

And neither is she the fragile child of a feminine novel. What drives me insane is the twofold nature of this nymph – of every nymph, perhaps; this mixture in my Lolita of tender dreamy childishness and a kind of eerie vulgarity, stemming from the snub-nosed cuteness of ads and magazine pictures, from the blurry pinkness of adolescent maidservants in the old country and in the very young harlots disguised as children in provincial brothels. And what is most singular is that she, this Lolita, my Lolita, has individualised the writer's ancient lust, so that above and over everything there is - Lolita. (p.44).

Annabel was meant to be the vanished angel. Lolita as her reincarnation outdid the prototype as she had an extra demonic glimpse, and the twofold nature.

On the other hand, Humbert Humbert attempts to analyse the ineffable nature of the nymphs, as he will always long for his androgynous state with Annabel: "My little Annabel was

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<sup>2</sup> Craig Raine, Afterword, in Vladimir Nabokov, *Lolita*, Penguin books, 1995, p. 322.

no nymphet to me; I was her equal, a faunlet in my own right, on the same enchanted island of time." (p.17)

Unable to seduce Lolita, who acts very physiologically, defying any metaphysical concepts, Humbert seeks for compensation in seducing his readers.

Humbert the pervert, comparable with Johannes from Kierkegaard's *The Seducer's Diary*, attempts to detect the resorts of innocence and fails, perverting it. Their supreme refinement is the fact they try to do so in writing.

Fatally enslaved to innocence, Humbert Humbert cannot escape casuistry, as it offers both a compensatory means of transcending an undesired reality and a way of exploring it. Lolita is frantically desired and perverted during Nabokov's discourse, not by granting her money in exchange for her dearness, but because of Humbert's turning into a casuist. Innocence cannot be re-found by analysing a self already schizoid. Humbert can vaguely sense again the innocence in the company of a nymphet, of every nymphet (that's why his ceaseless hunting of nymphets, even if he must have been satisfied with Lolita, is an impulse of living, not a sign of perversion). Humbert's real perversion lays in his casuistry. Another perversion is to be so refined in the art of seducing the reader. None of Don Juan's acts of seducing could be accomplished without gratuity. An aesthete in Kierkegaard's sense, Humbert wants to savour life without being limited by moral rules. Innocence grants both Johann the Seducer (in Kierkegaard's writings) and Humbert Humbert a life lived within the aesthetic stage of existence.

Paradoxically, Lolita is a consumer without any remorse of what Humbert (and this time Nabokov either) hated most: the stereotyped society, sterile imitation, commercial kitsch.

In this respect, Lolita is not individualised, but conventional, as conventional as a nymphet could be. The difference between Lolita as a nymphet and a stereotyped woman (any from Miss Opposite to Charlotte Haze) is that Lolita does not live according to these clichés. Her life may be governed by them, she is gravitating around them, but her nymphic glimpse makes her incorporate all these consuming goods. Thus they are made her own.

Humbert's narcissism lays in the fact that he is more eager to know the inner world rather than the outer one. The paths of exploring the world go through the inner self. Loving Lolita becomes an act of a 20<sup>th</sup> century Narcissus. We are very far from the commonsensical situation when a powerful male personality transforms the beloved one into a reflex of his own self. Humbert could be a perfect illustration of the Narcissus myth not because he loves himself in Lolita but because he wants to set in permanent forms the beloved image.

Losing virginity coincides with the revelation of the end, of the finite. This is valid for Humbert who becomes from that moment Humbert Humbert. Reaching enlightenment, Humbert Humbert cannot ignore or deny knowing. It is impossible for him to pretend that the sense of his quest has not changed irreversibly. For Lolita, the Charlie Holmes experience is just a childish game. Her authenticity has not been endangered and the world has not changed its co-ordinates.

Lolita's innocence belongs to the category of "ignorant innocence". Humbert Humbert, now that he knows the world is limited and love subdued to Death is fascinated by this type of innocence, totally devoid of shame. All his strategies of seducing Lolita reveal in fact a surprising timidity. Humbert Humbert does not exactly plan how to make Lolita love him, but how to derive small satisfactions without her approval.

Recomposing his identity is a playful way of guarantying the subjective truth. This attitude is preserved in approaching the nymphet. The greatest Humbertian joy now is to let the nymphic nature fully manifest itself and recombine all these images in silence, so that the White Widowed Male could "blissfully digest" the "rare drop of honey".

In a way, Humbert has the intuition that the besieged Lolita is able to surprise the hunter and turn it into a "Hunted Enchanter". Her natural way of becoming her step-father's mistress is the climax of her nymphic manifestations:

The hollow of my hand was still ivory-full of Lolita- full of the feel of her pre-adolescently incurved back, that ivory smooth, sliding sensation of her skin through the thin frock that I had worked up and down while I held her. [ ... ] I felt proud of myself. I had stolen the honey of a

spasm without impairing the morals of a minor. Absolutely no harm done. The conjurer had poured milk, molasses, foaming champagne into a young lady's new white purse; and Lo, the purse was intact. Thus I delicately constructed my ignoble, ardent, sinful dream; and still Lolita was safe – and I was safe. What I had madly possessed was not she, but my own creation, another, fanciful Lolita – perhaps more real than Lolita; overlapping, encasing her; floating between me and her, and having no will, no consciousness- indeed no life- of her own. The child knew nothing. I had done nothing to her. And nothing prevented me from repeating a performance that affected her as little as if she were a photographic image rippling upon a screen. (p.62)

Had Lolita remained Humbert's only in his imagination, she would have perfectly replaced Annabel and she would have belonged to Humbert's own reality. But Lolita has a life of her own, a self-sufficient existence that makes no room for moral dilemmas. She needs to be more than a prototype for Humbert's recreation of another Lolita.

Humbert considers pathetic his hypostasis of nymphic purity protector. This would be the only possible way to fix Lolita in eternity, to set her unchanged. But Humbert can do so only on the realm of arts. Art reconciles and stirs Lolita and Humbert's games and destinies. Don Juan is innocently seduced by innocence. The twofold nature of Humbert the Don Juan and Lolita are heaven and hell, life and death:

This is my story. I have reread it. It has bits of marrow sticking to it, and blood and beautiful bright-green flies. At this or that twist of it I feel my slippery self eluding me, gliding into deeper and darker waters than I care to probe. Thus, neither of us is alive when the reader opens this book.[... ]I am thinking of aurochs and angels, the secret of durable pigments, prophetic sonnets, the refuge of art. And this is the only immortality you and I may share, my Lolita. (p. 309).

The beginning is given new valences. Trying to seduce the illusion of Lolita, Humbert has engulfed the real one, so deep inside, that he can take her out only for the sake of his autoscopic view: "Lolita, light of my life, fire of my loins. My sin, my soul."

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## Challenging Received Ideal. Adrienne Rich's Theatre of Voices

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*Résumé:* A partir des caractéristiques postmodernistes de la polyphonie et du pluralisme, le travail cherche d'explorer la manière dans laquelle les poèmes d'Adrienne Rich offrent une opportunité égale de la manifestation aux éléments marginalisés et provisoires pour affirmer leurs principes incongruents en évitant de cette façon toute interprétation finale. Les références culturelles dominantes, les définitions prédéterminées du genre, de la race de l'identité sexuelle se confrontent avec les valeurs et les approches marginalisés. Accordant du crédit aux pulsations des voix ordinaires et immédiates, des associations fugitives et incohérentes rejettent profondément toutes les hiérarchies et les conventions imposées. Si l'on accepte le principe de différence, un renversement des structures et des valeurs a lieu. Les hiérarchies sont dissolues et le concept d'identité est totalement reconfiguré.

**Key Words:** fragmentariness, reconfiguration, marginalized voices, heterogeneity

A theatre of public voices, Adrienne Rich's poetry probes artistic issues, personal and universal concerns and furthermore it questions received ideals. Performing a visionary movement beyond the ordinary, she reflects on the unexplored and reconfigures positions and identity, accepting the principle of difference. Rich shifts to a heterogeneous perspective where flashes of feminine routine, disjointed particular situations move around the central theme of feminist awareness and creative self-consciousness. She adopts the non-standard language of the oppressed and thus subverts the patriarchal culture, the dominant system rediscovering alternative concepts and values.

This paper analyses the reversal of structures that takes place in a chaotically displayed universe where Rich dissolves hierarchies and reconfigures the concept of gender/sexual identity. Creating a radically alternative poetic beyond the boundaries of convention and the confines of the dominant, Rich immerses in the totality of the immediate, of the present moment. Minimising the language of power and discarding the established order, her poetry manages to reconceptualise the world and its system of values, by voicing the voiceless, the marginalized, the oppressed and the unconceivable. Confronted with heteroglossia, diffraction and disintegration, with confusing perspectives, the reader searches for further knowledge, believing in no stable values.

Adrienne Rich strongly believes in the power of poetry as a theatre of public voices for exploring issues of poetry and for revealing an active, participatory spirit to the creative act. With a dialogic form and structure, her poetry moves from local to more universal positions and it probes identity issues by means of strongly questioning idealized notions and shared values. [3, 38]

Through a fragmentary, decomposed language Adrienne Rich creates a poetry of revolution, of change, of transformative abilities, of multiple possibilities, addressing readers stripped of hope, deprived of values and surrounded just by material commodities:

I know you are reading this poem  
late before leaving your office  
I know you are reading this poem which is not in your  
Language  
guessing at some words while others keep you reading  
and I want to know which words they are.  
I know you are reading this poem listening for something,

Torn  
between bitterness and hope  
turning back once again to the task you cannot refuse.  
I know you are reading this poem because there is  
nothing else left to read  
there where you have landed, stripped as you are. [*Dedications*, 4, 25]

Accepting that poetry was a “fierce, destabilizing force, a wave pulling you further out than you wanted to be”, suggesting that “you have to change your life”, Rich increases the use of open forms, of fragmentary observations that confront you aggressively and straightforwardly with unvoiced matters. Trying to reconcile the conscious and the unconscious, poetry is a fierce, destabilizing, disturbing force, pulling you further out than your position or identity, suggesting that “you have to change your life”:

Over so many millennia, so many cultures, humans have reached into preexisting nature and made art: to celebrate, to drive off evil, to nourish memory, to conjure the desired visitation. The revolutionary artist, the relayer of possibility, draws on such powers, in opposition to a technocratic society’s hatred of multiformity, hatred of the natural world, hatred of the body, hatred of darkness and women, hatred of disobedience. The revolutionary poet loves people, rivers, other creatures, stones, trees inseparably from art, is not ashamed of any of these loves, and for them conjures a language that is public, intimate, inviting, terrifying, and beloved. [5, 250]

The urgency and pressure of interrogations uttered in despair and continuous search, throws us beyond boundaries of the self. Rich creates a mosaic of voices, a wide range of perspectives leading to a reconsideration of positions, to a reconfiguration of identities and to accepting differences- race, class, gender, generation- which prevents us from falling into restrictive, fixed classifications. The provocative combination and association of linguistic sources set the stage for poetry as an act of translation. Sometimes in a dream-like, surrealistic setting Adrienne Rich encompasses multiple alternatives and interpretations, as performing a visionary movement beyond ordinary, common situations and concepts, she reflects on the unexplored and the unseen:

Old backswitching road bent toward the ocean’s light  
Talking of angles of vision movements a black or a red tulip  
Opening  
Times of walking across a street thinking  
Now I have joined a movement but I am stepping in this deep  
Current  
Part of my life washing behind me terror I couldn't swim with  
part of my life waiting for me a part I had no words for  
I need to live each day through have them and know them all  
though I can see from here where I'll be standing at the end. [*And Now*, 6, 31]

Poetry becomes a battlefield, interplay between the individual and the social, between personal and social representations, between imagination/ freedom and gender/sexual roles, between the oppressed and the oppressor, between individual expression and historically/politically determined structures. Within the central symbols of the poem *Aunt Jennifer's Tigers*- the tapestry tigers and the Uncle’s wedding band- the individual and the social, the personal and the political meet. The tapestry tigers are not just individual artistic expressions; they are politically inflected, engaged in patriarchal myths and seen as icons of colonialism-suggestive of capitalist structures of power (notice too they are sewn with an “ivory needle”) By the physical intimacy of a constraining wedding band, *Aunt Jennifer's Tigers* personalizes the presence of patriarchal politics. A relation of oppression paralyses the woman; she finds herself in a position of submission, and her death seems

to confirm this: "When Aunt is dead, her terrified hands will lie/ Still ringed with ordeals she was mastered by." Her art assumes a form of power (the embroidered tigers do not fear men), concedes her a sense of immortality and freedom. The tigers display in art the values that Aunt Jennifer must repress or displace in life: strength, self-assertion, fearlessness, fluidity of motion.

Adrienne Rich reconfigures positions and identity, as she shifts focus to a visual, private reality which faces us with fragments, scraps of banal episodes, flashes of feminine routine activities and disjointed particular situations. We reach a heterogeneous perspective encompassing different voices which move around the increasing feminist awareness and the confrontation of the individual with the social, of the public with the personal sphere:

In the bed the pieces fly together  
and the rifts fill or else  
my body is a list of wounds  
symmetrically placed  
a village  
blown open by planes  
that did not finish the job  
"You, once a belle in Shreveport,  
with henna-colored hair, skin like a peachbud,  
still have your dresses copied from that time,  
and play a Chopin prelude  
called by Cortot '*Delicious recollections*  
*float like perfume through the memoir*". [Snapshots, 7, 6]

Rich's increasing feminist awareness determined a thematic expansion related to her Jewish identity, to the Vietnam War, to the Cold War and women liberation movements. The public sphere interferes with the personal one, such as in *Nightbreak* where Rich acts as a receiver of the atrocities of the Vietnam War, since the "pieces" and "rifts" broken off from the bombings provoke wounds in her own body:

In the bed the pieces fly together  
and the rifts fill or else  
my body is a list of wounds  
symmetrically placed  
a village  
blown open by planes  
that did not finish the job. [Nightbreak, 9, 24]

Adrienne Rich appropriates the non-standard language of the oppressed, which observes no basic grammar rules, and thus subverts the male-made cultural system with its social and gender exclusion, the patriarchal oriented culture of oppression and terror, the values and structures of the limited Western culture. Alternative values and concepts different from the dominant, authoritarian ones are rediscovered, making poetry a reader-demanding one:

I am a galactic cloud so deep so involuted  
that a light wave could take 15 years to travel through me  
And has taken I am an instrument in the shape  
of a woman trying to translate pulsations  
into images for the relief of the body  
and the reconstruction of the mind. [Planetarium, 9, 45].

The reader is culturally engaged to reinterpret the images, the pulsations into several possibilities in relation to the ideological and cultural context. A reversal of structures takes place and new modes of existence, unknown, uncontrolled forces in a chaotically displayed universe of

confusion and violence reconfigure the concept of gender/sexual identity and dissolve hierarchies and differences:

This is the place.  
And I am here, the mermaid whose dark hair  
streams black, the merman in his armored body  
We circle silently about the wreck  
we dive into the hold.  
I am she: I am he". [*Diving into the Wreck*, 8, 22]

Rich's poetry achieves new powers and potentialities, plunging in the immensity of the unknown, the unconscious and the unlimited, out of social impositions and gender, predetermined roles:

I am a woman in the prime of life, with certain powers  
and those powers severely limited  
by authorities whose faces I rarely see,  
I am a woman in the prime of life  
driving her dead poet in a black Rolls-Royce  
through a landscape of twilight and thorns  
A woman with a certain mission  
which if obeyed to the letter will leave her intact.  
A woman with the nerves of a panther  
a woman with contacts among Hell's Angels  
a woman feeling the fullness of her powers  
at the precise moment when she must not use them  
a woman sworn to lucidity  
who sees through the mayhem, the smoky fires  
of these underground streets  
her dead poet learning to walk backward against the wind  
on the wrong side of the mirror. [*I Dream I am the Death of Orpheus*, 9, 18]

Adrienne Rich validates women's spiritual/ sexual experiences and intimacies through lesbianism, as it possesses the power to break them free of governing conventions and principles, of social pressures and to privilege the quest for authentic self-expression:

And this drive to self-knowledge, for women, is more than a search for identity: it is part of our refusal of the self-destructiveness of male-dominated society. A radical critique of literature, feminist in its impulse, would take the work first of all as a clue to how we live, how we have been living, how we have been led to imagine ourselves, how our language has trapped as well as liberated us, how the very act of naming has been till now a male prerogative, and how we can begin to see and name and therefore live-afresh. [10, 168]

Rich's recognition that lesbian sexuality is "outside the law" similarly brings Foucault's opinion to the surface: it is both a prohibition and an inducement to a form of sexuality conceived in opposition to the dominant culture. Rich creates a radically alternative poetic, as escaping the boundaries of convention and the anxieties of the dominant, heterosexual, patriarchal culture, she immerses in the totality of the immediate, of the present moment, focusing on women's shared intimacies with other women.

A new order, a new world emerges, leaving outspoken words of dominance, obsolete traditions, prejudices aside, just proclaiming the intensity of shadows, silences and understatements:

I choose to be a figure in that light,  
half-blotted by darkness, something moving  
across that space, the color of stone



greeting the moon, yet more than stone:  
a woman. I choose to walk here. And to draw this circle. *The Floating Poem, Unnumbered*, 11,  
14]

The experience of estrangement, solitude and isolation leads towards greater understanding and awareness of female power and spiritual connection to the whole universe. In minimizing the language of power, divesting words of their accretions of power, discarding the established order, Rich's poetry manages to reconceptualise the world and its system of values by voicing the voiceless, the marginalized, the oppressed and the unconceivable. Pre-established principles and conditions, a social context dominated by consumerism and alienation suffocate the inner worlds of the individuals, even their unconsciousness. Still it is impossible to detach oneself from the social context, since the linguistic system itself is ideologically, socially and culturally represented, bringing to the forth the confrontation between the powerful and the powerless, the language of the oppressed and the language of the oppressors. Decontextualisation is impossible.

Confronted with multiple voices, a heteroglossia of society, diffraction and disintegration of the world, with confusing, contradictory perspectives, the individual is left to face alone the difficulties of life, since solitude is found in public places, among friends, couples and during sexual intercourse:

Lonely in the bar, on the shore of the coastal river  
with your best friend, his wife, and your wife, fishing  
lonely in the prairie classroom with all the students who love  
you....  
You grieve loneliness, and if I understand you fuck in  
loneliness." [*An Atlas of the Difficult World*, 4, 6]

People no longer believe in values and are no longer capable of finding their identities, of discovering stable, collective principles or common grounds: "One citizen like and unlike so many, touched and untouched in passing/-each of us now a driven, a nucleus, a city in crisis." [*An Atlas of the Difficult World*, 4, 7] Each person constitutes his own world of selfish and individualistic values, but each one still embodies a plurality of identities, a multiplicity of possibilities.

Each intimate self-centered space transcends one single perspective and interpretation:

I am a canal in Europe where bodies are floating  
I am a mass grave I'm the life that returns  
I'm a field with corners left for the landless  
I'm accused of child-death of drinking blood  
I'm a woman bargaining for a chicken  
I'm a woman who sells for a boat ticket  
I'm a family dispersed between night and fog  
I'm a corpse dredged from a canal in Berlin." [*On this earth, in this life, as I read your story you are lonely*, 4, 17]

Rich considers that selfish and individualistic values are the ones that lead to uncertainty, without any strong criteria of selection and action. She uses the opposition between "we" and "I" to explain why we lost track, no longer searching for the others, just trying to live a personal life. Our competitive society, dominated by the importance of commodities diminished the interaction between people and led to a self-centered existence, self-committed life.

In dialogue with community, dealing with social issues, Rich moves to smaller, more intimate spaces and urban snapshots, to overlapping, confusing perspectives. She expends a minimum of words to obtain a multiplicity of meanings that make her poems transcend a single interpretation, as "language is the map of our failures", reader and poet failing in their attempt of conventionally decoding, translating meanings:

It's only a branch like any other  
green with the flare of life in it  
and if I hold this end, you the other  
that means it's broken  
broken between us, broken despite us  
broken and therefore dying  
broken by force, broken by lying  
green, with the flare of life in it." [The Art Of Translation, 13, 3]

Still Rich searches for a more revolutionary, committed poetry, which is not programmatic or limited, to relief her body and reconstruct her mind, to remind us of all the possibilities existing there and give us hope and a more optimistic vision:

Only so you can start living again  
waking to take the temperature of the soul  
when the black irises lean at dawn  
from the mouth of the bedside pitcher  
This condition in which you swear I will  
submit to whatever poetry is  
I accept no limits Horrible patience.[The Art Of Translation, 13, 8]

For Rich poetry becomes a "theatre of voices" different from her own, an interpenetration of conversations, of languages, a heteroglossia that determines her commitment to different beliefs, feelings, images, to the complexity of life.

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## ***The History of Emily Montague: the First Canadian Novel?***

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**Zusammenfassung:** Der Artikel untersucht den kulturellen Nationalismus in *The History of Emily Montague* von Frances Brooke.

**Key-words:** cultural nationalism, Canadian novel, Frances Brooke, *The History of Emily Montague*

Frances Brooke's epistolary novel is by many critics and historians of Canadian literature (Elliott 558, Fraser 1, Hanțiu 10) considered the first Canadian novel for the simple reason that a great part of the novel's plot (about 70% of it) is set in Quebec. Yet none of the novel's protagonists are Canadians or Canadian settlers or have Canada as their chief object of interest (Their chief object of interest is matrimony and social behaviour.) The present essay argues that though *The History of Emily Montague* displays some interest in Canada and Canada's colonization, the book is not a Canadian novel but an eighteenth century British novel of manners.

Before proceeding to the discussion of the novel, I'd like to set forth the conditions that in my opinion a novel should meet in order to be considered a national (in our case Canadian) novel. A national/ethnic novel in order to be called so, should articulate the specific values and concerns of a national or ethnic community, i.e. its protagonists should be members of the national/ethnic community; its plot should unfold in a particular region (or particular regions) of the country that a national/ethnic community identifies with and claims as its own; while the problems addressed by the plot should be either the specific problems of the national/ethnic community or if they are problems of a general concern the way in which they are addressed should shed light on the code of values of a national/ ethnic community.

Frances Brooke's novel falls short of most of the aforementioned requirements for chiefly three reasons: first and foremost because the social-political reality of Canada in the eighteenth century (and the action of *The History of Emily Montague* takes place in the 18<sup>th</sup> century shortly after the signing of the Treaty of Paris upon which France relinquished its North American possessions to Great Britain) was not propitious for the writing of a national novel. As Arthur Lower pointed it out in his study: *Canadians in the Making: A Social History of Canada* at that point of Canada's history one could not speak about a Canadian nation or a Canadian national consciousness. The French colonists<sup>1</sup> in Quebec, very much like the new British settlers, saw themselves primarily as subjects of, and, therefore, felt allegiance to, their respective mother countries. Had Frances Brooke been a colonist, which she was not (Her novel is, at its best, a mock-colonial novel.), for she spent only five years in Canada (between 1863 and 1868) as the wife of a visiting military British chaplain in the conquered French garrison of Quebec, she would still have found difficult to produce a national (i.e. Canadian) novel.

The second, is Frances Brooke's choice (a very convenient choice, though all too obviously not the right one) to rework in *The History of Emily Montague* the plot of her previous sentimental novel of manners, entitled *The History of Lady Julia Mandeville*. *The History of Lady Julia Mandeville* centers on three couple of lovers: the sentimental Lady Julia Mandeville and the

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<sup>1</sup> "A colony has some aspects of permanence: some of its people have committed themselves and cease to think of themselves primarily as exiles. But a colony draws most of its life from its mother country. It is dependent upon it for most of the necessities of life beyond the simplest, even for food, and particularly for defence and for recruits. Colonials still think of themselves as severed parts of 'the nation', to which they refer lovingly as 'home'." (Lower xvi)

equally sentimental Harry Mandeville, the coquettish and witty Lady Anne Wilmot and the unremarkable Colonel Belleville, and Bell Hastings and Lord Melvin. The characters spend most of their time with pondering their financial situation and analyzing each other's feelings and behaviour or enjoying themselves at rustic parties. The novel has a surprise 'Romeo and Juliet' ending: a misunderstanding ensures that Harry Mandeville does not receive an important letter (explaining how Julia Mandeville is intended for him and has been destined for him since birth). Instead, thinking Julia is to marry Lord Melvin by the design of her father, in a fit of jealousy, he attacks his rival. In self-defense Lord Melvin mortally wounds Harry. Julia can not tolerate the death of her loved one and in sadness dies of a broken heart. The other two couples are joined but their unions are tempered by the sorrow evoked by the deaths of their friends.

Just like *The History of Lady Julia Mandeville*, *The History of Emily Montague* focuses on the courtships of three couple of lovers: the sentimental Emily Montague and the equally sentimental Ed. Rivers, the coquettish and witty Arabella Fermor and the commonsensical John Fitzgerald, and innocent but clever Lucy Rivers and the reformed philanderer John Temple. The setting of the novel is Canada (more precisely Quebec) in the years just after French Canada had been added to Britain's growing New World Empire.

The novel opens with a letter from Ed. Rivers to his friend, John Temple, announcing his intention to become a settler in Canada. The ensuing letters addressed to his sister, Lucy Rivers, and to his friend, are already written from Canada. In these letters Ed. Rivers appears to be enchanted with the awesomeness of the natural scenery and with the exoticism of the natives, but all too soon he loses focus of Canada, because he falls in love with Emily Montague, the apparently orphaned daughter of a British officer and the fiancée of one of Rivers's fellow officer's: Sir George Clayton. Overwhelmed by his love for Emily Montague, Ed. Rivers forgets about his plans of buying land and settling in Canada. He returns to his land-purchasing plans occasionally, whenever he thinks that Emily does not love him. On her turn, Emily Montague hasn't got the least interest in what she calls "the uncultivated wilds of Canada, the seat of barbarism and ignorance" (*The History of Emily Montague*). Her only aim in the novel is to marry the man she loves while maintaining all the outward forms of decorum and feminine propriety. Her friend, Arabella Fermor, the artful and educated coquette, is the most interesting of all the letter-writers and the only character that displays some genuine interest in Canada. Her heartfelt, elegant and detailed descriptions of the Canadian winter, of the clothes that they are to wear in order to cope with it, of the Canadian winter parties and amusements as well as the information she collects about agricultural work in Canada and the marriage customs of the "savages" form the lightest and the best-written parts of the novel. Her father, Colonel William Fermor's letters of Canada are of a more sober nature and his interest in Canada's history, the French Canadian colonists and the new government of Quebec is marred only by his much too frequent assertions of British superiority in comparison with everything that is Canadian. At the end of the novel, all the three couples of lovers marry and the two couples that have lived in Canada return to Great Britain.

By choosing to replicate the protagonists and the plot of her previous novel, a novel based in Great Britain, Brooke virtually ruled out the possibility of developing or bringing Canadian-based characters into focus. This is not to say that she entirely ignored them, but that they are never allowed to speak out for themselves and the reader sees them only through the eyes of the British protagonists. Such being the case, it is but natural that no viewpoint that could be deemed Canadian is present in the novel.

It is true that for a short period of time Ed. Rivers fancies that he would settle in Canada and expresses his "hope to see the *human face divine* multiplying around me; and, in thus cultivating what is in the rudest state of nature, I shall taste one of the greatest of all pleasures, that of creation, and see order and beauty gradually rise from chaos." (*The History of Emily Montague*). But soon it comes obvious that he is nothing but a mock-settler, a mock-colonist with practically no knowledge of agriculture, let alone the climate of the country in which he wishes to settle: "I have studied the Georgicks (sic!), and am a pretty enough kind of a husbandman as far as theory goes; nay, I am not sure I shall not be, even in practice, the best *gentleman* farmer in the province" (*The*

*History of Emily Montague*). As Wayne Fraser pointed it out, “Rivers’ reference to the pastoral poem of Virgil seems to be a little joke on Brooke’s part: a Latin poem written in 29 B.C. describing agricultural techniques suitable for Italy is a very inadequate manual for “cultivating” the Canadian wilderness” (4). Frances Brooke did not believe in the success of a British settlement in Canada, and one of the characters, Colonel William Fermor, Brooke’s mouthpiece in the novel says:

the English are the worst settlers on new lands in the universe. Their attachment to their native country ... is so very strong, that few ... can be prevailed on to leave it .... The English are also, though industrious, active, and enterprising, ill fitted to bear the hardships, and submit to the wants, which inevitably attend an infant settlement even on the most fruitful lands. (*The History of Emily Montague*)

Colonel Ed. Rivers’s half-hearted attempt to settle in Canada<sup>2</sup>, the easiness with which he lets himself dissuaded from it, is a proof in point.

The third reason for which I consider that the novel comes short of being a Canadian novel is the fact that the author uses Canada and its inhabitants: the ‘noblesse’ (the Canadian French seigneurs), the Canadians (Canadian French farmers) and the ‘savages’ (the natives) as a foil to the superiority of the British in terms of liberty<sup>3</sup>, religion and education<sup>4</sup> and industry<sup>5</sup>. In this sense the novel is an ode to the virtues of the British.

On the other hand, while *The History of Emily Montague* fails to be a Canadian novel, it is quite successful as an 18<sup>th</sup> century British novel of manners and, as such, it is a forerunner of the novels of Jane Austen.

According to William Flint Thrall a novel of manners is

a novel, among the dominant forces of which are the social customs, manners, conventions, and habits of a definite social class at a particular time and place. In the true *novel of manners* the social mores of a specific group are defined and described in detail and with great accuracy, and these mores become powerful controls over characters. (324)

The social group on which *The History of Emily Montague* is centered is that of the officers of the occupying British army in Canada and their families. The chief interest of the protagonists in the novel is matrimony. Throughout the letters, the various writers exchange

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<sup>2</sup> “I am at present, my dear Lucy, in the wildest country on earth; I mean of those which are inhabited at all: ’tis for several leagues almost a continual forest, with only a few straggling houses on the river side; ’tis however of not the least consequence to me, all places are equal to me where Emily is not.” (*The History of Emily Montague*)

<sup>3</sup> “Dear England! where liberty appears, not as here among these odious savages, wild and ferocious like themselves, but lovely, smiling, led by the hand of the Graces. There is no true freedom any where else.” (*The History of Emily Montague*) (The underlining is mine.)

<sup>4</sup> Their religion, to which they are extremely bigoted, is another great bar, as well to industry as population: their numerous festivals inure them to idleness; their religious houses rob the state of many subjects who might be highly useful at present, and at the same time retard the increase of the colony. Sloth and superstition equally counterwork providence, and render the bounty of heaven of no effect. I am surprized the French, who generally make their religion subservient to the purposes of policy, do not discourage convents, and lessen the number of festivals, in the colonies, where both are so peculiarly pernicious. However religious prejudice may have been suffered to counterwork policy under a French government, it is scarce to be doubted that this cause of the poverty of Canada will by degrees be removed; that these people, slaves at present to ignorance and superstition, will in time be enlightened by a more liberal education, and gently led by reason to a religion which is not only preferable, as being that of the country to which they are now annexed, but which is so much more calculated to make them happy and prosperous as a people. (*The History of Emily Montague*) (The underlining is mine.)

<sup>5</sup> The corn here is very good, though not equal to ours; the harvest not half so gay as in England, and for this reason, that the lazy creatures leave the greatest part of their land uncultivated, only sowing as much corn of different sorts as will serve themselves; and being too proud and too idle to work for hire, every family gets in its own harvest, which prevents all that jovial spirit which we find when the reapers work together in large parties. Idleness is the reigning passion here, from the peasant to his lord; the gentlemen never either ride on horseback or walk, but are driven about like women, for they never drive themselves, lolling at their ease in a calache: the peasants, I mean the masters of families, are pretty near as useless as their lords. (*The History of Emily Montague*) (The underlining is mine.)

experiences, opinions, and advice, and in this sense the novel is a critique of love and marriage; examining the importance of "sensibility" in forming happy relationships, and gender relations before, during, and after courtship. The novel is oversaturated with statements and pieces of advice like: "What a charm ... is there in sensibility! 'Tis the magnet which attracts all to itself: virtue may command esteem, understanding and talents admiration, beauty a transient desire; but 'tis sensibility alone which can inspire love." or "coquetry is dangerous to English women, because they have sensibility; it is more suited to the French, who are naturally something of the salamander kind" or "Take care, my Emily; I know the goodness of your heart, but I also know its sensibility; remember that, if your situation requires great circumspection in your behaviour to Sir George, it requires much greater to every other person: it is even more delicate than marriage itself." Or "I love her with a tenderness of which few of my sex are capable: you have often told me, and you were right, that my heart has all the sensibility of woman."

Another thing that the characters are very interested in is the problem of their incomes. It is because of the smallness of his income that Ed. Rivers sets out for Canada – "I cannot live in England on my present income, though it enables me to live *en prince* in Canada" --, and the issue keeps bothering him even after he has returned to England and become a country gentleman settled on a comfortable farm: "Had I my choice, I should wish for a very small addition only to my income, and that for the sake of others, not myself. ... My Emily's suppers are enchanting; but our little income obliges us to have few: if I was rich, this would be my principal extravagance." (*The History of Emily Montague*) Emily's unexpected legacy removes this last obstacle in the way of Ed. Rivers's happiness and the novel closes on a very happy and optimistic note.

To sum up, *The History of Emily Montague* is a skillful combination of an eighteenth century British sentimental novel of manners and a travelogue describing the social, political and geographical conditions to be found in eighteenth-century Quebec under British governance. Such being the case, it is a mistake to regard the novel as the first Canadian novel. Deeming it the first British novel about Canada would be much more appropriate.

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# La coscienza della morte nella poesia di Giacomo Leopardi

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**Abstract:** Leopardi's tragical attitude is given by his lucidity. There are two senses of the word "death" in Leopardi's oeuvre. The first one is death as openness, (*kalos thanatos*), the second one is death as closure (*kakos thanatos*). Death as openness is a threshold for the beyond, it is the cessation of suffering, the liberation, the Eros-seducing death. On the contrary, the second significance views death as a frontier, offering a void transcendence, revealing the emptiness of Leopardi's century, the feeble-mindedness of his contemporaries.

**Parole chiave:** morte come limite, infinito/limitatezza, morte come apertura, morte come chiusura, consapevolezza, amore e morte

## 1. Morte come limite in opposizione all' infinito

L'aspetto basilare di questo saggio è l'attitudine del poeta attraverso la morte, che lo definisce come poeta tragico.

Il pessimismo di Leopardi, con le radici nell' Ecclesiaste ( "te, la natura, il brutto / poter che, ascoso, a comun danno impera, / e l'infinita vanità del tutto" – *A se stesso*), simile alla filosofia di Schopenhauer, ha già fatto l'oggetto dei numerosi saggi. Risulta che il pessimismo di Leopardi non è solo un stato affettivo, ma un'autentica *Weltanschauung*, una visione integrativa. Iosif Cheie-Pantea ha operato questa distinzione fondamentale, fra il pessimismo e la vocazione tragica del poeta recanatese<sup>1</sup>.

L'attitudine tragica non esiste nell'assenza della lucidità. Il pessimismo di Leopardi ed il suo senso del tragico non si escludono, ma interagiscono nella stessa visione sulla vita. Il pessimismo ha come obiettivo il senso della vita, la visione tragica invece mira alla coscienza della morte. Secondo il filosofo romeno, Gabriel Liiceanu<sup>2</sup>, il tragico è il dialogo fra una coscienza ed il limite, cioè il confronto di una persona cosciente, limitata, con un limite assoluto, insormontabile. Gli esseri che sono al di là di questa coscienza non hanno nessun diritto al tragico, cioè a tentare un limite. Allora, se vediamo il tragico nei termini di peratologia, il tragico non si manifesta al di là di questa consapevolezza del limite<sup>3</sup>. Non è la ubiquità della morte che conferisce a Leopardi la qualità di poeta tragico, ma asumerne la coscienza del limite.

"Gli scrittori grandi... hanno per destino di condurre una vita simile alla morte" – diceva Leopardi, l' isolamento del genio è uguale a una "morte perpetua", dunque il genio rimane l'unico che può assumersi coscientemente il rischio della consapevolezza, il rischio di ragionare, di sapere, che lo allontana dalla felicità.

L' immagine del mondo si minimizza, diminuisce al contempo con lo sforzo della nostra mente di conoscere i misteri dell'universo. Come "la felicità consiste nell'ignoranza del vero", il trionfo della ragione sulla natura impone inesorabilmente la caduta dell'uomo dallo stato originario, dallo stato in cui l'uomo era felice.

All'infinito può aver accesso solo l'infanzia.

L'eroe si può ribellare contro il suo destino, mentre per il genio non è permesso di abdicare dal suo dovere, cioè di essere la coscienza di un *secol morto, superbo e sciocco*.

La morte, come limite ontologica, non è percepita nel suo aspetto metafisico, ne cristiano, ma è avvicinata a una grande familiarità e consuetudine.

<sup>1</sup> Iosif Cheie-Pantea, *Eminescu și Leopardi*, București, ed. Minerva, 1980, p.20.

<sup>2</sup> Gabriel Liiceanu, *Tragicul. O fenomenologie a limitei și depășirii*, București, Humanitas, 1993, p.14.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 14.

Nostra vita a che val? solo a spregiarla:  
Beata allor che ne' perigli avvolta,  
Se stessa obblia, nè delle putri e lente  
Ore il danno misura e il flutto ascolta;  
Beata allor che il piede  
Spinto al varco leteo, più grata riede.  
(A un vincitore nel pallone)

L'idillio *L'infinito*, parte della "poetica delle illusioni" leopardiana, potrebbe essere letto anche come un viaggio al di là del nostro mondo reale e visibile. L'immaginazione percorre un tragitto iniziatico, incominciando con il limite, come punto di partenza, finendo con il superamento di questo limite.

Nel poema *L'Infinito*, il limite si confonde con la linea, equivalente a una limitatezza.

Sempre caro mi fu quest'ermo colle,  
e questa siepe, che da tanta parte  
dell'ultimo orizzonte il guardo esclude.  
Ma sedendo e mirando, interminati  
spazi di là da quella, e sovrumani  
silenzi, e profondissima quiete  
io nel pensier mi fingo, ove per poco  
il cor non si spaura. E come il vento  
odo stormir tra queste piante, io quello  
infinito silenzio a questa voce  
vo comparando: e mi sovvien l'eterno,  
e le morte stagioni, e la presente  
e viva, e il suon di lei. Così tra questa  
immensità s'annega il pensier mio:  
e il naufragar m'è dolce in questo mare.  
(*L'Infinito*)

"Quest'ermo colle / E questa siepe", ben collocate, sono elementi ambivalenti, che servono al poeta per capire l'ambivalenza vita-morte. Per il poeta avido dell' illimitato, l'esistenza del colle e della siepe significa una delimitazione, un ostacolo nell'eternità celestiale. Però questo ostacolo, questa linea, proprio perché dà una forma, così come la morte dà forma alla vita, (come pensava Heidegger) costituisce una soglia, un punto di partenza per l'al di là. Il ruolo di questa soglia è di costringere l' Io a liberarsi, attraverso l' immaginazione, ad aspirare ad un altro mondo.

Percorrendo con l'immaginazione questo tragitto, il poeta raggiunge non solo la liberazione, ma anche il passaggio fra angoscia e pace. Così la tensione tra l' Io ed il limite viene sospesa. L' immersione nell'immensità avrà anche un senso nascosto, cioè l'apprendimento della morte, come per Eminescu nella sua *Ode in metro antico*. Questo accade quando il poeta si accorge che il limite dovrebbe esistere per forza, ma la tensione contro di lui può essere superata.

Allora, *L'Infinito* diventa un poema emblematico non solo perché realizza la liberazione così tanto invocata negli altri poemi, ma prova la voluttà, il piacere che gli dà la contemplazione del trascendente.

Questo trascendente avrà bisogno di una soglia inferiore, che lo delimiti nei nostri confronti, altrimenti noi non saremmo mai capaci di comprenderlo. Una volta che preso questo, la pace sostituisce l'angoscia, perché la paura della limitazione è oltrepassata.

## **2. Due accezioni della morte nella poesia di Leopardi**

L'infinito rappresenta il momento di una rivelazione: la conquista di un infinito sia spaziale che temporale, sia macrocosmico che microcosmico.

Ma il "guasto legnaggio" segnala di nuovo la vanità del secolo sciocco che ritorna tragicamente negli altri canti.



Il poeta non può rinunciare al suo ruolo di coscienza universale, perché deve lottare per i suoi contemporanei che sono degli scettici. Pertanto il poeta ha il compito d'invocare l'azione e di rimuovere il *Weltschmerz* del suo proprio secolo.

Da questo punto di vista ci sono due sensi, due accezioni della parola "morte" per Leopardi. Il primo sarebbe la morte come apertura (*kalos thanatos*), il secondo la morte come chiusura (*kakos thanatos*). La morte come apertura è una soglia per quel al di là, per il trascendente, è la cessazione del dolore; è la liberazione che ritrova il principio del piacere, è la morte che seduce l'Eros.

La seconda accezione è la morte come frontiera, la morte chiusa, che non offre niente, una trascendenza vuota, quella nullità del secolo, cioè del 1800.

La morte aperta– *kalos thanatos* – allarga la vita, la morte chiusa – *kakos thanatos* – la distrugge, tanto come la lava del "monte sterminator Vesevo".

Queste due accezioni non sono ambivalenti, non sono una sola essenza con due faccie, al contrario, sono due cose diverse ed incompatibili. Così, la morte come apertura Leopardi la usa in rapporto con se stesso, con la propria morte con la quale ha un certo senso di familiarità. La sua morte Leopardi la capiva non solo nel senso metafisico, concettuale, ma la approfondiva anche in quello sensoriale.

Questo tipo di morte– come un' apertura – non è una minaccia alla vita, anzi è quella "morte perpetua" con quale il genio dovrebbe abituarsi ogni giorno.

La morte come chiusura è percepita nei confronti dei contemporanei di Leopardi, quelli responsabili per la decadenza morale del suo secolo:

Oh menti, oh senno, oh sovrumano acume  
Dell'età ch'or si volge! E che sicuro  
Filosofar, che sapienza, o Gino,  
In più sublimi ancora e più riposti  
Subbietti insegna ai secoli futuri  
Il mio secolo e tuo! Con che costanza  
Quel che ieri schernì, prosteso adora  
Oggi, e domani abatterà, per girne  
Raccozzando i rottami, e per riporlo  
Tra il fumo degl'incensi il dì vegnente!  
Quanto estimar si dee, che fede inspira  
Del secol che si volge, anzi dell'anno,  
Il concorde sentir! con quanta cura  
Convienci a quel dell'anno, al qual difforme  
Fia quel dell'altro appresso, il sentir nostro  
Comparando, fuggir che mai d'un punto  
Non sien diversi! E di che tratto innanzi,  
Se al moderno si opponga il tempo antico,  
Filosofando il saper nostro è scorso!  
Un già de' tuoi, lodato Gino; un franco  
Di poetar maestro, anzi di tutte  
Scienze ed arti e facoltadi umane,  
E menti che fur mai, sono e saranno,  
Dottore, emendator, lascia, mi disse,  
I propri affetti tuoi. Di lor non cura  
Questa virile età, volta ai severi  
Economici studi, e intenta il ciglio  
Nelle pubbliche cose. Il proprio petto  
Esplorar che ti val? Materia al canto  
Non cercar dentro te. Canta i bisogni  
Del secol nostro, e la matura speme.  
Memorande sentenze! ond'io solenni  
Le risa alzai quando sonava il nome  
Della speranza al mio profano orecchio

Quasi comica voce, o come un suono  
Di lingua che dal latte si scompagni.  
(*Palinodia al Marchese Gino Capponi*)

Questa morte, come chiusura, rovina l'essere, è generata dal male, ed è la morte dell'azione, della vitalità, del progresso.

E già dal caro  
Sangue de' suoi non asterrà la mano  
La generosa stirpe: anzi coverta  
Fien di stragi l'Europa e l'altra riva  
Dell'atlantico mar, fresca nutrice  
Di pura civiltà, sempre che spinga  
Contrarie in campo le fraterne schiere  
Di pepe o di cannella o d'altro aroma  
Fatal cagione, o di melate canne,  
O cagion qual si sia ch'ad auro torni.  
Valor vero e virtù, modestia e fede  
E di giustizia amor, sempre in qualunque  
Pubblico stato, alieni in tutto e lungi  
Da' comuni negozi, ovvero in tutto  
Sfortunati saranno, afflitti e vinti;  
(*Palinodia al Marchese Gino Capponi*)

I figli dell' ottocento non sono mai capaci di tramutare la loro vita in un destino. Leopardi è molto critico verso questo secondo tipo di morte, non rispetto al primo, come apertura; perché la morte come apertura allarga l'essere umano e non si trova in antitesi con la vita.

Nessuna sofferenza può dare il diritto a questi contemporanei di Leopardi di vivere come dei *morti vivendi*, di andare avanti in un'esistenza sonnambulesca.

Da una parte, questa ragione che allontana l'uomo dalla sua felicità paradisiaca, dall'innocenza, potrebbe essere la base di questa attitudine passiva della gente dell'ottocento, che agisce quasi come fosse contagiata dalla ragione.

La troppa conoscenza causa troppa sofferenza, ma i contemporanei del poeta non soffrono perché assumono conscientemente la sofferenza universale. Al contrario, sfuggono da questa sofferenza.

Almeno Dante, Tasso, Ariosto, Alfieri hanno avuto parte di contemporanei indegni, ma vivevano in tempi eroici. Beati sono quelli che non hanno vissuto fino a vedere la decadenza della virtù e beate sono le donne che non hanno dato vita in questi tempi di morte come si può vedere nei poemi: *All' Italia, Sopra il monumento di Dante che si preparava in Firenze, Ad Angelo Mai, Nelle nozze della sorella Paolina*.

Questa morte che non è più una soglia, ma una chiusura, impedisce all'uomo sia di vivere, sia di morire – magari eroicamente. Questa morte non è un svolgimento naturale della catena del divenire, non è una tentazione dell'eternità.

Soltanto il genio può diventare la coscienza di tutti-per questo Bruto Minore diventa un Prometeo tragico, che accumula il titanismo dinamico di Prometeo con le caratteristiche di Atlas, che tiene fermo il mondo nel suo stato d'essere.

Il suicidio di Bruto rappresenta il rischio dell' autodistruzione assunto sin dall'inizio. Questo lo rende un vero eroe di tragedia greca, che Leopardi amava così tanto.

### 3. Eros e Thanatos

L' Eros si rivela al fine essere quel *amabam amare*, un amor che porta alla morte.

Non si può parlare dell' amore di una donna particolarmente, ma dell' amore di amore. Accettando di amare così, Leopardi ha accettato il tragismo che scaturisce dalla fatalità di questo tipo di amore. Eros era per i greci un daimon che oscillava sempre fra due mondi, fra l' essere ed il

non essere. Quell' Eros che può liberare se stesso solo quando converge al limite assoluto– cioè Thanatos– è presente in Leopardi. Bellissima fanciulla– Morte– accompagna il fanciullo Amore:

Fratelli, a un tempo stesso, Amore e Morte  
Ingenerò la sorte.  
Cose quaggiù sì belle  
Altre il mondo non ha, non han le stelle.  
Nasce dall'uno il bene,  
Nasce il piacer maggiore  
Che per lo mar dell'essere si trova;  
L'altra ogni gran dolore,  
Ogni gran male annulla.  
Bellissima fanciulla,  
Dolce a veder, non quale  
La si dipinge la codarda gente,  
Gode il fanciullo Amore  
Accompagnar sovente;  
E sorvolano insiem la via mortale,  
Primi conforti d'ogni saggio core.  
Né cor fu mai più saggio  
Che percosso d'amor, né mai più forte  
Sprezzò l'infausta vita,  
Né per altro signore  
Come per questo a perigliar fu pronto:  
Ch'ove tu porgi aita,  
Amor, nasce il coraggio,  
O si ridesta; e sapiente in opre,  
Non in pensiero invan, siccome suole,  
Divien l'umana prole.  
(*Amore e morte*)

Gilbert Durand ha notato che il simbolismo ascendente, diurno, si oppone a quello notturno della caduta, delle tenebre, dell' angoscia della morte. In Leopardi non sono presenti le immagini della caduta, associate di solito alla femminilità letale. Al contrario, in Leopardi sono presenti le immagini eroiche, ascensionali, diurne, come per esempio le armi, il sole.

Una eccezione– la luna– che è un simbolo così complesso per Leopardi che rifiuta le caratteristiche mitomorfe generali. La suggestione thanatica che accompagna la luna è una delle sue fasi, anzi del suo essere proteico. La propensione eroica di Leopardi è rinforzata dall'ossessione di purezza, di verginità.

La sua natura, anche quando è matrigna rimane aerea, senza i simboli tradizionali del romanticismo nei confronti del maleficio femminile – come in E. A. Poe, in Shelley, in Keats. Al contrario, la natura e la cromatica di Leopardi rinforza questo bisogno di castità, di purificazione. Allora, come dimostra questo simbolismo ascensionale, la preferenza per l'aria, non per l'acqua, Leopardi oppone alla morte immagini ascensionali, eroiche, maschili.

La morte invece è compresa nella sua dimensione tragica, cioè è assunta coscientemente. Insieme a questa coscienza della morte esiste una coscienza della vita, e per questo Leopardi lotta contro la morte come chiusura, kakos thanatos. Perché, come diceva Orazio, *Mors ultima linea rerum est*.

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## Cimabue e la tradizione del mosaico in Italia

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**Résumé:** *A la fin du XIIIe siècle apparaît l'art noble et humaine de Giovanni Cimabue (1240-1302). Le célèbre artiste florentin imprime au style dans lequel il s'est affirmé des schémas et des compositions propres, une fermeté plastique qui met en valeur la forme et le dessin, plus que la couleur, adoucissant ainsi la rigide et quasi abstraite spiritualité byzantine sans la réduire, en lui accentuant par contre la grandeur et le pouvoir de communiquer.*

**Parole chiave:** *mosaico, pittura, decorazione, oscuramento, cromatica, naturalezza.*

Un destino d'ombra sembra riservato in sorte dal trascorrere dei secoli alla figura e all'opera di Cimabue. Se, infatti, già in antico la fama da lui raggiunta nella pittura fu quasi subito oscurata da quella di Giotto, nell'età moderna alcune delle sue opere fondamentali, in complesso giunte sino a noi in numero davvero limitato, come vedremo in seguito, sono state gravemente danneggiate nel corso di catastrofici eventi naturali. Per di più, assai scarse e generiche sono le testimonianze storiche che lo riguardano, sicché la sua grandezza e le nostre possibilità di conoscenza della sua personalità artistica sono affidate alla testimonianza di pochi, grandi capolavori superstiti, nei quali si concretizza una straordinaria e innovativa vicenda figurativa. È del 18 giugno 1272 il primo riferimento documentario che lo riguarda, una notizia estremamente interessante non tanto per il suo contenuto quanto per la data e il luogo in cui il documento fu redatto. Si tratta infatti di una presenza, a Roma, di «Cimabove pictore de Florentia» in qualità di testimone per l'assunzione del patronato, da parte del cardinale Ottobono Fieschi per volontà di papa Gregorio X, di un monastero delle monache di San Damiano, passate alla regola di Sant'Agostino. Essendo l'atto in questione di notevole importanza, il pittore doveva a quella data essere non più giovanissimo e, comunque, godere di una certa notorietà per essere chiamato a svolgere la funzione di testimone; si può quindi ragionevolmente ritenere, concordando con il Vasari, che egli fosse nato intorno all'inizio del quinto decennio del Duecento, cioè circa nel 1240-1245. Particolarmente significativo è comunque il fatto che Cimabue si trovasse a Roma, già meta obbligata per i pittori toscani; poco più di un trentennio prima, infatti, vi era passato anche Giunta Pisano. La presenza nell'Urbe di pittori provenienti da altre aree figurative costituisce un fenomeno culturale di grande interesse, sia per l'influsso che le opere dell'arte classica e paleocristiana poterono esercitare su questi maestri, sia per ciò che essi eseguirono in loco, con il conseguente impatto del loro stile sui pittori già attivi nella città.

Uno iato di oltre un quarto di secolo separa l'atto del 1272 da un gruppo successivo di documenti riguardanti l'attività di Cimabue. Si tratta di diverse carte redatte a Pisa tra il 30 agosto 1301 e il 19 febbraio 1302, che attestano la partecipazione del maestro fiorentino alla decorazione a mosaico dell'abside del duomo. Nel dettaglio, Cimabue fu incaricato del completamento del mosaico già cominciato da un certo Maestro Francesco, con l'aggiunta delle figure ai lati del Cristo in trono posto al centro dell'abside («Pro operando ipsum ad illas figuras que noviter fiunt circa Magiostatam inceptam in majori ecclesia S. Marie»), con un riferimento particolare, in un pagamento del 19 febbraio 1302, alla figura di *San Giovanni*, già portata a termine («Cimabue pictor Magiostatatis sua sponte fuit confessus se habuisse a D. Operario de summa libr. decem quas dictus Cimabue habere debebat de figura S. Johannis quam fecit juxta Magiostatam»). Il primo novembre 1301,

inoltre, l'ospedale di Santa Chiara incarica il maestro dell'esecuzione, per l'altar maggiore della chiesa, di un grande polittico, purtroppo perduto, di cui il contratto di commissione fornisce anche una dettagliata descrizione e il nome per esteso del pittore e del padre: «Magister Cenni dictus Cimabue pictor condam Pepi de Floren-tia». Un documento fiorentino nei registri della Società dei piovuti, del 19 marzo 1302, menziona espressamente gli eredi di «Cienni pictoris», permettendoci così di collocare la morte dell'artista tra il novembre dell'anno precedente e questa data; il 4 luglio dello stesso anno, infine, viene ancora ricordato il nome del pittore in un documento notarile. Altrettanto scarno è il corpus delle opere che la moderna letteratura critica attribuisce a Cimabue; un corpus che, come sempre avviene in questi casi, ha subito oscillazioni piuttosto ampie. La principale fonte al riguardo è senza dubbio la *Vita di Cimabue* redatta dal Vasari il quale, oltre a riunire un fin troppo ricco catalogo delle opere, cercò di definire il ruolo svolto dal maestro nel rinnovamento della pittura italiana. Vide, cioè, nello stile di Cimabue il superamento delle durezza e goffaggini dell'arte bizantina verso una maggiore vivezza cromatica e naturalezza di tratto. Il Vasari fu anche il primo a collegare il nome del maestro alla decorazione della basilica superiore di San Francesco ad Assisi, attribuendogli sia gli affreschi dell'abside e del transetto sia quelli della navata, a eccezione delle storie francescane di Giotto. Ma, se da un lato egli riconobbe i caratteri innovativi dello stile di Cimabue, dall'altro ribadì il giudizio sul superamento della sua fama e della sua arte da parte di Giotto, che già agli inizi del Trecento era stato efficacemente e sinteticamente espresso da Dante Alighieri: «Credette Cimabue nella pittura / tener lo campo, e ora ha Giotto il grido, / sì che la fama di colui è scura».

Questo oscuramento, che sicuramente influì in antico sia sull'attenzione prestata al maestro dagli eruditi, sia sulla conservazione delle sue opere, sembra aver pesato indirettamente anche sulla vicenda critica moderna; questa deve fare i conti con la mancanza di datazioni definite per le opere riferibili a Cimabue, che pure sono tali solo con certezza relativa. L'unica eccezione è, appunto, costituita dalla figura di *San Giovanni evangelista* del mosaico absidale del duomo di Pisa, databile, grazie ai documenti già ricordati, al 1301; essa è però leggibile dal punto di vista stilistico solo per la metà superiore, essendo stata quella inferiore oggetto di pesanti rimaneggiamenti.

Non troppo lontana nel tempo dal *Crocifisso* di Arezzo - e probabilmente anteriore al 1272, anno del soggiorno romano - sembra essere la partecipazione di Cimabue alla decorazione musiva della volta del battistero di San Giovanni a Firenze, riconosciuta per la prima volta da Adolfo Venturi, che ne valutò eccessivamente l'ampiezza, e in seguito riconsiderata dal Toesca, che riferì al maestro in prima persona due sole scene.

Anche in questo caso, in mancanza di un qualsivoglia riferimento documentario, l'unico mezzo a disposizione per definire cronologia ed estensione dell'intervento è l'indagine stilistica, resa qui ancor più difficile dai pesantissimi interventi di restauro subiti dal complesso.

Gli inizi della decorazione del battistero fiorentino datano a partire dal 1225 circa, con i mosaici della "scarsella" eseguiti dal mosaicista fra Jacopo, facente parte dell'ordine di San Francesco, erroneamente identificato dalle fonti con Jacopo Torriti, attivo oltre mezzo secolo più tardi nella chiesa di San Francesco ad Assisi e a Roma; l'impresa si protrasse, con interruzioni, fino alla fine del Duecento, divenendo il più importante cantiere pittorico di Firenze, luogo di incontro ed elaborazione dei nuovi fermenti figurativi che di lì a breve avrebbero contribuito in misura determinante alla nascita del nuovo linguaggio pittorico giottesco.

Alla sua esecuzione attesero i maggiori maestri attivi nella città tra cui Meliore, Coppo di Marcovaldo, Gaddo Caddi e, naturalmente, Cimabue, il cui intervento, come si è detto, non sembra essere stato particolarmente esteso. La critica, infatti, è ormai quasi concorde nel limitare la sua effettiva presenza al massimo a tre scene, *Giuseppe venduto dai fratelli*, il *Lamento dei genitori di Giuseppe* e la *Nascita di san Giovanni Battista e imposizione del nome*.

Ma l'iniziale impostazione dell'opera e la sua direzione furono con tutta probabilità affidate a mosaicisti di formazione bizantina, la cui area di provenienza può ragionevolmente essere indicata nel cantiere della basilica di San Marco a Venezia.

Ciò dovette avvenire poiché tale tecnica decorativa a livello monumentale era di fatto estranea alla tradizione fiorentina, mentre i mosaicisti marciari godevano di un'indiscussa e insuperata fama, tale da farli chiamare anche a Roma - culla di quest'arte per tutto il Medioevo - per eseguire, agli inizi del Duecento, il mosaico absidale della basilica di San Paolo fuori le Mura.

In un contesto figurativo di tale complessità non è comunque agevole definire esattamente cosa realmente spettò a Cimabue: se solo l'ideazione e l'approntamento dei cartoni o anche l'effettiva esecuzione del mosaico. Che Cimabue fosse un mosaicista in senso tecnico, è peraltro ricavabile dai documenti pisani, che attestano che egli eseguì direttamente l'opera, servendosi di un collaboratore'. Certo è che confrontando la testa di un astante nell'*Imposizione* con quella, autografa, di *San Giovanni* nell'abside del duomo di Pisa o con l'analoga figura nella *Crocifissione* nel transetto sinistro della chiesa superiore di San Francesco ad Assisi, non si può non ipotizzare anche per la prima una paternità cimabuesca.

Ma al di là dell'intervento autografo, la lezione del maestro - agente direttamente o trasmessa attraverso i suoi seguaci - ebbe profonda influenza sugli altri pittori attivi nel battistero, tanto da lasciare tracce evidenti nel proseguimento dell'opera, soprattutto nella direzione di un accentuarsi degli elementi espressivi e della ricchezza dei passaggi cromatici.

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## Giotto – fondatore del linguaggio pittorico trecentesco

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**Résumé:** *Admirable dans l'art de Giotto est l'intuition psychologique des personnages. Dans la composition des tableaux les caractéristiques externes ont une valeur révolutionnaire vis-à-vis des règles de la tradition byzantine, statique, hiératique, parce que les personnages de Giotto se meuvent dans l'espace et dans la profondeur, chose tout à fait innovatrice. Il cherche l'équilibre des masses, la synthèse sobre de l'expression jamais rompue par les détails, vrais mais insignifiants, qui interrompent l'idée. L'atmosphère, les formes, les gestes, la couleur, tout concourt à former la scène, la partie centrale du tableau, qui est l'essentiel du thème.*

**Parole chiave:** *psicologia, tradizione bizantina, prospettiva, architettura, spazio reale, affresco*

Tra il 1303 e il 1306 circa Giotto lavorò a Padova al servizio di Enrico Scrovegni, esponente di una delle più importanti famiglie della città. Il 6 febbraio 1300 questi aveva acquistato un terreno per edificarvi una cappella in onore della Vergine Annunciata. La sua costruzione fu iniziata con tutta probabilità nel 1302; in quell'anno, infatti, il patriarca di Aquileia Ottobono de' Razzi concesse allo Scrovegni l'autorizzazione a edificare la cappella, che venne poi consacrata forse nel 1303, secondo quanto affermato da un'iscrizione perduta, ma ricordata dalle fonti. Tale consacrazione ebbe comunque luogo entro il primo marzo 1304, data di promulgazione da parte di papa Benedetto XI di un'indulgenza per coloro che avessero visitato l'edificio in spirito di umiltà.

Un'altra importante testimonianza è del 9 gennaio 1305 e riporta la protesta dei frati del vicino convento degli Eremita-ni contro Enrico Scrovegni, il quale stava progressivamente modificando l'edificio da un oratorio privato in un chiesa aperta al culto: la costruzione del campanile veniva in tale ottica letta come un sorta di provocazione nei confronti della comunità degli Eremitani.

Infine, il 16 marzo 1305 una delibera del Maggior consiglio di Venezia approvò il prestito a Enrico Scrovegni «de pan-nis Sancti Marci», forse paramenti o tovaglie d'altare della basilica di San Marco per la consacrazione di una cappella di sua proprietà in Padova, con ogni verosimiglianza da riconoscere in quella dell'Arena, vista anche la vicinanza della data con la festa dell'Annunciata, il 25 marzo. Nel 1305, quindi, l'edificio era consacrato e, quasi certamente, anche la decorazione affrescata doveva essere se non del tutto completa, almeno a un rilevante stadio di avanzamento.

L'essenziale e fortemente coerente e dinamica concezione spaziale della cappella occupa un posto preciso nella storia dell'architettura gotica in Italia settentrionale. Realizzato in semplice materiale laterizio - in linea con le tradizioni edilizie locali - l'edificio si presenta come un'aula rettangolare di dimensioni non particolarmente ampie: circa trenta metri di lunghezza, circa otto metri e mezzo di larghezza, con un'altezza massima all'interno di circa dodici metri e mezzo.

La facciata è "a capanna" e presenta al centro un'ampia trifora ad archi trilobi e un semplice portale, ambedue profilati in pietra bianca. Lungo il fianco meridionale dell'edificio, nella zona superiore, si aprono sei alte finestre strombate; altre sei aperture pressoché quadrate si trovano nella fascia inferiore della parete.

L'aula è coperta da una volta a botte a tutto sesto e termina con un'area presbiteriale pressoché quadrata, introdotta da un arco trionfale e voltata a crociera; il presbiterio si conclude in un'abside pentagonale dalle forme slanciate.



Proprio sulla zona absidale insiste il campanile la cui cella, in origine, probabilmente non doveva essere più alta dell'abside stessa e che, comunque, nella sua forma attuale sembra non poter essere considerato anteriore al primo Quattrocento.

All'interno, la decorazione della cappella segue un complesso programma iconografico, incentrato sulle *Storie detta Vergine e di Cristo*.

La volta a botte presenta, entro clipei su uno sfondo a ciclo stellato, le figure a mezzo busto della *Madonna con il Bambino*, del *Cristo benedicente e di Profeti e santi*. Nella fascia inferiore delle pareti sono dipinte a monocromo quattordici figure al legoriche dei *Vizi* e delle *Virtù*, identificate dal nome in alto e, in origine, accompagnate lungo il margine inferiore da un'iscrizione latina, probabilmente a carattere esplicativo della scelta della figura; infine, i riquadri con le *Storie evangeliche* sono accompagnati da medaglioni che racchiudono scene e per-sonaggi dall'Antico Testamento con esse in rapporto, nonché numerose figure di santi.

La sequenza narrativa degli affreschi sulle pareti si svolge su tre registri e ha inizio in quello superiore della parete destra a partire dalla zona absidale, per proseguire sulla parete sinistra, dalla controfacciata verso l'abside, sempre dall'alto verso il basso. Lo stesso ordine viene seguito per gli altri due registri. I cicli iconografici di cui si compone la decorazione sono le *Storie di Gioacchino e Anna*, *l'Infanzia di Cristo e la Passione*, per un totale di trentasette episodi, escluso il *Giudizio universale* in controfacciata. Sull'arco absidale, poi, è dipinta, in alto, una figura dell'*Eterno* - su tavola inserita nella muratura - tra le schiere angeliche, prologo celeste dell'*Annunciazione* che si trova proprio ai lati dell'arco, con l'*Angelo* sulla sinistra dell'abside e *Maria* sulla destra. Nel registro inferiore si trovano la *Visitazione* e il *Tradimento di Giuda* e, infine, due spazi architettonici illusivi, dipinti in prospettiva e privi di figurazioni, i cosiddetti "coretti".

Essi costituiscono, senza alcun dubbio, la più eclatante invenzione spaziale della pittura giottesca e dell'intero panorama figurativo del primo Trecento.

I due straordinari murali si trovano ai lati dell'abside e sono centrati otticamente sull'asse di questa, quindi dialetticamente posti in rapporto con lo spazio "reale" dell'edificio. Ma le novità non finiscono qui: essi, infatti, fingono uno spazio "reale", tanto che l'altezza delle volte a crociera che li coprono fa ipotizzare che il loro pavimento si trovi allo stesso livello di quello realmente esistente nel presbiterio. Si crea illusivamente in tal modo l'impressione che si possa davvero accedere a essi proprio attraverso il presbiterio; si pongono quindi come un'estensione dipinta dello spazio realmente esistente e, sul piano dei contenuti teorici, come manifesto di una relazione tra realtà e artificio pittorico assai più complessa di quanto elaborato nei secoli precedenti.

Un'assoluta novità, quindi, per lo sviluppo del fare pittorico nel Medioevo, ma anche la prova dell'altrettanto assoluta padronanza teorica delle leggi ottiche, che Giotto mette magistralmente in pratica, con diverse modalità, nell'unità della decorazione: «ornato pittorico e forme architettoniche concorrono ai medesimi scopi, sono determinati dal medesimo modo di intendere e di servirsi dello spazio con precisi intenti figurativi». La totale compenetrazione e interazione tra struttura architettonica e apparato decorativo, infatti, ambedue segnati da una stessa concezione dinamica dello spazio che dalla parete di ingresso procede verso l'abside, annullano mina con un'area presbiteriale pressoché quadrata, introdotta da un arco trionfale e voltata a crociera; il presbiterio si conclude in un'abside pentagonale dalle forme slanciate.

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**LINGUISTIC STUDIES/ LINGUISTIQUE/  
SPRACHWISSENSCHAFTLICHE BEITRÄGE**

## A Special View to the Problems of the Personal Pronoun

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**Résumé:** *L'article concerne les situations où certains pronoms personnels, bien qu'ils apparaissent dans des contextes caractéristiques au nom, ne peuvent remplacer un nom et obtiennent des significations spécifiques. Nous nous occuperons de quelques cas particuliers d'utilisation des pronoms personnels en anglais et en roumain.*

**Key-words:** *definition, gender, agreement, person, pronoun*

The definition of the Pronoun is a problem much more complicated than it may appear to somebody at first sight. Numerous definitions have been given to this part of speech so far, many linguists have tackled it beginning with Aristotel and finishing with Roman Jakobson or perhaps some newer theorists in the last few years. An exhaustive history of these definitions was given by A.M. Berrenechea.

We did not propose ourselves to take into consideration all these definitions here and now. As this problem could represent by itself a subject of a separate work. So we are just going to select and discuss the principal directions of this domain.

A definition must necessarily contain, according to the logical requirements two elements: the proximate genre and the specific differences. Most definitions which the pronoun has been given so far never indicate (as Maria Manoliu Manea informs us) more than the proximate genre "The pronoun is a substitute for a noun" which in other terms would mean "the pronoun occurs in the same context as the noun – has the same distribution.

If we analyze this problem more attentively we can see that the pronoun and the noun don't have the same distribution. Besides certain common contexts we may find a differential multitude for each.

As for the common basis of the opposition between the two bulks of contexts we can cite here an example like:

Engl. John hasn't come.

He hasn't come.

Rom. Ion nu a venit.

El nu a venit.

For the differential multitude of the noun we can cite here examples like:

Engl. My friend has come.

+ my he has come.

Rom. Prietenul meu a venit.

+ El meu a venit.

Engl. My father's brother is an engineer.

+ My father's he is an engineer.

Rom. Fratele tatălui meu este inginer.

+ El tatălui meu este inginer.

In such cases one can remark that the pronoun can be a substitute not only for the noun but an entire NP (Noun Phrase). The differential multitude of the pronoun in the above opposition can be represented by such contexts in which personal pronouns of the first and the second person may occur, which are never noun substituted. Viewing this problem from a different standpoint we may

say that in such contexts the substitution of a pronoun by a noun also results in unallocated chains of expression or, in English chains with a different meaning.

Engl. I shall come.

John shall come.

Rom. Eu voi veni.

+ Ion voi veni.

It is obvious that in English we are in front of a modal future not a simple future.

As to the differential multitude of the pronoun our conviction is that the above idea must undergo a slight amendment. There is a context in which the second person pronoun can replace a name and this is the case of a sentence with predicate in the Imperative Mood and its subject in the Vocative Case. (see M. Zdrenghea).

e.g. engl. John, tell us ....!

John, tell us ...!

e.g. rom. Ioane, spune-ne ...!

Tu, spune-ne ...!

Differences between the noun and the pronoun can only be understood if one considers every pronoun category apart on one hand and the noun on the other, but it is difficult enough for one to find a common characteristic trait on the basis of which pronouns might be grouped together within the same Morphological class opposed to that represented by the noun.

Some linguists among whom A. Ernout have tried to delimitate pronouns in accordance to certain observation of a morphological nature. Following A. Ernout the pronominal flexion in Latin is different from the nominal one in the first place by the fact that it comprises specific gender, number and case formatives: - e for masculine, singular, nominative, (ille, ipse, iste); - ius for the Genitive singular, - I for the Dative singular.

On the hand in the Genitive, and the Dative the pronominal declension is characterized by a specific sincretism (homonymy) of the genders.

It has rightly been remarked that such morphological, paradigmatic traits are not sufficient in delimitating the class of the pronoun as a whole, because one can't find them with all Latin pronouns (the personal pronouns for instance).

In "Gramatica limbii române", the definition given to the pronoun "the part of speech which has declension and takes the place of a noun" seems to suggest the idea that the pronoun might be characterized through its capacity of obeying flexion. Nor can this characteristic be applied to all categories of pronouns; the English Indefinite pronoun; something (like its Romanian counterpart ceva) or the Negative pronoun nothing (Rom. nimic) or the Relative What (Rom. ce) are not flexible.

In mathematical linguistics, more exactly in the linguistic statistics, a new definition of the pronoun has been looked for, based on the quantitative principle.

It has been noticed, for instance, the fact that in Spanish, French, Romanian and English pronouns begin to appear in word – frequency dictionaries starting from range 7.

In this perspective the pronoun might be subordinated to a class having a relatively restricted number of members occurring however with a high frequency. But the statistic definitions have not come to satisfy all the linguists. The mere fact of finding out that units of range 1 to 6 are Prepositions, those of range 7 to 10 Pronouns is not giving an authentic definition of this class.

Quantitative results can at the best complete but they can never replace appreciations of a quantitative order. In the modern linguistics of the last two decades, interesting attempts have been made to define personal pronoun by means of structuralist concepts:

1. The homoplan relation (paradigmatics and sintagmatics)

2. The heteroplan relations between code and message or between significance and the world of the designated objects.

Homoplans are those between elements belonging to the same compartment of the language. From this point of view the relation between pronoun and noun present in the definition of the pronoun is paradigmatic in character.

In Modern Grammars, the term substitute appears sometimes in place of the traditional pronoun, although the two terms are not synonymous.

There are certain “pronouns” which though occurring in contexts characteristic of nouns and Noun Phrases never substitute a noun and have a peculiar significance.

NP can be represented either by a Nominal followed or not by a Relative sentence, or by a sentence. The Nominal marked by symbol Nom stands for the multitude of Nouns and Pronouns.

In any context the Pronoun represents a NP, to the same degree as a noun accompanied by its determinants. However only part of the elements known as pronouns can replace a Np – These are the substitutes or pronouns with antecedent while the other “pronouns” represent a special form of a NP – pronouns without antecedent.

Most definitions given so far to the Personal Pronoun (both in English Grammars and in the Romanian ones) essentially mention that “it can replace a noun, or a noun equivalent in the mean time denoting the person.”

Many objections to the traditional definition have been formulated in more recent linguistic contributions:

a) The first and the second person singular personal pronouns never replace a noun or a noun equivalent (maybe with the exception concerning the Vocative). These pronouns refer to the conditions in which information is transmitted:

The first person singular represents the transmitter.

The second person singular – the receiver, so they represent the protagonists of the act of transmitting (communicating) information.

It's only the third person singular and plural which satisfies the definition and generally referring to the previous context.

b) In the second place, an idea which we promise to resume below, the very term of “personal” is inadequate:

The personal pronoun of the third person can replace a noun no matter if it presents the traits + Human or – Human + person – person, respectively.

c) Thirdly, it has been remarked that pronominalization can't be applied to any noun – only to a definite determined noun.

Out of the categories of the pronoun, the gender, the number and the person are integrative connective categories, joining together information by means of their repetition. The case, on the other hand, is a non – iterative – connective category.

Not are the Grammatical Categories of the personal pronoun the same with all “personal” pronouns. If all of them can achieve the case, person and number opposition, it's only the third person pronoun which can achieve the gender opposition.

Two of the grammatical categories of the pronoun in general and the personal pronoun “in specie” may deserve special attention gender and number.

The Gender as a grammatical category generally appears in Grammar books without a proper definition (with no reference to the proximate gender and the specific differences) most often they discuss a correspondence between natural gender, conceived exclusively as a sex difference (male - female) and grammatical gender which is not defined grammatically.

In more recent works the gender is considered as a category of words contextually delimited. The most coherent attempt of defining gender to which we personally subscribe is that based on the G.T.G. theory, a model which turns to good account the ideas of Roman Jakobson.

Dealing with the theory of redundancy in linguistics, R. Jakobson put forward the idea that grammatical categories represent connective elements, which are repeated along the discourse in order to link together themes of information thus ensuring the so called isotopy of the discourse.

In this perspective as we mentioned before, gender appears to be (at least in certain languages) as a semic iterative category by means of which items of information are joined together expressed by constituents belonging either to the same NP or to different phrases (groups).

In the specific case of the pronoun, gender, like number, is characterized in both Romanian and English through its capacity of linking together the information of the noun to that of the pronoun.

First of all it is necessary to decide (establish) what are the terms (the invariants) of the category of gender in the two languages under consideration.

The problem of the gender in Romanian is first dependent on the solution given to the problem of the Romanian neuter.

In the Romanian traditional linguistics it is generally admitted that the Romanian language has 3 genders: masculine, feminine and neuter (to which some newer contributions add the common gender).

In English it is also considered the existence of four genders: masculine, feminine, neuter, and common gender.

It is not possible for us or anyone to make a comparison between the Romanian gender and the English gender with nouns and pronouns in terms of traditional grammar.

It's only the contributions of more recent linguists that can supply us comparable terms in the two languages, and these are of a semantic order.

According to most modern linguists in Romanian are only two genders – masculine and feminine, a third being eventually the common gender.

The first one to assert such an idea was F. Agard More recently Rober Hall Jr. has demonstrated conclusively that, the Romanian neuter no longer has the functions of the Latin neuter, as it not be found with the adjectives or the pronouns (in other terms we could say it isn't a semic iterative connective category). In a similar way, Romanian gender is envisaged in Em. Vasiliu and Sanda Galopentia Eretescu "Sintaxa transformatională a limbii române" and Maria Manoliu Manea "Gramatica comparată a limbilor romanice."

The Gender of the Pronoun. Dependent on the way pronominal theme can be combined with the gender affixes they can fall into two large categories.

- those which admit, at one case at least gender affixed.
- themes that always syncretize masculine and feminine (i.e. which have the same form for the two genders).

To the first category are considered to belong:

- the demonstrative pronouns
- some of the indefinite pronouns (those which include the seme [+ Personal] (e.g. cineva, ceva)
- the third person personal pronoun

In Romanian the gender marks are suspended in the plural Genitive and Dative. (acestora, acelora)

From this point of view the Demonstrative Pronouns in English belong to the second category as they always syncretize masculine and feminine. (this = aceasta, acesta) (that = acela, aceea)

The Indefinite Pronouns in Romanian behave in a similar way as the Demonstrative ones. (unul, una – altul, alta).

It's only the compounds with care in the contemporary Romanian that syncretize masculine and feminine in the Nominative and in the Accusative (fiecare om – fiecare femeie).

With the third person pronouns in Romanian, the masculine ~ feminine opposition can be achieved, usually in The Nominative and the Accusative (el, ea) but it is suspended with the [-Tonic] Dative forms:

e.g. Îi dau (lui, ei).  
Le dau (băieților, fetelor).

In English the gender opposition is achieved in both the Nominative Case and the other cases disregarding the opposition between tonic and non – tonic forms:

He	she	It
him	her	To it
To him	To her	To it
him	her	It

Pronouns which have affixes of the semic category (+ Personal) suspend the opposition masculine ~ feminine. As terms subordinated to the noun, as a substitute for them, they syncretize masculine and feminine but as a superordinate term, in concord with a determinant they require the extensive sense of the noun that is the masculine: ceva bun, nimic rău.

Alongside the Indefinite Pronouns to this category are considered to belong the Personal Pronouns of the first and the second persons (eu, tu, noi, voi, I, you, me, you) the latter suspend the opposition [+/- Personal] in favor of the [+ Personal].

The category of Number. Not the category of number either, has so far benefited from a strictly scientific definition in the traditional grammars.

In modern linguistics one can find in this respect the entitled objection that the difference between the singular and plural is conceived as a mere reflex of the opposition unul ~ mai mulți (one ~ more) or singularity ~ plurality

The category of case. The case, as it is conceived in the traditional grammars has not yet enjoyed too much attention, not even in the linguistic works considered as modern.

In modern grammars of English it is only conventionally that one can admit the existence of 5 cases; for most linguists the case opposition has only two terms: subjective – objective.

The subjective ~ objective opposition can prove useful in explaining certain specific situations which put into contrast the Romanian and the English cases respectively.

The concord in case of the Predicative (nume predicativ) with the subject after the copulative “to be” in English evidences variance which the Romanian ignores; this concord is rigorously achieved only in the formal style, while in the colloquial speech the objective case is preferred to the Nominative (the subjective).

e.g. Who is there = Cine e acolo?  
It's only I = nu sunt decât eu  
It's me = eu sunt

In comparisons it seems that in contrast with Romanian, English has two adverbial modifier of comparison, in parallel with the respective subordinate clause, which can sometimes appear in an elliptical form.

The contraction of an Adverbial Clause of Comparison in Romanian requires that its subject should be expressed by an Accusative, the comparative adverb which functioned as a conjunction on the complex sentence level becoming thus a preposition with the Accusative on the Clause level:

e.g. You are learning more than I do  
You are learning more than I.  
Tu înveți mai mult decât învâți eu.  
Tu înveți mai mult decât mine.

The Personal Pronoun in English after as or than are in the same case as the respective noun or pronoun representing the other term of the comparison:

e.g. I know her better than he – knows her.  
I know her better than – I know him.

We have shown above that in Romanian we can have an adverbial modifier of comparison introduced by ca or decât functioning as prepositions. In this case the subjective ~ objective opposition of English takes the form of an opposition which we suggest to be Called Simple Accusative ~ Accusative with the morpheme (pe).

e.g. O cunosc mai bine decât tine.



O cunosc mai bine decât pe tine.

When dealing with “Special Uses of Some Personal Pronouns” we speak about the so called Ethical Dative:

e.g. Aici mi-ai fost?

Ce credeți că mi-ți văzu?

Such unstressed Dative forms of the Personal Pronouns which can be found in folk literature and with certain writers who took from it their inspiration can't be possible translated into English:

e.g. And what do you think he saw?

There is however a similar value which we can find in both languages.

This is the situation when in Romanian the unstressed Personal Pronoun in the Dative Case cumulates both the function of a Possessive and that of an Indirect Object:

Ți-am reparat ceasul = Am reparat ceasul țau pentru tine – I have repaired your watch for you.

**The Category of Person.** Generally speaking the category of person can be subject to the same discussion in both English and Romanian and also on a contrastive level.

The traditional definition of the person has been severely criticized not only from the stand point of modern linguistics but even from that of some more recent works of traditional inspiration.

The idea has recently gained ground that there are more than there person.

If the first and the second person singular evoke the protagonists of the act of communication, the first and the second persons plural do not necessarily mean a multitude of transmitter or receivers.

Defining the third person as „the person spoken about” evidences several shortcomings. As we have already mentioned above, by Pronouns el, ea, ei, ele, he, she, it, they, respectively one can replace not only names of Person + Human but also names described as – Person = - Human.

Or the other hand „the person spoken about” can be represented by either I or R (Transmitter - Receiver).

One can be amazed by the paradox which arises when comparing the school – grammar definitions of the Personal Pronoun of the third person and that of the subject of a sentence on the other hand.

If we are to analyze such examples as:

Eu cânt.

Tu cânti.

The following sequence of logical sentences is possible.

Despre cine se vorbește în propoziție?

A. eu, tu

Q. Ce este persoana a II-a?

A. Persoana despre care se vorbește.

Q. Deci, de ce persoană sunt cuvintele eu și tu?

De persoana a III-a, evident.

In addition we can mention that there are many cases when the third personal pronouns are referring not even to a person, but to an entire P. Sometimes it is totally impossible for one to decode such pronouns at all – it is the case of the third person of verbs in concord with undetermined subject or subject zero.

e.g. Dar pe asta n-am crezut-o.

(că s-a putut întâmpla)

I couldn't believe it. (that such a thing could happen)

It can be remarked that the zero-subject in a primary NP must be expressed in English by means of an impersonal it (which, funny enough is dealt with in most grammars within the chapter, Personal Pronouns.)

A special use of the third person pronoun it in English which has no direct equivalent in Romanian appears in the Emphatic *it* constructions.

e.g. It is he.

It is his rude behavior that worries me.

In more recent studies are mentioned some other semantic oppositions concerning the pronoun, less studied in the past.

#### + **Emphasis – Emphasis**

One can even speak of a scale of emphasis with several degrees in the case of the personal pronoun.

e.g. Marin îmi zâmbește adesea.

Marin îmi zâmbește mie adesea

Marin mie îmi zâmbește adesea.

Mie îmi zâmbește Marin adesea.

In English the scale of emphasis seems to have less steps; in the English translation of the above examples, only two:

Mike often smiles to me - Emphasis

It is to me that Mike often smiles + Emphasis

The subcategories of the trait Emphasis - + tonic – tonic as their very names suggest it, are achieved phonologically by means of the stress. Tonic forms are phonetically stressed, the others have no stress.

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# Values of Adverbs

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**Résumé:** L'article concerne l'essai de présenter les sens négatifs ou positifs de certains adverbes (*quite, enough, too, only*) ainsi que le changement du sens de la phrase en fonction de leur place.

**Key-words:** *meaning, intonation, stress, position, adverb.*

The word adverb suggests the idea of adding to the meaning of a verb (ad-verb). This is what many adverbs do. They can tell us something about the action in a sentence by modifying a verb, i.e. by telling us how, when, where something happens or is done.

Adverbs of Degree indicate the extent of an action or the degree to which an action is performed. These adverbs broadly answer the question "to what extent?". Some of the most common are: *enough, too, quite, nearly, hardly, somewhat*. Most of these go before the words they modify. The adverb *enough*, unlike other adverbs of quantity, is placed after the adjective, adverb or verb.

e.g. You have done your job well enough.

This isn't a good enough reason.

You are not near enough to see well.

Curiously enough, no one was there.

However, not all adverbs of degree can form all these combinations. Adverbs of degree change the meaning of a sentence, often by weakening the effect of the word they modify.

*Too* goes before adjectives and adverbs. It conveys the idea of "excess," "more than is necessary" and should not be confused with the intensifier *very*, which does not suggest *excess*. *Too* and *enough* point to a result.

e.g. I arrived at the station too late. (I missed the train)

I don't arrive at the station early enough. (I missed the train)

The use of *too*, directly after the subject is formal and the end position is generally preferred, especially in informal speech. *Too* is not used in negative sentences and must be replaced by *no t... either*, and it is never placed between the auxiliary and the verb:

e.g. "I, too, saw it" refers to the subject. (My friend saw it and I saw it too.)

Many foreign people make the mistake of using *too* as a synonym of *very* or *extremely*. Sometimes the adverb *only* combined with *too* means "extremely":

e.g. That translation was only too difficult for me.

This mistake is usually due to the people not realizing that *too* (like the French *trop*) is an adverb that creates a negative sense. If, for example, we say: "This house is too expensive" we mean that it is so expensive that we cannot buy it.

The adverb *enough* always follows adverbs and predicative adjectives. *Enough* also follows attributive adjectives, though it may be separated from the adjective by the noun.

e.g. He is a decent enough clerk.

He is a decent clerk enough.

*Enough* can be also used in partitive constructions: "I have already spent enough of my time."

On the other hand, *enough* is an adverb that creates an affirmative sense. If, for example, someone says: "This exercise is easy enough for me to do in ten minutes", he means that the exercise is so easy that he can do it in ten minutes.

Many people, however, feel a little unsure of the constructions with *too* and *enough* and avoid them altogether, contenting themselves with the adverb *so* and adverbial clauses of consequence;

i.e. instead of:

It is too expensive for us to buy.

they say:

It is so expensive that we cannot buy it.

and instead of:

This exercise is easy enough for me to do it in ten minutes.

they say:

This exercise is so easy that I can do it in ten minutes.

Such sentences with adverbial clauses of consequences are not wrong in themselves but they sometimes put an unnatural emphasis on the adjective or adverb that is qualified by *so*. In the sentence above, for example, the exercise might not be so very easy as the latest constructions suggests; it might, indeed, be quite difficult for anyone, but for him it is easy enough to require only ten minutes' work. In such a case the former sentence with *enough* would be indispensable.

Many English people add the word "to be able" to such sentence as these, putting them immediately in front of the infinitives:

e.g. That suitcase is too heavy for him to be able to carry alone...

Tom is too lazy to be able to do it.

The house is expensive enough for us to be able to buy it.

He is clever enough to be able to do this exercise.

Such an addition is usually unnecessary; in the first, the third and the fourth above, it is certainly so; in the second it could remain to obviate a possible ambiguity.

The construction with *too* and *enough* are used mainly to remove the emphasis on an adjective or adverb that is created by *so* and an adverbial clause of consequence.

*Too* comes before the adjective and has the sense of "excessive". In patterns with to-infinitives, *too* often combines negative ideas:

e.g. He isn't strong. He can't lift it – He is too weak to lift. In the above example, the subject of the main verb is also the subject of the infinitive. In the following example, the subject of the main verb is the object of the infinitive:

e.g. He's too heavy. I can't lift him – He is too heavy (for me) to lift.

Note the optional for-phrase and note that we never put an object after the infinitive in sentences like this.

*Enough* comes after the adjectives and means "to the necessary degree". In to-infinitive patterns it combines two ideas:

e.g. He's strong. He can lift it – He is strong enough to lift it.

He's weak. He can't lift it – He isn't strong enough to lift it.

In the above examples the subjects of the main verb and of the infinitive are the same. In the following example the subject of the main verb is the object of the infinitive:

e.g. The apple is ripe. I can eat it. – It is ripe enough (for me) to eat.

The for-phrase is optional and we don't repeat the object in this type of sentence

The rules for the change from the one construction into the other are very simple:

Where *too* was used in the original sentence, *enough* must be substituted; where *enough* was used, *too* must be substituted.

The adjective or the adverb qualified by *too* or *enough* in the original sentence must be replaced by its antonym.

The verb of the original sentence must be made negative.

e.g. This cake is too warm.

This cake is not cold enough.

This dictionary is cheap enough.

This dictionary is not too expensive.

In all the foregoing, the infinitives used have been Ordinary Infinitives.

Another adverb of degree is *quite*. The meaning of *quite* depends on the kind of word it modifies. With adjectives and adverbs which are gradable *quite* means “less than the highest degree” or it can mean “better than expected”. This use of *quite* (=less than) is not very common in American English.

i.e. The film was quite good.

A confusing thing about *quite* when it is used as an adverb is that it has two meanings – one contradicting other.

One meaning of the adverb *quite* is “completely, wholly, absolutely”, when it used with adverbs or ungradable adjectives.

e.g. This is quite impossible

The cinema was quite full last night.

(i.e. it was absolutely full; there were no seats left unoccupied.)

The other meaning is “fairly, reasonably, sufficiently-but not completely, wholly and absolutely”;

e.g. He is quite a good player.

The cinema was quite full last night.

(i.e. it was fairly full, reasonably full-but not absolutely full.)

One can distinguish between the totally contradictory meanings. He may be able to do so from the context (i.e. that which has been said before) or, more probably, from the tone of the speaker’s voice.

Many times the meaning of *quite* depends on intonation or stress. When a rising tone is used, it has a positive meaning and if we use a falling tone, the meaning is negative.

e.g. The room was quite full

Adverbs such as *only*, *just*, *even*, *really* are Focus Adverbs and they can precede the word they qualify to focus attention on it. Others like *too* and *as well*, focus our attention by adding information.

The position of the adverb *only* is particularly flexible, conveying slightly different meanings according to where it is placed.

e.g. Only Mary knows the answer (nobody else does)

e.g. Mary knows only half of it (nothing else)

e.g. Mary only met John (no one else)

We’ll find the adverb *only* before a verb in explanations and excuses:

e.g. I don’t know why you’re so angry. I only left the door open.

The pre-verb position of *only* often leads to ambiguity. In the written language we can avoid ambiguity by putting the word before the word it qualifies. In the spoken language this is not necessary. We rely on stress and intonation.

e.g. I only asked John to lend me his pencil (not anything else)

In spoken English many people frequently put *only* in an illogical position in a sentence.

They say, for example:

I only want to buy some milk.

instead of:

I want to buy only some milk.

or:

I only lost ten dollars at the races.

Instead of:

I lost only ten dollars at the races.

The rule is that *only* should precede the word it qualifies-unless that word is the last word in a sentence or clause, in which case *only* may both precede and follow it.

In the following examples, we’ll have *only* in five different positions, and the four different senses that are created:

Only Tom offered me a flower.

(i.e. nobody else offered me a flower.)

Tom only offered me a flower.

(i.e. he didn't give it to me.)

Tom offered only me a flower.

(i.e. he didn't offer a flower to anyone else.)

Tom offered me only a flower.

Tom offered me a flower only.

(i.e. he didn't offered me more than a flower; the meanings here are the same because the qualified word is the last in sentence.)

Sometimes a *to-infinitive* in the second part of a sentence is used for "the later" event in a sequence. The *to-infinitive* (which can be replaced by *and + verb*) describes an event which is unexpected, sometimes unwelcome – respectively when only is used in front of *to*:

e.g. He returned after the war (only) to be told that his wife had left him (= and was told).

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# Un modèle d'analyse de l'éditorial

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**Riassunto:** Questo studio fa parte di una ricerca più vasta relativa ai generi giornalistici dei quotidiani nazionali francesi e italiani. Presentiamo qui un modello d'analisi dell'editoriale, genere che definiamo come segue: un articolo succinto su un argomento di grande attualità, scritto nel registro brillante e la cui istanza enunciativa dimostra uno spiccato impegno. Alla base del progetto di ricerca c'è l'idea che i francesi e gli italiani hanno un potenziale comune di virtualità espressive, ma delle modalità particolari di sentire e di comprendere la realtà. Due grandi tendenze artistiche hanno influito sull'evoluzione della cultura francese e della cultura italiana: il Classicismo in Francia e il Barocco in Italia. Dalle tradizioni di scrittura diverse risultano due stili giornalistici particolari.

**Mots-clés:** analyse du discours, presse écrite, genres journalistiques, stylistique comparée, style collectif

## 1. Définitions et caractéristiques de l'éditorial

L'éditorial, que la presse italienne nomme *editoriale* ou *articolo di fondo*, est le genre le plus connu et le plus répandu de la catégorie des „genres du commentaire”. Les auteurs des manuels de journalisme considèrent que c'est l'article d'opinion par excellence.

Il dispose d'une place fixe dans l'espace du journal, qui se trouvait initialement à la une (à gauche, dans les deux premières colonnes) et qui, plus récemment, a été transférée à la page éditoriale et il est généralement auto-désigné (*editorial*, *édito*).

Voici quelques définitions données par les dictionnaires et par les manuels de journalisme:

- Le Petit Robert: „Article qui émane de la direction d'un journal, d'une revue et qui définit ou reflète une orientation générale (politique, littéraire, etc.)” (2002: 836)
- José de Broucker - „Article écrit par une personnalité importante du journal et engageant la responsabilité morale de l'équipe tout entière” (1995: 219)
- Martin-Lagardette - „Article prenant position sur un fait d'actualité et engageant la responsabilité morale du journal” (2003: 100)
- Daniela Vellutino - „Commento che, di norma, dovrebbe esprimere la linea editoriale su un determinato argomento” (2000: 218)
- le dictionnaire Zingarelli - „Articolo di un giornale o di una rivista, pubblicato generalmente in prima pagina, che esprime l'opinione autorevole dei principali collaboratori e, in particolari occasioni, il punto di vista del direttore.» (2007: 753)

Le point commun de ces définitions est le fait que l'éditorial reflète non seulement la position de l'auteur à l'égard d'un sujet, mais aussi celle de la publication.

Au début, l'éditorial était écrit par le directeur du journal. Peu à peu, l'éditorial a été confié à un rédacteur en chef, ensuite à des journalistes dont l'autorité et le professionnalisme ne pouvaient pas être contestés ou bien à des journalistes spécialisés en politique, économie, etc. Dans le premier cas, l'éditorial devait respecter la ligne éditoriale du journal. Cette contrainte ne fonctionne plus nécessairement quand il est écrit par des journalistes de prestige ; ceux-ci ont la liberté d'exprimer leur propre opinion, qui peut coïncider ou non avec celle de la direction du journal. Cela arrive surtout dans la presse italienne, où l'éditorial devient souvent une tribune.



Il y a des cas où l'éditorial n'est pas signé. C'est „le seul article dont l'absence de signature lui confère parfois plus de poids” (Antoine, Dumont, Marion & Ringlet 1987: 115).

L'éditorial est construit sur un *thème d'actualité*. Il met souvent en valeur un *article d'information publié dans le même numéro du journal*. C'est un article de fond, par conséquent il implique une réflexion approfondie sur le sujet, un jugement de valeur, une prise de position.

Alors qu'auparavant il paraissait lorsque surgissait un événement extraordinaire, digne d'être mis en discussion, aujourd'hui presque chaque numéro de journal en a un, et il y a même des quotidiens qui en contiennent plusieurs.

Malgré l'espace fixe et assez limité dont il dispose, l'éditorial est l'un des articles les plus susceptibles de jouir d'une grande liberté d'expression. Il se situe à la limite de l'écriture littéraire et de l'écriture journalistique. Il relève aussi bien du style individuel de l'éditorialiste que du style de la publication.

Le ton de l'éditorial peut varier beaucoup: il y a des éditoriaux modérés, sobres, mais aussi des éditoriaux incisifs, virulents.

Selon Martin-Lagardette, „l'éditorial doit jouer un noble rôle: défense d'une idée, d'une personne ou d'un groupe de personnes, éveil des consciences sur telle ou telle situation, etc.” (2003: 100). L'éditorial attire souvent l'attention sur un fait qui soulève un problème; le journaliste s'érige alors en moraliste, allant jusqu'à admonester, critiquer, réprimander et même condamner les acteurs impliqués.

Pour couvrir cette riche gamme d'actes de discours, l'éditorialiste utilise le plus souvent un langage riche en images et une syntaxe élaborée.

## 2. Approches de l'éditorial dans les études récentes

Les études récentes tendent à analyser l'éditorial en utilisant le cadre de l'analyse de discours.

Antoine Maurice (2000), journaliste et professeur de sociologie et d'histoire du journalisme, analyse l'apparition des genres de la presse écrite du point de vue historique. Il étudie „l'écriture éditoriale” et en met en évidence trois caractéristiques principales: la brièveté (chaque paragraphe est une unité de sens autonome), le rythme (les phrases courtes et denses alternent avec des phrases plus longues et imagées), la fluidité (due à l'unité et à la cohérence interne). Ensuite, il remarque que l'évolution des genres implique des influences et des brouillages de frontières entre les genres. Ainsi, il y a de nombreux cas de mélange entre l'éditorial et le commentaire ou bien entre l'éditorial et l'analyse.

Sans insister là-dessus, Antoine Maurice avance l'idée que l'éditorial vise à susciter une réaction de la part du destinataire (notamment de la part des autorités ou des personnes impliquées dans l'événement). Il s'agit là de l'effet perlocutoire de l'acte de langage, notion développée par la pragmatique: „Séduire pour attirer l'attention, attirer l'attention pour convaincre, convaincre pour mobiliser” (2000: 97).

Thierry Herman et Nicole Jufer (2001) se demandent dans quelle mesure nous pouvons encore considérer l'éditorial comme étant la „vitrine du journal”, étant donné que les changements de formule intervenus ces dernières années ont fait passer l'éditorial de la Une à la page „Opinions”. Une possible explication en serait la modification du rôle de la Une, qui serait devenue une sorte de „porte d'entrée” ou „home page” à visée captatrice.

Du fait que même au sein de la page „Opinions” l'éditorial se démarque par une mise en évidence du type *fonds grisés*, *caractères gras* ou *cadrage particulier*, les deux chercheurs arrivent à l'hypothèse suivante: „l'éditorial est avant tout une **position privilégiée**, position à partir de laquelle s'exerce la reconnaissance du pouvoir” (2001: 138). Les deux linguistes reprennent la théorie de Bourdieu sur le *skeptron*<sup>1</sup> et postulent que l'éditorial serait *le skeptron du journal* et permettrait de légitimer la parole de l'éditorialiste.

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<sup>1</sup> Le *skeptron* est « le bâton rituel que, dans certaines sociétés, on passe à celui qui doit prendre la parole pour marquer qu'il est autorisé à le faire » (Bourdieu, cité par T. Herman et N. Jufer 2001: 139).

Ils ont remarqué qu'un même article était désigné comme commentaire dans un journal romand (*24 Heures*) et comme éditorial dans un autre (*Tribune de Genève*). C'est pourquoi ils ont mis en doute l'existence d'une écriture éditoriale et ont émis la conclusion qu'il s'agit d'une „écriture du commentaire assigné à une position éditoriale” (2001: 140).

Les recherches menées sur l'instance auctoriale ont mis en évidence une subjectivité „qui se manifeste par des procédures de désobjectivisation” (Herman et Jufer, 2001: 140).

En étudiant un corpus formé des quotidiens *l'Humanité*, *Libération* et *le Monde*, Nam-Seong Lee (2003) n'a trouvé aucun *je* ou *nous* d'auteur. Les pronoms *nous* (inclusif ou identitaire) et *on* (employé à la place de *je*) sont les plus fréquents, suivis par le mode impersonnel (*il faut que...*). Dans sa thèse, Nam-Seong Lee distingue le *on doxique* (le *on* de la rumeur publique: „on sait ...”) qui implique un savoir commun ayant une crédibilité incontestable et le *on collectif*, qui, selon Herman et Jufer (2001), n'est qu'un *je* déguisé, car en l'employant l'éditorialiste essaye d'imposer son opinion („on voit ...”, „on a vu ...”).

Dans l'éditorial, la subjectivité de l'auteur se manifeste davantage au niveau de l'interprétation qu'il met en place par le discours, même si la prise de position ne paraît guère personnelle.

Nous allons montrer que si ces raisonnements sont valables pour les quotidiens français, dans la presse italienne l'énonciateur est bien présent et il utilise souvent le *je*.

Les linguistes voient de plus en plus dans l'éditorial une position discursive, plus qu'un genre journalistique. En examinant un corpus formé de huit journaux français et belges, Annik Dubied et Marc Lits (1997) ont constaté que la plupart des éditoriaux ne respectent plus les critères du genre. Selon les manuels de journalisme, l'éditorial devrait figurer à la Une, être publié à des moments importants seulement, engager le journaliste et prendre position, en mêlant engagement passionnel et argumentation classique, sur un sujet d'intérêt général, en un style recherché. En réalité, la topographie, la fréquence de parution, les intitulés de l'article<sup>2</sup> et de la rubrique, la signature diffèrent d'un journal à l'autre.

Les deux chercheurs avancent l'hypothèse que certains articles présenteraient une „dominante<sup>3</sup> éditoriale”, qui repose sur l'opposition entre implication subjective et explication objective. Leur analyse, centrée sur l'étude des déictiques dans le texte de presse, montre que l'éditorial se caractérise par un mode d'énonciation particulier. Les repérages peuvent être réalisés par *deixis* plutôt que par anaphore, étant donné que le texte est construit sur le partage d'un univers commun de référence. Pour décoder le texte, le lecteur fait des inférences en se basant sur son environnement socio-politique, économique et culturel et sur les indications temporelles mentionnées en tête de page.

Nous remarquons que les approches actuelles sont centrées sur des questions telles que l'existence d'une écriture éditoriale, le respect ou le non-respect des critères du genre, l'instance énonciative. Les hypothèses présentées ci-dessus mettent en place l'appareil conceptuel fourni par la linguistique de l'énonciation, par la pragmatique et l'analyse du discours.

Nous considérons que l'analyse comparative des textes appartenant à des quotidiens de langues différentes peut faire naître de nouvelles pistes de recherche et de nouveaux points de vue sur l'éditorial.

### 3. Présentation de la démarche suivie

Notre démarche puise sa source dans les suggestions offertes par le *Traité de stylistique comparée: Analyse comparative de l'italien et du français*, de Pierre Scavée et Pietro Intravaia et par l'étude *Variations discursives* appartenant à Catherine Fuchs.

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<sup>2</sup> Dans certains journaux il apparaît sous le titre « Commentaire ».

<sup>3</sup> La notion de dominante est employée au sens où l'entend Tomachevski: « Les traits du genre, c'est-à-dire les procédés qui organisent la composition de l'œuvre, sont des procédés dominants, c'est-à-dire que tous les autres procédés nécessaires à la création de l'ensemble artistique leur sont soumis. Le procédé dominant est appelé *la dominante*. L'ensemble des dominantes représente l'élément qui autorise la formation du genre ». (Tomachevski, cité par A. Dubied et M. Lits, 1997: 54).

### 3.1. La notion de style collectif et les complexes affectifs

Scavée et Intravaia ont élaboré une stylistique comparée appliquée à l'enseignement des langues et à la traduction. Cette discipline a pour tâche d'expliquer le sens profond des marques affectives qu'elle identifie.

Les deux chercheurs ont postulé l'existence d'une **instance intermédiaire** entre la *stylistique*, qui étudie les „moyens d'expression affective que la langue met à la disposition de l'usager” et le *style personnel*, qui est „la marque individuelle d'une parole”, dans notre cas la marque de la parole du journaliste. Cette instance intermédiaire s'appelle **style collectif**. Il concerne „le choix préférentiel propre à toute une collectivité qui, parmi toutes les possibilités d'expression affectives, privilégie certaines d'entre elles selon un mode de sensibilité particulier” (1979: 14).

Les Français et les Italiens ont un potentiel commun de virtualités expressives, mais une façon particulière de sentir et d'appréhender la réalité. Cette manière spéciale d'utiliser la gamme des expressions affectives à leur disposition est le fruit d'une évolution culturelle et d'une tradition qui ont modelé la sensibilité collective (par exemple, la préférence des Italiens pour les diminutifs est expliquée par le complexe<sup>4</sup> „franciscain” de l'italien, associé à une espèce de compassion et de compréhension universelles) ; le style collectif peut être également le produit des modes plus récentes (le jargon des hommes politiques italiens a déterminé un emploi abondant de vocables abstraits).

Faire de la stylistique comparée, c'est identifier la façon dont les deux peuples utilisent les ressources d'expression à leur disposition et essayer d'expliquer les choix qu'ils opèrent. Les clés de la compréhension du style collectif sont psychologiques.

En se penchant sur l'italien, Scavée et Intravaia ont remarqué des effets stylistiques de contraste entre l'expression concrète et l'expression abstraite, ce qui les a amenés à énoncer le diagnostic suivant: *L'italien a une vocation baroque*.

Pour le valider, ils ont postulé que l'usage préférentiel d'une tournure résulte d'une polarisation particulière de la sensibilité, appelée „complexe”. Ils identifient ainsi **5 complexes affectifs de l'italien**:

**1. le „complexe de Saint François”** désigne toutes les manifestations d'une sensibilité participationniste à base d'humanisme chrétien ; il s'agit d'une double polarisation: la compassion universelle (déclenchée par l'idée que le monde est un lieu d'épreuve, le séjour d'exil de l'homme accablé par la chute originelle) et le don d'émerveillement devant la beauté simple et immédiate. Les deux linguistes donnent l'exemple du mot *creatura* – le click spitzérien par excellence – qui a déclenché ce type d'interprétation.

**2. le „complexe de Benedetto Croce”** dérive de la tradition culturelle italienne qui valorise la pensée abstraite et le conceptualisme philosophique. L'italien manifeste une prédilection pour des mots comme *sostanza, nucleo generatore, processo*, une très grande ductilité dans la dérivation des substantifs, d'adjectifs et d'adverbes abstraits (*clientelismo, drammaticità, fondi pensionistici*). Tout cela est l'héritage de la tradition savante et académique qui touche au paroxysme dans le jargon des hommes politiques et qui s'est généralisée sous l'influence de la presse écrite et parlée.

**3. le „complexe de Pietro Bembo”**, à savoir un goût hédoniste d'origine essentiellement culturelle et savante pour la cadence et le rythme des phrases, la redondance, „l'ampollosità” et „l'anfrattuosità” des périodes. En italien, le style soutenu implique la recherche du terme le plus noble et le plus rare, l'usage des métaphores, des archaïsmes, des latinismes, l'emploi du participe présent (*norme aventi valore giuridico*), l'emploi du gérondif combiné avec les verbes *andare* et *venire* (une forme „progressive”), l'antéposition de l'adjectif et de l'adverbe.

**4. un complexe mineur, „le complexe du mécano”**: le peuple italien saisit la réalité comme un organisme, une mécanique, un système.

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<sup>4</sup> Cette notion n'a pas le sens péjoratif qu'on lui donne généralement.

**5. une hybridation de ce dernier complexe avec celui de Croce**, une sorte de faux concret créant une illusion de profondeur (pseudo-philosophisme).

À l'aide de ces complexes il est possible d'expliquer le comportement linguistique de la communauté italienne. Il ne s'agit pas de dresser un glossaire idiomatique, car la stylistique comparée doit être „compréhensive et interprétative”.

Le traité est centré presque exclusivement sur l'analyse de l'italien, étant né des efforts des deux linguistes, professeurs à l'École d'Interprètes Internationaux de Mons, de faire connaître aux traducteurs français la façon naturelle dont les Italiens s'expriment dans une circonstance déterminée.

Nous pouvons appliquer la méthode de Scavée et Intraivaia à notre analyse comparée de l'éditorial. Si dans le cas de la presse italienne la primauté du complexe de Benedetto Croce et du complexe de Pietro Bembo ne peut pas être contestée, il faut voir par quoi se caractérise le style des éditoriaux français.

À l'aide des complexes affectifs définis par Scavée et Intraivaia nous pourrions identifier les différences de structuration du discours et les tendances expressives des deux langues romanes.

### **3.2. Les mécanismes constitutifs de la mise en discours**

Dans l'article *Variations discursives*, paru en 1983, Catherine Fuchs compare trois faits divers relatant un même événement (le cambriolage de bijoux et d'argent dans l'appartement d'un couple d'américains, à Paris), publiés dans trois quotidiens français (*le Figaro*, *France Soir* et *l'Humanité*). Elle montre que la mise en discours est régie par les mécanismes constitutifs suivants: *la sélection des éléments de contenu, leur découpage et ordonnancement, leur mise en œuvre à travers les opérations énonciatives.*

Le fil conducteur de sa méthode est la recherche des points de convergence et des points de divergence entre les trois articles.

#### **1) La sélection des éléments de contenu**

En examinant les cas d'identité informative elle réussit à reconstituer l'événement. Elle constate que les articles contiennent également des données factuelles implicites et que le jeu *données explicites vs. données implicites* détermine des effets stylistiques et idéologiques.

Les cas de non identité informative, à savoir *les contradictions, les variations dans la quantité d'information, la présence ou l'absence d'un élément de contenu*, sont eux aussi constitutifs du discours.

Le choix des éléments de contenu dépend du choix du journaliste, mais il reflète également le profil de la publication.

#### **2) Le découpage et l'ordonnancement des éléments de contenu**

La première opération est orientée vers les choix lexicaux et syntaxiques du journaliste, qui sont très importants du point de vue discursif. En examinant la manière de désigner, de décrire et de qualifier les personnages et la manière de relater le vol, Catherine Fuchs arrive à la conclusion suivante: *Le Figaro* présente les faits d'une manière quasi-objective, *l'Humanité* laisse transparaître une certaine ironie à l'égard des riches et *France Soir* mise sur la dramatisation et le sensationnel.

L'ordonnancement des éléments de contenu se réfère à la dynamique de chaque article, à savoir à l'ordre de présentation des événements, qui est différent d'un journal à l'autre.

#### **3) Les opérations énonciatives**

Cette troisième étape de l'analyse est centrée sur les sources énonciatives, les modalités appréciatives et les registres énonciatifs.

Il est intéressant de voir qui est le responsable des assertions: ainsi, dans *le Figaro* le journaliste assume entièrement la responsabilité de ses dires, dans *l'Humanité* il laisse parler le seul témoin direct du cambriolage (qui appartient à la classe ouvrière) et *France-Soir* met le témoin et le cambrioleur face à face pour obtenir un effet plus spectaculaire.

Les traces des modalités appréciatives se retrouvent aussi bien dans le vocabulaire que dans les constructions syntaxiques. De cette analyse il résulte que chaque quotidien focalise un autre aspect de l'histoire: *le Figaro* insiste sur les risques encourus par la propriété, *l'Humanité*

considère que le témoin (la femme de ménage) est la véritable victime du cambriolage et *France-Soir* insiste sur la ruse dont avait fait preuve le cambrioleur.

Quant aux registres énonciatifs, c'est l'étude des temps verbaux qui aide au repérage des séquences du registre commentaire ou narration.

Les trois grandes étapes de l'analyse font du texte une „représentation de l'événement”.

#### **4. La grille d'analyse**

Nous nous appuyerons sur le modèle d'analyse proposé par Catherine Fuchs pour comparer quant à nous des éditoriaux extraits des journaux français et italiens. Nous considérons que dans le cas où les éditoriaux sont construits autour du même événement, l'examen des éléments de contenu, de leur ordonnancement et des opérations énonciatives peut nous aider à repérer les opérations à l'œuvre dans les textes, à décrire les effets produits sur les récepteurs, à déchiffrer les intentions du locuteur et à trouver les points de convergence et de divergence entre les quotidiens.

Étant donné qu'il s'agit d'un article d'opinion à dominante argumentative, nous allons modifier la démarche ci-dessus de la manière suivante:

##### **1) Identification des éléments informatifs et comparaison des données**

Les éditoriaux naissent comme une réaction à un événement, par conséquent ils ne sont pas dépourvus d'un côté informatif. D'ailleurs, la dichotomie *information vs. opinion* a été artificiellement créée, car au niveau de la langue comme à celui du discours il est impossible d'opérer de tels découpages.

##### **2) Repérage de la thèse et du point de vue du journaliste**

Nous allons repérer la thèse que le journaliste énonce à un moment donné (thèse explicite) ou qu'il laisse entendre (thèse implicite) ainsi que la manière de qualifier l'événement traité et de désigner les personnages impliqués.

##### **3) Analyse de l'incipit de l'article**

Nous considérons que l'incipit est toujours fondamental et qu'il doit être soumis à l'analyse, surtout s'il s'agit d'un article de commentaire.

##### **4) Sélection et ordre de présentation des arguments**

Le choix des arguments et la manière dont ils s'enchaînent sont différents même si l'hypothèse de départ est la même.

##### **5) Analyse des opérations énonciatives**

Les études présentées au début de notre article ont mis en évidence le fait que pour l'éditorial **la source énonciative** représente un élément constitutif. De même, l'analyse du vocabulaire et de la syntaxe ainsi que celle des temps verbaux montre comment le journaliste organise son discours.

#### **5. Étude de cas: *Le Figaro* et *Il Corriere della Sera***

Nous avons choisi deux éditoriaux datant du 17 août 2007, écrits par Nicolas Barré (F) et Bill Emmott (CdS).

##### **1) Identification des éléments informatifs et comparaison des données**

Les deux textes mettent en discussion la crise enregistrée sur le marché financier américain au milieu du mois d'août et ses possibles extensions. La crise a affecté le marché du crédit hypothécaire sub-prime (à risque), à cause du fait que les emprunteurs n'ont plus pu rembourser les emprunts.

En dépit du fait que les manuels de journalisme recommandent pour les articles dits d'opinion des titres métaphoriques, énigmatiques ou ironiques, nos deux articles annoncent leur sujet et leur angle dès la titraille.

	F	CdS
Surtitre	-	La crisi dei mutui Usa e le Borse
Titre	La crise financière et nous	Scompiglio forse utile

En effet, l'éditorial français envisage les influences que la crise survenue sur le territoire américain peut avoir sur le marché européen, notamment en France. Le pronom *nous*, employé deux fois (d'abord dans le titre, ensuite dans le troisième paragraphe) a comme référence *les Français*. Il englobe toute la communauté française, y compris le journaliste et les lecteurs.

Même si normalement l'éditorial n'a pas de surtitre ou de sous-titre, il *Corriere della Sera* préfère donner une pré-information. Il est fréquent que ses titrilles contiennent un surtitre qui ancre l'éditorial dans le contexte ou qui en annonce le sujet. Le titre donne le fil rouge du raisonnement: l'argumentation développée par la suite servira à démontrer que la crise financière est peut-être utile.

### **2) Repérage de la thèse et du point de vue du journaliste**

Les deux premiers paragraphes de l'éditorial français annoncent le fait que *la crise financière suscite des inquiétudes, non seulement dans la communauté américaine, mais aussi à l'échelle mondiale* et que *les Français ne sont pas à même d'intervenir de manière à changer la situation*. Le quatrième paragraphe révèle la thèse du journaliste français, à savoir que *les possibles effets de la crise ont été surdimensionnés*.

Le journaliste italien affirme que *les fluctuations des marchés financiers sont normales, voire utiles, et qu'il n'est pas nécessaire de faire de cette crise financière un drame, car elle ne peut pas exercer des influences catastrophiques sur le marché mondial*.

Nous remarquons que les deux points de vue ont un noyau commun: *la crise n'aura pas d'impact majeur sur l'économie mondiale*.

### **3) Analyse de l'incipit de l'article**

Nicolas Barré commence par deux questions qui font allusion à une possible aggravation de la crise. L'effet dramatisant de la première est un peu atténué par l'ironie que comprend la deuxième:

La crise financière risque-t-elle de déboucher sur une crise tout court ? La machine économique mondiale va-t-elle connaître des ratés parce que Joe Smith, résidant en Californie, n'arrive plus à rembourser le prêt de sa maison ?

Dans l'article de Bill Emmott, l'idée de l'aggravation de la crise est exprimée par une assertion qui a presque une valeur de vérité générale, mais ne suscite pas d'inquiétude, malgré la présence du mot *drame*:

Quando i mercati finanziari crescono del tre o quattro per cento al giorno, nessuno ci fa caso. Ma quando, giorno dopo giorno, perdono quelle stesse percentuali, ecco che diventa quasi un dramma.

Nous comprenons dès le début les intentions des éditorialistes. L'argumentation développée par la suite confirmera les thèses énoncées ci-dessus.

### **4) Sélection et ordre de présentation des arguments**

Avant d'examiner les arguments, nous allons voir comment est appelée la crise financière dans les deux éditoriaux:

F	CdS
Crise	scompiglio (confusion, agitation)
Turbulences	scossone (secousse)
Secousses	sconvolgimento (bouleversement)
Bourrasque	turbolenze (turbulences)
coup de tabac	catastrofe (catastrophe)

Nous avons écrit les lexèmes évaluatifs dans l'ordre de leur apparition. À part le fait que les deux journalistes utilisent presque les mêmes images qui ont trait au même champ sémantique (presque toutes les dénominations font allusion à une tempête ou à un tremblement de terre), dans l'éditorial français l'ordre décroissant de l'intensité enregistré par les images suit l'argumentation qui aboutit à la conclusion:

Ces questions sont importantes, certes, et elles devront être traitées. Mais elles ne mettent pas en jeu la prospérité de la planète.

Pour soutenir son point de vue, le journaliste français compare l'impact de cette crise financière et l'impact que peut avoir un choc pétrolier ou un krach boursier majeur, en affirmant que dans le premier cas les sommes en jeu sont dérisoires.

Dans l'éditorial italien l'ordre d'apparition de ces lexèmes évaluatifs n'est pas significatif. Après des séquences où l'éditorialiste présente la situation, il choisit de nuancer la question principale:

Allora, bisogna preoccuparsi e fino a che punto?

Il répond en donnant trois explications: à l'avenir, les créiteurs seront plus prudents quand ils accorderont des crédits ; il s'agit d'un procès salutaire du point de vue économique (l'alternance normale des hausses et des baisses); l'Europe dispose de moyens qui lui permettent de dépasser cette crise sans trop de dommages.

La quatrième explication qu'il souhaite ajouter constitue en fait la chute ou la fin de l'article: c'est une allusion à l'influence négative que la politique peut avoir sur l'économie.

Nous remarquons une communion d'idées entre les deux textes. L'organisation des arguments est pourtant différente: dans l'éditorial français on explique brièvement la situation du marché américain et par le biais d'une comparaison avec d'autres possibles événements on aboutit à la conclusion ; dans l'éditorial italien la partie explicative est plus ample, les arguments sont plus nombreux, étant présentés sur un ton didactique.

L'éditorialiste français introduit lui aussi dans le dernier paragraphe une visée didactique:

Cela ne veut pas dire qu'il n'y aura pas de leçons à tirer de cette crise, bien sûr.

Il relance ainsi la discussion, en apportant des solutions telles que: une meilleure régulation des marchés financiers, une implication plus grande des agences de notation financière (mentionnées dans l'éditorial italien aussi), la transparence de la part des opérateurs du système financier.

Comme on l'a déjà précisé, dans le texte français la chute apporte un ton serein et annule la sensation d'inquiétude qui avait dominé la première partie de l'article. En revanche, le journaliste italien finit son article sur un ton ironique:

... si rischia sempre di trasformare un dramma in una crisi o persino in una catastrofe. Di solito questo accade quando i politici cominciano a immischiarsi.

Il est intéressant de voir qu'il y a de nombreux points de convergence entre les deux articles. Dans le souci de trouver des solutions, les deux journalistes s'interrogent sur la possibilité qu'ont les autorités européennes d'intervenir. Dans les deux cas la réponse est négative.

Mais il y a aussi des opinions divergentes: alors que l'éditorialiste français considère que les agences de notation financière auraient pu avertir les investisseurs sur les problèmes survenus aux Etats-Unis, selon l'éditorialiste italien aucun rapport rédigé par ces agences n'aurait pu influencer l'évolution du marché du crédit.

### **5) Analyse des opérations énonciatives**

#### **La source énonciative**

La comparaison qu'on vient d'effectuer (aux quatre premiers niveaux) révèle bien des ressemblances entre les deux articles. Les différences apparaissent quand nous abordons la source énonciative et les marques qu'elle imprime au discours.

Comme nous l'avons déjà mentionné, l'éditorial devrait refléter l'opinion du journal. C'est pourquoi au début il ne portait pas de signature. Selon les normes, la responsabilité de l'éditorial appartiendrait au journal.

Ce genre journalistique est généralement soumis à un processus d'effacement énonciatif. Le journaliste s'efface derrière un *on* dont on a souvent du mal à identifier le référent.

Dans la plupart des quotidiens actuels cette règle ne fonctionne plus. Les deux quotidiens que nous analysons ont renoncé eux aussi à cette contrainte générique. Les deux textes sont signés. Nous connaissons donc dès le début les noms des éditorialistes.

Dans le *Figaro*, le pronom *nous*, utilisé dans le titre et dans le troisième paragraphe, remplace en fait le substantif *les Français*. Le journaliste tend à établir un lien avec la communauté à laquelle il s'adresse et dont il fait partie. C'est une stratégie qui donne au discours une force persuasive. Toujours dans le troisième paragraphe, le pronom *on* est lui aussi employé à la place de *nous*. Le référent du pronom *on* qui apparaît dans le dernier paragraphe est plus vague et peut être *tout le monde*.

La situation est différente dans l'éditorial italien, dont le deuxième paragraphe commence par: „Non voglio dire che ...”. La présence du journaliste dans son texte est évidente. Il prend ouvertement la responsabilité de ce qu'il affirme, en employant un verbe conjugué à la première personne du singulier. Il continue en affirmant „Però, bastava il nome di questo mercato a farci drizzare le antenne: *subprime*”. Le pronom personnel *ci* fait allusion au journaliste et aux Italiens, mais il peut tout aussi bien englober la communauté internationale.

Nous sommes en présence d'une subjectivité assumée: tout comme dans le commentaire, dans la chronique ou dans la tribune, le journaliste italien „montre” ses pensées et s'érige en garant d'un raisonnement dont il accepte la responsabilité.

Pour le reste, c'est le mode impersonnel qui domine dans les deux textes: „il est vrai que...”, „il est plus que jamais nécessaire ...”, „reste que...”, „il n'est pas normal ...», *bisogna preoccuparsi ...*”, „si potrebbe aggiungere ...”, „si rischia di ...”.

#### **Les modalités appréciatives**

Nous trouvons des traces des modalités appréciatives dans le vocabulaire, mais aussi au niveau morpho-syntaxique.

L'expressivité de la langue se manifeste tout d'abord au niveau lexical: dans l'éditorial italien il y a une prédominance nette des substantifs ayant un très haut degré d'expressivité: *dramma*, *panico*, *chiasso*, *sconvolgimento*, *catastrofe*, *scossone* (*scossa* + le suffixe augmentatif *-one*), *la fine del mondo*.

Dans le *Figaro*, bien des marques appréciatives portent sur les dimensions des phénomènes en question: „*répercussions mondiales*”, „*inquiétudes réelles / excessives*», „*montages sophistiqués*”, „*sommes dérisoires*”, „*krach boursier majeur*”, etc. Nous pouvons noter l'emploi massif de l'adjectif qualificatif dans les deux langues.

Au niveau syntaxique prédominent les phrases bien formées, constituées en général d'une principale et d'une subordonnée. Cependant, il arrive que la principale manque: „Comme si l'État français était maître des horloges de Wall Street ou de la City !” Des phrases du type: „et si cela



précipitait tout le pays dans la récession ?” dénotent un degré accru d’implication de l’instance énonciative.

Par rapport à d’autres textes journalistiques, il y a beaucoup de phrases interrogatives et de phrases exclamatives, qui laissent deviner la présence du journaliste.

L’article italien foisonne de termes rares et spécialisés: „*rastrellare profitti*”, „*iter*”, „*indice azionario*”, „*debitori inadempienti*”. Même si le journaliste explique certains termes (*agenzie di valutazione del credito* = *agenzie di rating*), la lecture du texte italien s’avère assez difficile. Le lecteur devrait être familiarisé avec le langage économique et connaître le domaine de l’économie et de la bourse (*l’indice Ft-Se* = *l’indice boursier de référence de la bourse de Londres*).

Comme nous l’avons précisé au début de notre article, la tradition impose que l’éditorial soit écrit par le directeur de la publication. Nos deux quotidiens ont renoncé à cette règle. Selon les thèmes abordés, les editoriaux sont écrits par des journalistes spécialisés en politique, économie, culture, etc. Nous remarquons que dans le cas de la presse italienne la tendance à la spécialisation est légèrement supérieure.

### ***Les temps verbaux***

L’éditorial représente une réaction rapide à un événement d’actualité. Les repérages spatio-temporels s’effectuent généralement par rapport à la date de parution du journal.

Notons la prédominance du présent, du passé composé, de l’imparfait et du futur. De ce point de vue, il y a une grande similarité entre les deux textes, qui mettent sur le premier plan les événements récents (imparfait+PC), donnent les explications nécessaires (présent) et s’interrogent sur les conséquences (futur).

L’analyse des temps verbaux peut nous aider à identifier d’une part le registre commentaire (présent) et le registre narration (PC) et d’autre part les séquences textuelles et leur rôle dans la construction de l’éditorial.

L’éditorial français a quatre grandes parties: la première partie, dominée par des verbes au présent, annonce la crise, les questions qu’elle suscite et les possibles conséquences pour le marché français ; le verbe au passé composé par lequel commence le troisième paragraphe met au premier plan l’aspect essentiel révélé par la crise, à savoir le fait que les ménages américains sont surendettés. Il ouvre ainsi la partie explicative („La crise a révélé essentiellement une chose ....”), où l’on trouve des détails sur l’événement qui s’est passé sur le continent américain. Les temps verbaux servent également à introduire certaines nuances ou bien à faire des comparaisons: l’imparfait combiné avec la conjonction *si* exprime l’inquiétude („et si cela précipitait tout le pays dans la récession ?”) ; dans le même paragraphe, l’imparfait est employé pour exprimer un contraste temporel („Jusqu’à présent, ce surendettement ne posait pas de problème majeur. Aujourd’hui ce n’est plus le cas.”)

Le verbe au présent qui ouvre le quatrième paragraphe („Reste qu’à l’échelle du système financier ...”) introduit l’argument principal qui mène à la conclusion („Bref, il y a dans tout cela une grande dose d’excès ...”). La dernière partie fournit les „leçons à tirer de cette crise”. D’ailleurs, il arrive souvent que l’éditorial fournisse des solutions aux problèmes débattus. En employant deux fois le futur du verbe *devoir* le journaliste incite à l’action. Dans la chute le verbe est au présent: l’éditorialiste parle en qualité d’autorité suprême en la matière („Mais elles ne mettent pas en jeu la prospérité de la planète”).

L’éditorial italien est plus ample:

Dans l’attaque, le présent imprime au discours une valeur de vérité incontestable.

La séquence „Ieri il Financial Times, per esempio, ha aperto i suoi servizi con ...” continue par un imparfait qui introduit l’opinion de l’éditorialiste („Ma non faceva altro che riferire una perdita dell’1,4% ...”); celui-ci relance la problématique en utilisant un verbe au futur („Che cosa si dirà oggi per il calo del loro indice ...?”).

Le deuxième paragraphe commence lui aussi par un verbe au présent qui illustre l’opinion à démontrer („Dunque forse si sta facendo troppo chiasso sul calo delle azioni questo mese e sui

problemi relativi al mercato del debito”). L'exemple commençant par un verbe au passé composé („Il presidente francese Nicolas Sarkozy, addirittura, ha interrotto le sue vacanze in America per scrivere una lunga lettera ...”) sera combattu dans la séquence suivante où le présent reflète de nouveau l'opinion du journaliste. („Non voglio dire che Sarkozy abbia torto ...”)

Celui-ci recourt à un imparfait pour justifier l'inquiétude suscitée par la crise financière et les actions des autorités („Però, bastava il nome di questo mercato a farci drizzare le antenne: subprime”). Après avoir introduit le concept nouveau (*le marché sub-prime*), le journaliste continue par un long passage dans lequel il fournit les explications nécessaires.

Le fait que pour exemplifier ses dires le journaliste recourt chaque fois au passé composé imprime au discours un rythme particulier.

L'ample séquence finale, introduite par la question „Allora, bisogna preoccuparsi e fino a che punto?” est dominée par des verbes au présent et au futur. Le discours est structuré également à l'aide des marqueurs d'intégration linéaire: *la prima, la seconda, la terza*. L'éditorial finit avec une quatrième considération, dont la forme est semblable à celle du paragraphe initial („... quando i mercati attraversano un periodo di turbolenze si rischia sempre di trasformare un dramma in una crisi o persino in una catastrofe”), suivie d'une phrase ironique („Di solito, questo accade quando i politici cominciano a immischiarsi”).

L'ensemble se caractérise par un grand degré de cohésion. Les verbes concourent à la construction textuelle, impriment un certain rythme (par l'alternance narration ~ commentaire) et un ton catégorique. D'ailleurs, même si l'éditorialiste n'est pas le directeur du journal, il se trouve toujours sur une position d'autorité.

## 6. Conclusion

La grille proposée ci-dessus nous permet d'analyser les similarités et les divergences qui existent entre les deux éditoriaux. Il y a beaucoup de points communs, qui résultent de ce que l'éditorial représente dans le cadre du journal, des règles constitutives du genre, des informations auxquelles ont accès les journalistes et de l'espace d'interculturalité que représentent les médias. Pourtant, les tendances expressives de ces langues romanes sont la résultante de deux traditions culturelles différentes.

Même si l'éditorial est un texte d'opinion, la subjectivité du journaliste français ne se laisse pas dévoiler aisément, alors que celle du journaliste italien se construit à la surface. En français, la source énonciative s'efface derrière le *on* et le *nous*, dont la référence inclut le journaliste, le lecteur et la communauté française. L'éditorial italien emprunte les caractéristiques du commentaire et de la tribune, car le journaliste fait des affirmations en son nom.

Nous pouvons donc émettre l'hypothèse que l'écriture éditoriale française a un degré accru d'objectivité, alors que l'écriture éditoriale italienne se caractérise par une subjectivité montrée.

Les arguments sont presque les mêmes, mais la façon dont est organisé le discours est différente. Le français aime la rigueur et la simplicité ; l'italien préfère la préciosité et la complexité.

En français il y a un certain équilibre en ce qui concerne l'organisation textuelle. Il y a moins d'exemples qu'en italien, le discours est plus fluide et on arrive plus vite à la conclusion.

En italien la partie explicative est ample et foisonne de termes économiques et de termes abstraits auxquels le lecteur n'est pas habitué. En Italie, les journaux étaient écrits par les représentants d'une élite culturelle. Les lecteurs appartenaient eux aussi à cette élite. Cette tradition d'écriture a eu une influence considérable sur la presse actuelle. Scavée et Intravaia ont rassemblé ces caractéristiques sous le nom du „complexe de Benedetto Croce”.

En précisant que notre intention n'est pas de dresser une hiérarchie de valeur, nous défendons la thèse selon laquelle l'évolution culturelle peut modeler la sensibilité collective des peuples. C'est pourquoi nous associons l'écriture française à la tradition classique et aux préceptes qui l'ont guidée: la clarté, l'élégance, l'ordre, l'équilibre. En revanche, l'écriture italienne reflète les caractéristiques du baroque: le goût des contrastes, le subjectivisme, la création d'effets dramatiques, l'ouverture à l'innovation, le goût du détail.

Par conséquent, *les étymons culturels* des deux styles collectifs seraient *le classicisme* et *le baroque*. Les tendances expressives des deux langues ne font que valider cette hypothèse.

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# Coherence in Discourse

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**Résumé:** Dans notre article nous abordé plusieurs aspects du discours. Tout en partant de l'idée qu'un texte ne peut pas être analysé s'il lui manque la consistance du sujet, deux aspects nous ont particulièrement retenu l'attention: la cohésion et la cohérence du discours politique. La cohérence est importante car elle donne au texte son unité de surface au niveau sémantique. Quant à la cohérence, celle-ci concerne la manière dans laquelle les phrases se rattachent, vu que tout le temps, dans un discours, il faut tenir compte de ce dont on a parlé antérieurement. L'élément qui donne la cohérence d'un texte est la structure informationnelle qui suit toujours le pattern given... new...given...new: l'information donnée, appelée thème et celle qui suit (l'information nouvelle) qu'on appelle rhème. En conclusion, pour qu'un texte ait une valeur de texte et non pas de non-texte, il doit accomplir les conditions de cohérence et cohésion.

**Key words:** cohesion, coherence, the semantic field, the information structure, linguistics, schemata, inferences, discourse.

## 1. Coherence in discourse

To begin with, coherence implies that elements of a certain message or text are connected, with or without overt linguistic connections between those elements.

Cohérence is attained when connectors or lexical devices represented by words or phrases make the paragraph consistent in subject and meaning.

When two sentences are taken at random and when there is no connection between them, they may be incoherent.

e.g.: "I could not understand him  
He spoke incoherently".

If we connect these two sentences with the word 'because', then the sentences would be coherent.

There are several types of sentence connectors, which make a text coherent, when using them.

1. there can be connectors of **cause and reason**: because, since, because of, due to, an account of
2. ....of **result**: so (an adj.) that, such a(adj.)(noun) that
3. ....of **purpose**: .....so (that).....
4. ....of **concession**: although, even though
5. ....of **contrast**: while, whereas

In order to achieve coherence, logical sentence connectors should be used, thus:

1. Connectors of result: therefore, thus, consequently, so, as a result
2. Connectors of contrast: on the other hand, however, nevertheless, on the contrary.

There are linking expressions which are used in the beginning, others are used to introduce something more and there are expressions which end or finish the paragraph or text. These are:

1. introductory expressions: first, first of all,
2. expressions which add something more: .... also, ..... and ....., furthermore, moreover, in addition, for example.
3. which end a text: finally, in conclusion, all in all, ... etc.

Any text in which such expressions are used gets a coherent aspect and consistency in subject matter.

e.g.: Applying for a license from the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) can be an expensive and difficult process. **For one thing**, you need to hire a lawyer who specializes in broadcast law. You will **also** need a technical consultant to make sure that the design of your facilities meets the FCC's specifications. **In addition**, you must demonstrate that you are financially qualified to run a station. **Finally**, you must prove that the station will operate in the public interest.

Moreover, the subject consistency in a text is achieved when the subject (whichever the subject is/of the entire text appears at the beginning of each sentence, otherwise the text will lack coherence. For instance, when a subject of a sentence is let's say "tadpole" you cannot use it at the end of the sentence as an agent.

Instead of 'Swimming around begins, and food is captured by the Tadpole'  
One should use 'The tadpole swims around and captures food!'

Coherence means consistency of subject matter and studies the way sentences follow each other and relate to what was said before. In coherence the most important is the information structure, the information that is organized in a text or discourse.

Coherence implies that a text hangs together and it makes sense and is not just a jumble of sentences.

In order for a text to be coherent, the information structure must follow the: following pattern first of all there comes the given information and then the new: 'given ... new ... given ... new'. The 'given information' is the topic or the theme of the sentence whereas the new information is called comment or theme. The theme is the grammatical subject of the sentence, it tells what we are talking about; the theme represents everything that follows.

In a sentence the new information always comes 'last'.

e.g.: "What's **his name**?"

**His name is Robert.**

With regard to a coherent text, one should take into account 'ordering sequence' as it follows:

e.g.: cause – effect

problem = problem – solving chronology

Labov<sup>1</sup> (1970) argues that there are 'rules of interpretation which relate what is said to what is done' and it is on the basis of such social rules that we interpret some conversational sequences as coherent and others as non-coherent. As an example of a following example of a doctor talking to a schizophrenic patient, from Laffal.

**e.g. A:** "What's your name?"

**B:** "Well, let's say you might have thought you had something from before, but you haven't got it any more".

**C:** "I'm going to call you Dean<sup>2</sup>".

Labov points out that the recognition of coherence or incoherence in conversational sequences is not based on a relationship between utterances, but 'between the actions performed with these utterances'.

Other analysts have attempted to develop this point, frequently basing the discussions on example such as (6) and (7)

**(6): A.** "What time is it?"

**B.** "Well, the postman's been already<sup>3</sup>".

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<sup>1</sup> Labov, W (1970) *The study of language in its social context*. University of Pennsylvania Press, p. 115

<sup>2</sup> Gillian Brown, George Yule: *Discourse analysis*. Cambridge Textbooks in Linguistics, Cambridge University Press, 1983, p. 226

<sup>3</sup> Idem, *ibidem*.

This example, quoted in Brown and Levinson, is used to show that the assumption of rationality on B's part leads us to assume that he is providing an answer to the question asked, and so on to the conclusion that the time is past 11 a.m., for instance.

The next example is taken from Widdowson and illustrates a coherent piece of conversational discourse which exhibits no cohesive links between the two sentences involved.

**A:** Can you go to Edinburgh tomorrow?"

**B:** B.E.A. pilots are on strike".<sup>4</sup>

Widdowson claims that B's reply is to be taken as a negative answer to the question, because the strike will prevent the speaker flying to Edinburgh.

Let's have some other examples:

**e.g. A:** "That's the telephone"

**B:** "I'm in the bath"

**A:** "O.K."<sup>5</sup>

Widdowson suggests that it is only by recognizing the action performed by each of these utterances within the conventional sequencing of such actions that we accept this sequence as coherent discourse.

The conventional sequencing may be presented as in:

**A** – requests B to perform action

**B** – states reason why he cannot comply with request

**A** – undertakes the perform action

Such a representation yields a description of conversational discourse as a form of social interaction. A similar analysis could be applied to a series of gestures, as in:

1. "(domestic evening scene: husband and wife watching television)

**A** indicates by pointing and tapping his ear that he can hear the telephone

**B** points to the cat asleep on her lap

**A** shrugs and gets up"<sup>6</sup>

In order to have a larger perspective on what coherence means and implies let us take the definition of coherence from 'Carmen Vlad – The Text as an Aisberg'. She gives the following definition of coherence: "If coherence is perceived as a global effect of the entire assembly of sign relations produced through different grammatical, inferential (or deductive) and recurrent or repetitive operations, then coherence expresses both the functional complexity of the text, and the protean and composite feature of the sense in a text".<sup>7</sup>

While cohesive devices are mostly linguistic in nature, coherence implies non-linguistic elements on the pragmatic and cognitive level as well, for instance general socio-cultural knowledge of the world.<sup>8</sup>

As de Beaugrande points out "the question of how people know what is going on in a text is a special care of the question of how people know what is going on it the world at all".<sup>9</sup>

In order to be able to analyze a text one should take into account her/his own knowledge about the world. The text involved, in order to be better understood, should be a part of the reader's own experience of the world; otherwise in many cases the text could be incomprehensible.

In analyzing a text the reader's background experience and knowledge are of vital importance.

When in need we appeal to only those amounts of knowledge that enable us to make a connection, a logical connection between what we say and know and what's around us.

People have stored stereotypic knowledge in their memory and they have access to it only when something has changed or when something does not appear anymore like before.

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<sup>4</sup> Idem, ibidem.

<sup>5</sup> Idem, p. 227.

<sup>6</sup> Gillian Brown, George Yule: *Discourse analysis*, Cambridge University Press 1983, p. 228

<sup>7</sup> Carmen Vlad, *The text as an aisberg*, Casa cartii de stiinta, 2000, p. 175

<sup>8</sup> Gillian Brown and George Yule. *Discourse analysis*. Cambridge textbooks in linguistics. Cambridge University Press.1983. p. 233

<sup>9</sup> Idem, ibidem.

E.g.: when reading a text about a certain restaurant or a known place it is not necessary to specify or to repeat the elements that belong to it (the chairs and tables in the restaurant or in waiters) because we already know from our past experience what elements are to be found in that restaurant. However there are cases when the situation has changed and therefore it is necessary to give details about the place: e.g.: when the restaurants changed its configurations, the chair and tables are replaced with logs and wood tables and the whole restaurant has changed into a rustic one or vice versa.

The linguists Gillian Brown and George Yule name the elements that are not to be mentioned again because they are part of our own experience “default elements”.<sup>10</sup>

Understanding discourse is essentially a process of relieving stored information from memory and relating to the encountered discourse.

In order to represent the background knowledge as well as possible we should follow Minsky’s frame – theory. Minsky argues that our knowledge is stored in memory in the form of data structures which he calls ‘frames’, and which represent stereotyped situations.

“When one encounters a new situation, one selects from memory a structure called a Frame. This is a remembered framework to be adapted to fit reality by changing details as necessary”.<sup>11</sup>

At a very general level, the notion of a ‘frame’ provides an attractive metaphor for thinking about discourse understanding, at least partially, “a process of fitting what one is told into the framework established by what one already knows”.<sup>12</sup>

e.g. When you go to the polling station tell the clerk your name and address”.<sup>13</sup>

The definite noun phrases derive from the same ‘voting – frame’ in that your stereotypic knowledge of voting provides for a place to vote (the polling station) and an official (the clerk) in that place.

Frame means a connection that is made between something you are told and something that is made mental storage or something that is part of your own experience.

In other words you do not have to be informed that there is such a thing as a polling station and that a clerk will be there. The producer of this piece of discourse expects you to have this knowledge.

The notion of a script was developed by analogy with Minsky’s frame, but “specialized to deal with event sequences”.<sup>14</sup> The script concept was used by Abelson (1976) to investigate the relationship between attitudes and behaviour.

**e.g.** “John ate ice cream with a spoon”.<sup>15</sup>

Script means that each action is described very minutely thus:

**e.g.** “John ingested the ice cream by transing the ice cream on a spoon to his mouth”.<sup>16</sup>

Now, let us take these 2 sentences: “John’ car crashed into a guard – rail.

When the ambulance came, it took John to the x”.<sup>17</sup>

Our background knowledge involves inferences or expectations. From the second sentence we infer that after the accident, John was taken to hospital and not to pizza or disco or something else.

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<sup>10</sup> Idem p. 236

<sup>11</sup> Minsky, M (1975) “A framework for representing knowledge”, in (ed)Winston, P.H. The psychology of computer vision .New York.,p.173

<sup>12</sup> Charniak, E (1979) “Ms.Malaprop, a language comprehension program” in (ed.)D.Metzing,pg.239

<sup>13</sup> Idem, ibidem, p. 239

<sup>14</sup> Schank & Abelson, 1976. *Scripts, Plans, Goals and Understanding*. Hillsdale, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum, p 12

<sup>15</sup> Idem, ibidem, p. 242

<sup>16</sup> Idem, ibidem

<sup>17</sup> Brown/Yule, p. 242

Even if people on ‘expectation –based parsers’ of texts, they are liable to making mistakes in the predictions of what for instance will come next in the text.

e.g. “Mary was on her way to school”,<sup>18</sup> which can suggest that Mary is a student but this sentence can very easily provide another meaning that is Mary is a teacher and is on her way to school.

One cannot interpret very accurately the meaning of an isolated sentence unless he/she knows the contextual meaning/or makes recourse to the sentence in its context.

Sanford and Garrod (1981)<sup>19</sup> choose the term ‘scenario’ to describe the ‘extended domain of reference’. For instance when reading a text about ‘Going to a Restaurant’ the existence of a ‘a waiter’ is mentally represented and stored in the memory level.

*A waiter not mentioned in a text represents a slot and the ‘role’ slots are activated in scenarios.*

Schemata is said to be ‘structures of expectation’ that influences in a way our thinking. Schemata contains fixed structures and set elements. Our entire background knowledge is organized and stored in some fixed schemata, together with some other, more flexible schematic structures. Schemata are said to be “higher – level complex knowledge structures”,<sup>20</sup> which function as “ideational scaffolding”.<sup>21</sup>

The notion of schemata and the educational enterprise in the organization and interpretation of experience. In the strong video, schemata is considered to be deterministic, to predispose the experienter to interpret his experience in a fixed way.

We can think of social prejudice, for example, as the manifestation of some fixed way of thinking about newly encountered individuals who are assigned undesirable attributes and motives on the basis of an existing schema for members of the race. Schemata can be seen as the organized background knowledge which leads us to expect or predict aspects in our interpretation of discourse.

Vlad<sup>22</sup> quotes E.M. Vasiliu as arguing that coherence is simply a pragmatic entity and later that is by coherence that the notion of the textuality is defined.<sup>23</sup>

“Coherence has a gradual function which is pointed out through the chaining (up) of sentential rules”.<sup>24</sup>

The lack of coherence leads to distortion of meaning.

“To reach the effect of coherence one has to pass through a variation of inferential or deductive operations”.<sup>25</sup>

The understanding and interpretation of a text depends to a larger extent on the establishment of some indirect sign relations between an occurrent verbal sign (or a verbal sequence) and one or several objects of (physical, conceptual, real, fictional, textual) nature situated outside of the evident verbal chain.<sup>26</sup>

Textness is attained as long as the verbal product fulfills three principles:

1. communicativity
2. referentiality
3. secventiality (sequence)

As the linguistic de Beaugrande, Dressler points out in his “Introduction to Text linguistics in 1981”. Coherence, which is a part of pragmatics, a horizon of expectation in a certain textual

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<sup>18</sup> Idem, ibidem.

<sup>19</sup> Sanford and Garrod (1981). Understanding written language Chichester: Wiley, p.123.

<sup>20</sup> Van Dijk, T.A., 1981, p. 141, Review of R.O. Freedle(ed) 1979, Journal of Linguistics 17:140-8

<sup>21</sup> Anderson, R.C., 1977. “The notion of schemata and the educational enterprise” in (eds.) R.K.Spiro & W.E. Montague, p.167.

<sup>22</sup> Carmen Vlad, *The Text as an Aisberg*, Casa cartii de stiinta, 2000, p 57.

<sup>23</sup> Idem, p. 176.

<sup>24</sup> Idem, p. 179.

<sup>25</sup> Idem, p. 180.

<sup>26</sup> Idem, ibidem.



world in which, by the act of reference, one can establish the relation between an element in the text and a real or imaginary entity belonging to a certain configuration of the world from outside (or the world which is not in the text).

Many times the reader when wanting to arrive at an interpretation of the discourse, he/she makes use of the so-called 'inference'.

Inference is very important to coherence and it implies an element in the text which binds itself with another, outside the text.

Inference means the reconstruction of an implicit content by the expression of a certain hypothesis when incompleteness or ambiguity in the textual verbal product crops up that can cause uncertain interpretations.

Inference means that process which the reader (hearer) must go through to get from the literal meaning of what is written (or said) to what the writer (speaker) intended to convey.

In speech, a sentence may have two functions thus:

**e.g.** "It's really stinky in here because my sister  
Cooked grilled meat  
Please open the window".

The first sentence has two functions: one is making a statement and the second is a request. By making this statement as in the first sentence you ask someone to do something (here – to open the window).

By inference one can make the deduction what is to be done next. The first sentence is more or less an indirect request and it leads to an indirect action. There are two aspects of inferences: automatic and non – automatic. The automatic inference can be realized by means of anaphoric or referential expressions.

**e.g.** "John got some sandwiches out of the car  
The sandwiches were very tasty".

There is also the non – automatic inference which can be realized only by recourse to what is known or to the background information.

**e.g.:** "Paul got some picnic supplies out of the car  
The beer was warm".

Here the inferential process forms a bridging assumption thus: The picnic supplies mentioned include some beer. Inferences as missing links are required to make an explicit connection between two sentences:

**e.g.** "I looked into the room  
The ceiling was very high".<sup>27</sup>

The sentence <the room has a ceiling> contains a missing link which is obvious in the two sentences.

Generally, the missing link expresses a type of generally true relationship which takes the form of a universally quantified preposition such as: Every X has a Y.

There are two categories of missing links. One kind is automatically made and does not result in additional processing time and the other is not automatic, but is the result of a bridging assumption and leads to additional processing time. Because inferences take time, the missing links which are automatically made are not to be described as inferences.

**e.g.**  
**a.** "This afternoon a strange man came to my office."  
**b.** "His rose was nearly purple"  
**c.** "The man has a rose".<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Clark, H.H., 1977, p. 257 "Inferences in comprehension" in (eds) D.Laberge & S.J.Samuels

<sup>28</sup> Van Dijk, 1977, pg. 257. *Text and Context*. London:Longman.

At Sanford and Garrod's proposal the sentence (c) – is called “automatic connection” and therefore it is not an inference, but the following sentence is a non – automatic one and it is likely to be treated as inference.

**e.g.**

**a.** “Mary got some picnic supplies out of the car”.

**b.** “The beer was warm”.

**c.** “The picnic supplies mentioned include some beer”.

Sentence **c** is a non – automatic one because you aren't given any clue about what the picnic supplies are, therefore you have to deduce or to make recourse to your own knowledge as to be able to say that that beer belongs to the picnic supplies.

Obviously, inferences require more interpretative work on the reader's (hearer's) part than automatic connections made via pre – existing knowledge.

Inferences need additional interpretive ‘work’ in order to be processed as a text.

When an element in speech is activated because it is necessarily part of the reader's (hearer's) pre – existing knowledge representation, it receives ‘direct interpretation’ and does not require additional processing time, therefore we speak about an automatic text and not about an inference.

All in all, coherence is defined as the result of the interaction between knowledge presented in a text and the reader's own knowledge and experience of the world. Coherence deals with different stretches of language that are connected to each other by virtue of conceptual or meaning dependencies. Coherence implies the internal logical organization of the ideas in a text or discourse.

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# Aspects sémantiques et morpho-syntaxiques dans l'approche de la catégorie de la voix

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**Abstract:** *In this paper we try to establish the origin of the grammatical terms voice and diathesis, and to define the relationship existing between them: is diathesis but the erudite synonym of voice or actually each of them corresponds to a well defined area. Then we attempt to evaluate this category from a double point of view based on logico-semantic criteria, and secondly, on formal, morphosyntactic ones.*

**Mots-clé:** *diathèse, voix, variations sémantiques, niveau morpho-syntaxique.*

## 1. Diathèse ou voix ?

Ce que nous appelons traditionnellement diathèse ou voix est une catégorie de la classe verbale aux manifestations à la fois nombreuses et variées sur le plan formel aussi bien que sur le plan sémantique. Le grand nombre et la diversité des manifestations de cette catégorie en font un phénomène linguistique d'une complexité à part, qui se laisse difficilement définir et décrire.

Les premiers débats sur cette catégorie, qui présentaient naturellement un réel caractère philosophique, ont été portés par les philosophes grecs de l'école stoïcienne il y a plus de deux mille ans. C'est d'eux que les grammaires traditionnelles, et non seulement, ont hérité du concept de l'opposition sémantique entre **action faite** et **action subie** ou plutôt **action** et **passion**: „Les termes „actif” (lat. *agere* "agir") et „passif” (lat. *pati* "pâtir, souffrir, subir") reflètent une conception sémantique de la voix qui a perduré pendant des siècles et demeure encore aujourd'hui courante dans les définitions d'ouvrages scolaires et autres encyclopédies ou dictionnaires. A l'actif, le référent du terme occupant la position de sujet du verbe est censé „agir” et mener l'événement exprimé par le verbe ; au passif, le référent de ce terme est censé „subir”, „souffrir”, ou „pâtir” de cet événement.» (Puckica 2003: 7).

Les anciens philosophes grecs nous ont légué aussi les termes de **voix** et **diathèse**. Pour les philosophes de l'école stoïcienne **diathesis** est l'état, la disposition, la fonction d'une entité physique, d'un „corps”<sup>1</sup> qui peut soit effectuer une action, soit subir une action ou bien les effets d'une action.

Le terme est repris par Aristote dans ses *Catégories* pour traduire *un état transitoire de l'individu, par exemple avoir chaud ou froid, ou être bien portant ou malade* ; ensuite les grammairiens grecs et latins l'ont adopté et employé pour indiquer la catégorie en cause.

„Tout, ou presque, prédestinait le terme grec **diathesis** à la carrière grammaticale qu'on lui connaît. Aristote l'emploie dans ses *Catégories* à deux reprises: dans l'une, où il discute des „qualités” (8, 8b25 sq.), il emploie ce terme dans un sens *passif* d'état passager de l'individu. Dans l'autre, où il discute des „relations” (6, 6a36 sq.), il l'emploie dans le sens *actif* de „disposer”, „ordonner”, etc. Le terme présente donc en lui-même l'ambivalence sémantique actif/passif. Il

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<sup>1</sup> Si l'action et la passion sont des principes fondamentaux de ce système quadri-partite, c'est parce que le *lekton* stoïcien est prédicable d'un « corps » et que le corps est défini par sa faculté d'agir (action) ou d'être agi (passion): « est corps tout ce qui peut agir ou subir » (Duhot 1989: 93) ; « [t]out ce qui agit, tout ce qui meut, tout ce qui est mû est corps » (*id.*, p.91). En revanche, le verbe n'est pas un corps et n'est défini que par sa fonction prédicative. [...] Ce n'est donc pas le prédicat verbal qui est ici actif ou passif, mais le référent « corporel » du sujet, et c'est la « disposition » active ou passive de ce référent qui détermine donc si le prédicat est de type actif (« droit »), passif (« renversé »), ou autre. (Puckica 2003: 11).

convient en outre à l'évocation d'un ordonnancement particulier de divers éléments, et ainsi des relations entre le verbe et ses participants logico-sémantiques." (Puckica 2003: 11-12).

C'est encore Aristote qui, dans la *Poétique*, emploie le terme **phôné**, pour désigner: 1) le son produit par la vibration des cordes vocales, la voix articulée, par opposition à **psophos**, bruit, son indistinct ; 2) la forme sonore d'un mot ou d'une association de mots, par opposition à son sens. Le terme a pris aussi un troisième sens, spécialisé, qui se rapportait à l'une des formes du verbe. Les Latins l'ont adopté avec ce sens et l'ont traduit par **vox** ; plus tard, il est entré dans les langues modernes européennes: **voix** en français, **voice** en anglais, **voz** en espagnol et en portugais. Étymologiquement donc, le terme voix désigne une forme du verbe, alors que **diathèse** renvoie à l'aspect sémantique, au contenu de la forme respective.

Le manque de correspondance parfaite entre la forme – voix, définie morphologiquement ou morpho-syntaxiquement, et le contenu – diathèse, définie sémantiquement selon l'opposition action vs passion, a toujours représenté une des principales difficultés quant à nos définitions de cette catégorie. Quels seraient les critères à retenir et comment les manipuler afin de construire un mécanisme descriptif et tracer une limite entre la dimension formelle et la dimension sémantique de ces faits de langue, de ces „accidents” qui arrivent au verbe dans le processus de la parole ?

Dans ce qui suit, nous essayons une double description de cette catégorie, s'appuyant en premier lieu sur des critères sémantiques, et, en second lieu, sur des critères formels, morphosyntaxiques, même s'il est bien connu que cette catégorie „ne dispose pas d'un système cohérent de marques” et „que son coefficient de grammaticalisation est nettement inférieur à celui des autres catégories: le temps et le mode” (Florea 1996: 122).

## 2. Les critères sémantiques dans la définition de la voix

„La théorie de la voix est fondée sur l'interprétation des rapports entre le procès et ses actants” (Cristea 1979: 74).

Les voix se distinguent donc: a) par le choix d'un actant en fonction de sujet, b) par le sens dans lequel va l'action par rapport à son agent et à son patient.

Rappelons que:

1) les actants du verbe ont une double face ; par conséquent ils peuvent, d'un côté, prendre des fonctions syntaxiques – sujet, complément d'objet, et de l'autre, assumer des rôles logico-sémantiques – agent, patient, bénéficiaire, causateur ou agent déclencheur ;

2) dans toutes les langues il est théoriquement possible que des transformations se produisent qui mènent à des changements de la structure phrastique et à des variations de sens ;

3) l'agent et le patient en tant que termes logiques ne changent pas avec le changement de la structure phrastique ;

4) l'agent et le patient se trouvent en relation avec les fonctions syntaxiques de sujet et de complément d'objet qui changent avec le changement de structure phrastique.

### Variations sémantiques possibles

Entre le procès et ses participants peuvent s'établir les rapports logico-sémantiques suivants:

Contenu actif:

1. le sujet grammatical fait l'action lui-même
2. le sujet du verbe est donc l'agent de l'action: sujet = agent
3. l'agent de l'action coïncide avec le sujet du verbe: agent = sujet
4. l'objet grammatical subit l'action
5. l'objet du verbe est donc le patient de l'action: objet = patient
6. l'action va du sujet vers l'objet

Contenu passif:

1. le sujet grammatical subit l'action
2. le sujet du verbe est donc le patient de l'action: sujet = patient
3. l'agent de l'action et le sujet grammatical ne coïncident pas: agent  $\neq$  patient

4. l'objet grammatical fait l'action lui-même
5. l'objet du verbe est donc l'agent de l'action: objet = agent
6. l'action va de l'objet vers le sujet

Contenu réfléchi:

1. le sujet grammatical fait l'action lui-même
2. le sujet du verbe est donc l'agent de l'action: sujet = agent
3. le sujet grammatical subit l'action
4. le sujet du verbe est donc le patient de l'action: sujet = patient
5. le sujet du verbe est donc à la fois agent et patient du verbe: sujet = agent = patient = objet<sup>2</sup>
6. l'action est interne au sujet

Contenu factitif<sup>3</sup>

1. le sujet grammatical n'est pas l'agent de l'action: sujet ≠ agent
2. le sujet grammatical n'est ni le patient de l'action: sujet ≠ patient
3. le sujet pousse un autre à faire l'action
4. le sujet est un agent déclencheur de l'action
5. il y a aussi un agent exécuteur qui, s'il est exprimé au niveau formel, prend la fonction d'un complément d'objet direct ou complément d'objet indirect.

Ligia-Stela Florea (1996: 125) estime qu'il y a deux schémas actantiels fondamentaux auxquels correspondent quatre valeurs de contenu équivalant aux quatre voix du français: actif, passif, réfléchi et factitif.

Le schéma **agent** → **procès** → **patient** est spécifique à l'actif, au passif et au réfléchi: l'agent et le patient sont différents à l'actif et au passif [agent = patient] ; au réfléchi l'agent s'identifie au patient [agent ≡ patient].

Le schéma actantiel pour le factitif „met en place deux agents, dont l'un est l'initiateur de l'action et l'autre l'exécutant proprement-dit" (Florea 1996: 125):

**agent 1** → **initiative** → **agent 2** → **action** → **patient**: *Le professeur fait réciter ce poème à Marie.*

Pour Gustave Guillaume il y a deux espèces de voix: 1) analytiques, (l'actif et le passif), et 2) synthétiques. Les voix synthétiques „ont la propriété, quelle que soit leur structure, d'allier en elles l'expression de l'actif et du passif" (Guillaume 1964: 27). Les modèles de voix synthétiques sont la voix réfléchie en français, et une voix mixte, la voix déponente, en latin. La voix déponente „est l'expression de l'actif au sein d'une voix qui ne lui est exclusivement réservée et dont la puissance d'expression s'étend au passif" (Guillaume 1965: 128). Guillaume considère que la voix déponente a une existence discrète en français où elle inclut un petit nombre de verbes comme aller, partir, entrer, sortir, naître, mourir, etc., actifs aux formes simples, passifs aux formes composées. Dans le rapport sujet/verbe, si le sujet est actif, c'est lui qui „impose au verbe l'instant terminal" et le verbe **avoir** comme auxiliaire ; si le sujet est passif, il ne peut décider de rien et c'est le verbe qui lui impose „l'instant d'accession à l'aspect composé", et qui choisit **être** comme auxiliaire.

### 3. La catégorie de la voix sur le plan de la forme

Théoriquement chaque signifié délimité sur le plan sémantique doit avoir un signifiant sur le plan de l'expression. En effet les quatre valeurs de contenu que nous venons de préciser se retrouvent dans quatre types de phrase correspondants: actif, passif, pronominal et factitif. Comme moyens d'expression „spécialisés" le français possède: 1) l'auxiliaire être pour le passif, 2) le pronom de même personne que le sujet pour le pronominal, c) les verbes faire, laisser et rendre pour le factitif. Ce ne sont pas des moyens flexionnels car morphologiquement le français n'a pas de

<sup>2</sup> En tant que patient et objet il se dédouble au niveau de la forme par le pronom de même personne et nombre que le sujet.

<sup>3</sup> C'est Jean Dubois qui propose d'inclure la structure factitive dans la catégorie de la voix. « Certains grammairiens (J. Dubois) parlent d'une quatrième voix qui fait intervenir un Agent déclencheur de l'action et un Agent exécuteur ; le premier est choisi en position de sujet superficiel et le second en position d'objet direct ou indirect ; c'est la voix factitive » (Cristea 1979: 74).

morphèmes de voix, ce sont des marques formelles se manifestant au niveau syntagmatique. C'est la raison pour laquelle les grammaires transformationnelles ont proposé de résoudre le problème en associant les diathèses aux types de phrase et en les présentant comme des structures provenant par la transformation d'une structure de base: la structure active.<sup>4</sup>

La correspondance forme-contenu est loin d'être absolue mais le phénomène en soi n'est pas singulier dans les langues. Une forme modale ou temporelle d'un verbe peut, en fonction du contexte, exprimer d'autres valeurs que sa valeur de base. Le contenu passif propre en principal à la structure *être + participe passé* se retrouve aussi dans des structures actives ou pronominales. Mais si „on a vu le présent, forme 'imperfective' acquérir dans certains contextes une valeur perfective" pourquoi ne pas voir „la forme pronominale prendre une valeur passive ou active ?" (Florea 1996: 123).

### ***La voix active***

On considère en général la forme active comme un trait inhérent du verbe. Les transformationnalistes la présentent comme la forme de base à partir de laquelle, en appliquant divers mécanismes de transformation, on parvient aux autres formes. Les Latins faisaient la distinction entre l'actif et le passif par l'opposition *zéro/r*.

Pour Christian Touratier *l'actif est une absence de voix, car il n'a pas de marque formelle propre* (Touratier 1996: 100). Après une explication qui reprend des arguments logico-sémantiques: l'actif contient des „formes verbales propres à exprimer que le sujet est considéré comme agissant essentiellement par opposition aux cas où il est représenté comme touché par l'action" (Touratier 1996: 100) il revient aux critères formels et définit la forme active en l'opposant à la forme passive et pronominale:

Il est clair qu'il n'y a rien de commun du point de vue de la sémantique entre tous les verbes à la voix active. Il est donc préférable de rattacher à l'actif l'ensemble des formes verbales qui n'ont aucune unité morphologique, là où les formes dites passives présentent une unité morphologique (*être+participe passé*), et les formes dites pronominales une seconde unité morphologique de personne dite réfléchie. L'actif, n'ayant ni signifiant ni signifié, correspond donc à une absence de morphème de voix. [...] Si l'actif est une absence de voix, on comprend alors que même les verbes qui, à cause de leur sémantisme, n'opposent pas des formes passives ou réfléchies aux formes actives, puissent être néanmoins considérés comme à l'actif (Touratier 1996: 100).

Toutes les constructions ayant un verbe à la forme active n'ont pas un sens actif. La construction ayant pour sujet le pronom indéfini ON peut sous-tendre un contenu passif:

a) dans le cas des verbes transitifs indirectes comme nuire à, plaire à, obéir à, pardonner à, etc., qui n'acceptent pas la transformation passive *être+participe passé*: *On a nuit à cet enfant ; On pardonne à cet enfant son manque de politesse ;*

b) dans la situation où l'on „considère une action moins du point de vue de son auteur que du point de vue des conditions de son déroulement, c'est-à-dire comme procès ou événement" (Tutescu 1996: 95). Le sujet du verbe, à savoir l'agent, n'étant pas effectivement précisé dans cette construction, on considère qu'on a un passif sans agent, ou à agent effacé. Cet agent effacé en surface suppose le trait [+humain] en structure profonde, un agent marqué du trait [-humain] étant plus difficile à supprimer (Voir Tutescu 1996: 95):

*ON a arrêté les Turcs devant Vienne...*

*ON a érigé des tours sur les côtes pour repérer les pirates...*

*Si un avion américain tombe, ON en fabrique un autre...* (Umberto Eco, *A reculons, comme une écrevisse*)

### ***La voix passive***

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<sup>4</sup> Voir aussi Florea 1996: 125.

Le contenu passif se retrouve en principal dans:

a) des constructions avec l'auxiliaire *être* suivi du participe passé du verbe principal, possibles avec des verbes transitifs directs ;

b) une structure active avec ON comme sujet du verbe (voir ci-dessus) ;

c) une forme pronominale où il n'y a pas d'identité sujet = agent = patient, *le dédoublement du sujet en agent et patient étant à tel point la caractéristique de la voix réfléchie que l'absence de ce trait mène au divorce inévitable entre la forme pronominale et la valeur réfléchie* (Florea 1996: 124) ;

d) dans des structures impersonnelles de forme active ou pronominale ayant pour sujet formel le pronom impersonnel IL ou un démonstratif à teinte neutre: *Il est arrivé de grands événements ; Cela se dit souvent ; Il se mijote quelque chose que j'ignore encore.*

Ces multiples possibilités de rendre un contenu passif pourraient être mises en évidence comme suit:

forme active	forme passive	forme pronominale	forme impersonnelle
contenu passif	contenu passif	contenu passif	contenu passif

Tout comme la structure active avec contenu passif, la structure pronominale à valeur passive impose des conditions et des restrictions:

a) le sujet est en général non animé, *Son dernier livre s'est très bien vendu* ; si le sujet est animé on crée soit des ambiguïtés soit des effets de sens: 'déshumanisation de l'humain', ou 'réification' de la personne: *Un esclave instruit et bien portant se vendait jusqu'à vingt livres ; Les enfants, ça se lave en cinq minutes.*<sup>5</sup>

b) la présence d'un complément d'agent très rare en français contemporain était plus fréquent en français ancien et classique: *La France s'est longtemps gouvernée par un roi*, (exemple pris de J. Gardes-Tamine) ; *Cette secte se fortifie par ses ennemis plus que par ses amis* (Blaise Pascal).<sup>6</sup>

La structure impersonnelle à valeur passive permet d'étendre le passif à des verbes transitifs indirects ou intransitifs sans exclure totalement les verbes transitifs directs qui sont, dans ce cas, employés intransitivement ou avec un complément d'objet indirect. Pour avoir un contenu passif cette structure entraîne, elle aussi, des restrictions:

a) les verbes qui apparaissent dans cette structure phrastique ont „le sens existentiel, événementiel, de survenance, distinct du sens constatif, descriptif des mêmes verbes employés personnellement” (Tutescu 1996:101) ;

b) „le sujet formel IL est soudé au verbe ; la séquence nominale qui suit le verbe est une rallonge syntactico-sémantique du verbe: cette phrase répond à la question **Que se passe-t-il** ou **Qu'est-ce qu'il y a**. La négation doit elle aussi, frapper toute la phrase, sa forme étant **Il n'est pas vrai que + P**” (Tutescu 1996: 101).

### **La voix pronominale**

Appelée tantôt forme pronominale, tantôt tournure pronominale, cette voix semble avoir un statut particulier dans la bibliographie spécialisée. La définition logico-sémantique que nous venons de tracer ci-dessus met en évidence le sujet à la fois actif et passif: le sujet grammatical fait l'action lui-même, le sujet du verbe est donc l'agent de l'action, sujet = agent ; le sujet grammatical subit l'action, le sujet du verbe est donc le patient de l'action, sujet = patient. La part d'activité et de passivité du sujet par rapport à l'action que le verbe évoque peut varier ce qui crée une grande complexité quant aux nuances sémantiques véhiculées par cette voix.

Le passif présente un manque d'unité en ce qui concerne ses réalisateurs. Le passif est extrêmement „expansif” sur le plan de la forme: en plus de la structure passive qui lui est propre, nous l'avons vu revêtir des formes actives et pronominales, voire impersonnelles.

<sup>5</sup> Voir Pinchon 1986: 190; Gardes-Tamine 1986: 42.

<sup>6</sup> Exemple pris à J. Pinchon 1986: 191.

Par rapport au passif le pronominal présente une unité de forme absolue, mais, en raison du degré variable de passivité et d'activité de son sujet, une diversité considérable sur le plan sémasiologique.

Les grammaires et les grammairiens distinguent généralement quatre sens de la forme pronominal: réfléchi, réciproque, passif et moyen. C'est une „terminologie commode mais insuffisante” (Joffre 1985: 10). Les sens passif, réciproque et réfléchi semblent les plus nettement déterminés. Les délimitations et les termes employés dans divers ouvrages reflètent une certaine unité et continuité des points de vue sur ce problème. Le „moyen” pose des difficultés. Le terme, emprunté aux grammaires anciennes, semble ne pas satisfaire les spécialistes qui proposent aussi *sens indistinct, subjectif, neutre*, etc. D'autre part on distingue plusieurs nuances à l'intérieur de cette valeur sémantique (voir Cristea 1979: 77-80).

La problématique concernant cette voix pourrait être synthétisée dans deux questions:

a) savoir si *la pronominalité est attachée au verbe ou ne caractérise que l'une de ses constructions ; si l'on peut attribuer aux verbes la pronominalité de façon absolue ou s'ils ne sont qu'occasionnellement pronominaux, dans certaines de leurs constructions ;*

b) savoir *s'il convient de parler d'une forme pronominal, présentant des valeurs sémantiques diverses ou d'une voix pronominal caractérisée par une valeur fondamentale* (Gardes-Tamine 1986: 42).

### ***La voix „factive”***

Les arguments invoqués pour inclure la structure factive dans la catégorie de la voix sont, premièrement, d'ordre logico-sémantique: les rapports entre le procès et ses actants que nous avons décrits dans le chapitre précédent. Le procès factitif est *déclenché* par le premier actant et *exécuté* par le deuxième.

On a identifié deux espèces de procès déclenché: un procès factitif proprement-dit, 'faire faire', qui, sur le plan de l'expression, se réalise à l'aide de l'auxiliaire *faire* ou *laisser*, et un procès causatif 'faire devenir', réalisé à l'aide de l'auxiliaire *rendre* (Cristea 1979: 82).

Le segment *faire + Verbe à l'infinitif* présente le degré de grammaticalisation le plus élevé. La désémantisation de *faire* dans cette construction a fait possible qu'il se combine avec soi-même: *Tu fais faire, Tu t'es fait faire* ; le degré de cohésion avec l'infinitif est tellement haut que seule le deuxième terme de la négation et quelques adverbes - *sans doute, parfois, souvent* - peuvent encore les séparer: *Tu ne le fais pas entrer dans ce magasin ; Je lui fais souvent nettoyer sa chambre* ; enfin, „une montée des clitiques se produit aboutissant à une réanalyse des deux verbes comme un seul syntagme verbal” (Lamiroy 1999: 44).

## **4. Conclusion**

Nous avons essayé de retrouver les origines des termes *voix* et *diathèse* et de définir les rapports existant entre eux. La question qui se pose est si la diathèse n'est qu'un synonyme savant de voix ou si chacun des deux termes recouvre un secteur linguistique bien déterminé.

Les Grecs anciens distinguaient dans leur langue trois voix qu'ils appelaient diathèses et qu'ils définissaient selon les relations pouvant s'instituer entre un sujet logique et l'action évoquée par le prédicat verbal. Voix, désignait à l'origine une forme du verbe. Étymologiquement donc, le terme **voix** se rapporte à la forme, alors que **diathèse** renvoie à un niveau plus profond, celui du contenu.

La situation de la catégorie de voix en français est très complexe. La notion a été héritée des Latins qui, morphologiquement, distinguaient deux voix: actif et passif. En français cette catégorie se manifeste au niveau de la phrase comme structure syntaxique. Longtemps les grammaires françaises ont essayé d'appliquer le modèle latin pour décrire le système français où la voix „n'était pas une flexion particulière, mais une structure” (Siouffi 2007:105). Par conséquent la voix a été présentée de manières très diverses: on l'a considérée tantôt comme forme ou type de phrase, tantôt comme tour ou tournure de phrase ou de verbe, ou bien, dans le cas du pronominal,



comme type de verbe<sup>7</sup>. Nombre d'auteurs lui ont contesté le statut de catégorie du verbe, d'autres l'ont analysée sous tous les aspects: catégorie verbale, type de phrase, type de verbe.

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<sup>7</sup> D'ailleurs, à l'origine *la voix latine définit des types de verbes*, voir Siouffi 2007: 105.

# Lexique et références anachroniques dans *Electre* de Jean Giraudoux

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**Abstract:** *What is an anachronism? Is it but a simple lexical unit or a vaster notion which hides behind it? In the following contribution we try to surprise its functioning in a modern discourse founded on ancient 'matière'.*

**Mots-clés:** *anachronisme, lexique anachronique, anachronismes référentiels, resémantisation.*

**Motto:** *A linguist deaf to the poetic function of language and a literary scholar indifferent to linguistic problems and unacquainted with linguistic methods, are equally flagrant anachronisms.<sup>1</sup> (Roman Jakobson)*

1.0. Dans son sens positif, *l'anachronisme* est défini comme „l'action de placer un fait, un usage, un personnage, dans une époque autre que l'époque à laquelle ils appartiennent ou conviennent réellement; fait, usage, personnage ainsi placé” (TLFi) et, dans le sens péjoratif ou ironique, comme: a) „objet, usage reflétant une époque révolue, en retard sur son temps”, ou b) „personne dont le genre de vie, le mode de pensée ou de sentir, est en retard sur ses contemporains” (*id.*).

Au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle on a essayé de créer un système à deux ou à quatre termes qui rendent compte de cette notion mais ces systèmes n'ont pas survécu.

Dans le système binaire on opposait *anachronisme*, qui place un fait avant sa date, à *parachronisme*, qui le place après.

Le système à quatre termes était formé de *prochronisme* „fait placé avant sa date”, *parachronisme* „fait placé après sa date”, *anachronisme* au sens général d' «erreur dans la supputation des temps», «confusion de dates», et *métachronisme*, synonyme d'anachronisme et signifiant exactement „déplacement de temps” (TLFi).

Au XX<sup>e</sup> siècle „la rhétorique moderne oppose parfois *l'anachronisme progressif* ou *prochronisme*: Christophe Colomb parlant dans un porte-voix, à *l'anachronisme régressif* ou *parachronisme*: Londres traversé en carrosse au xx<sup>e</sup> s.» (TLFi)

„*L'anachronisme* peut être dû à *une erreur*, à *une ignorance* ou à *une tradition*” (TLFi) La littérature et la peinture du Moyen Age et de la Renaissance abondent en de tels exemples: *anachronismes historiques, anachronismes de langage, anachronismes de costume.*

„Dans les costumes (du *Christ porté au tombeau*) on relèverait plus d'un *anachronisme*, et tel vêtement semble sortir de la garde-robe des doges...”, constate Théophile Gautier en décrivant dans son *Guide de l'amateur au Musée du Louvre, le Christ porté au tombeau.*<sup>2</sup>

Mais le monde médiéval ne se souciait ni de la couleur locale ni de la couleur d'époque comme le feront plus tard les romantiques.

*L'anachronisme* peut être *volontaire, notamment pour des raisons esthétiques*:

Pour faire passer sous les yeux de Chactas les hommes illustres du grand siècle, j'ai quelquefois été obligé de serrer les temps, de grouper ensemble des hommes qui n'ont pas vécu tout-à-fait ensemble,

<sup>1</sup> « Un linguiste sourd à la fonction poétique de la langue et un critique littéraire indifférent aux problèmes linguistiques et qui ne connaît pas les méthodes linguistiques sont, en égale mesure, des anachronismes flagrants » (Roman Jakobson, notre traduction).

<sup>2</sup> T. Gautier, *Le Guide de l'amateur au Musée du Louvre*, 1872, p. 49, *apud* TLFi.

mais qui se sont succédés dans la suite d'un long règne. Personne ne me reprochera sans doute ces *légers anachronismes*, que je devois pourtant faire remarquer ici (F.-R. de Chateaubriand).<sup>3</sup>

2.0. Ce qu'on remarque dès le premier abord, même superficiel, dans les pièces de Jean Giraudoux, inspirées des mythes anciens, c'est la tentative de l'auteur d'orienter ces mythes vers une signification nouvelle, de leur donner une interprétation contemporaine. Il en résulte, sinon des mythes nouveaux, des mythes "polysémiques" dont le sens se multiplie et élargit la sphère sémantique des mythes anciens. Le mythe se renouvelle aussi au niveau de la forme par des éléments qui se superposent au conflit ancien. Ainsi peut-on distinguer le "corps" ancien du mythe dans la liste des personnages et le fil des événements qui s'enchaînent pour aboutir au dénouement à l'antique: dans le cas d'Électre, la mort d'Egisthe et de Clytemnestre, la catastrophe et la destruction finales.

2.1. **Les anachronismes** modifient les données temporelles du texte. Ils sont comme des points d'ancrage du discours de Giraudoux dans une réalité moderne, contemporaine. En même temps ils servent de mécanismes de démythisation et de réinvention de la légende et des significations qu'elle porte.

Les anachronismes apparaissent au **niveau lexical**, mais les unités lexicales anachroniques impliquent simultanément des anachronismes au niveau des éléments de référence ou des référents auxquels elles renvoient. La nature des références ou des référents anachroniques auxquels renvoient ces unités lexicales est multiple. On constate:

a) des références concernant l'existence des classes sociales: *bourgeoisie, ouvriers ; magistrats ; les faubourgs, les quartiers bourgeois, bourgeoisie et châteaux ;*

b) des références anachroniques quant à la nature des objets et des pratiques individuelles modernes: *le café et l'eau chaude du matin, le café philtre, la baignoire, la piscine ;*

c) des références anachroniques se rapportant aux pratiques sociales collectives: *la grève comme pratique sociale de protestation, la mésalliance ;*

d) des références de nature administrative et professionnelle: *département, président, magistrats, tribunal, les chemins communaux et vicinaux, le vétérinaire, chef d'État ; policier, boulangère, braconnier, consultation (médicale), Egisthe qui a ordonné le mariage des rêveurs, des peintres et des chimistes, le président du tribunal ;*

e) des références d'ordre politique: *secret d'État, Egisthe est chef d'État, parler politique, la théorie du président est bourgeoise; homme d'État, la borne militaire ;*

f) des références qui visent les principes et les mécanismes de l'économie moderne: *le prix des matières premières est au plus haut et le prix des objets de détail au plus bas, déclame le chef de l'État ; ou: pourquoi exportons-nous plus de vaches ?, les réflexions du conseil sur ses honoraires et son pourcentage ;*

g) des références qui s'inscrivent dans l'univers de la vie quotidienne (produits, commerce, paysage urbain): *la boulangerie, avoir une entorse, les halles, le hangar, le vitriol.*

Les unités lexicales et surtout les références auxquelles ces unités renvoient ne se retrouvent pas au niveau d'un temps originaire caractéristique au mythe et au monde ancien, ce sont des éléments réparables au niveau d'un temps moderne, des éléments qui ancrent la légende ancienne dans une réalité contemporaine et lui font adapter les sens aux réalités du XXe siècle.

2.2. **Les nouvelles dispositions du discours** ou **les transfigurations du discours** ont comme premier rôle de soutenir les unités anachroniques. Elles greffent les éléments anciens sur le texte moderne et font que le conflit proprement dit, au niveau événementiel, soit redoublé par un autre au niveau textuel. Les images lexicales du texte recouvrent des notions, des mentalités, des conventions, bien éloignées de celles du texte ancien.

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<sup>3</sup> F.-R. de Chateaubriand, *Les Natchez*, 1826, p. 105, apud TLFi.

Le discours initial de la pièce ancienne est le discours du chœur qui raconte pas à pas la tragédie ayant eu lieu dans le palais des Atrides ; le discours initial de la pièce de Giraudoux n'insiste pas à raconter toute la tragédie mais plutôt à décrire le palais comme un bâtiment qui cache des énigmes sous certaines apparences, avec une façade qui rit et une autre qui pleure, présentation métaphorique d'une maison qui a été le théâtre de tant de malheurs. Le palais des Atrides devient un théâtre dans le théâtre, Giraudoux dynamisant ainsi le décor et les éléments scéniques pour insérer dans le texte l'information sur le destin des Atrides. Un des éléments les plus exploités est *la fenêtre*: tous les événements, le crime d'Atrée, la mort de Cassandre, la mort d'Agamemnon sont présentés comme ayant lieu derrière une fenêtre qui s'ouvre et se ferme successivement.

Les causes anciennes des effets présents sont rappelées par des scènes mimétiques explicatives: le jeu des trois petites filles, qui grandissent au fur et à mesure que la pièce se déroule et deviendront les Euménides, est celui de 'réciter' ; non seulement elles racontent et anticipent les événements mais elles donnent une allure impersonnelle au discours qui accuse par des procédés interrogatifs absurdes: elles parlent de la reine Clytemnestre qui a „mauvais teint... parce qu'elle se met du sang”.

Dans le texte moderne l'auteur a inséré des récits paraboliques tel celui des hérissons ou celui de la femme/louve Narsès, paraboles de la justice divine ; le dialogue des personnages propose des réflexions sur les dieux, le bonheur, la tragédie, la justice, la vertu ou la culpabilité, le sens de ces notions n'étant plus relevé par seul l'enchaînement des faits mais par un débat théorique où les personnages se servent de termes et de procédés anachroniques par rapport à la légende ancienne.

**2.3. Les nouvelles dispositions des personnages ou les transfigurations des personnages** s'inscrivent dans le même jeu anachronique que les éléments lexicaux et les références auxquelles ceux-ci renvoient. Les éléments visés par excellence sont les 'petites filles', le 'mendiant' et le 'jardinier'.

'Les petites filles semblent être tantôt les Choéphores, tantôt les Euménides, tantôt les Érinyes qui poursuivront Oreste. Trois, elles sont comme des mémoires ayant gardé l'histoire car leur spécialité est de 'réciter': elles racontent, anticipent et expliquent des faits et des sentiments.

Le mendiant, personnage marqué par le signe du vin, renvoie lui aussi à une double référence: le chœur antique et la voix des Dieux. Sous l'influence du vin il révèle la vérité sur la mort d'Agamemnon, et en plus il connaît le sort d'Oreste ce que seuls les dieux peuvent savoir. Mais ces dieux apparaissent comme des êtres indifférents, léthargiques et distraits, image *anachronique* par rapport à la temporalité de leur existence.

Le jardinier comme personnage s'inscrit, dans une certaine mesure, dans la tradition ancienne: c'est le laboureur ou l'être de condition ordinaire avec lequel les Anciens mariaient Electre afin de l'éloigner du palais et des événements. Mais son discours explicatif du début de la pièce et son lamento de l'entracte sont *anachroniques*. C'est un essayiste du XXe siècle qui parle et son discours est un *anachronisme* de pensée, comme dirait M. de Staël.

3.0. *Electre* fait, dans la pièce moderne, les mêmes gestes que dans le mythe ancien, mais ses actions prennent des significations différentes. C'est un personnage qui s'enrichit en s'appauvrissant: elle s'identifie à l'idée de justice et de vérité absolues, de 'signe' qui „fait signes aux dieux”. Mais tandis que le mythe ancien célèbre la vertu et le sacrifice pour l'absolu implacable et extérieur à la condition humaine, le discours moderne propose le compromis: le personnage qui court l'absolu est anachronique et a le visage déshumanisé d'un loup.

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## Passive-Causative Constructions

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**Résumé:** *Cette étude est une approche de l'une des idées linguistiques selon laquelle le terme «causatif» se réfère soit à l'aspect, soit à la voix. Nous nous intéressons surtout aux constructions causatives – passives, qui, quoique passives par leur sens, ont une structure différente de celle des constructions passives proprement dites.*

**Key Words:** *Passive voice, causative aspect/voice, causer, affected /effected participants, get/have constructions.*

The aim of this study is to highlight causative constructions in correlation with their passive value.

In the English tense system an activity or action is seen from several points of view. Generally speaking, the duration, completeness or incompleteness of an action, the emotional attitude of the speaker towards an action is usually indicated by two aspects, the **common** (or **indefinite**) and the **continuous** (or **progressive**). While the common aspect expresses an act thought as a bare statement, as a completed whole, the continuous aspect expresses an action as a process going on at a given moment.

e.g.

*I **wrote** him a letter three days ago.*

*I **was writing** him a letter when he phoned me.*

Some grammarians also talk of a **perfective** aspect, taking into consideration that each English tense or verbal (non-finite verb) has a perfect form

e.g.

*I **have written** him recently.*

*I **will have written** him by this time tomorrow., etc.*

and of a **causative** aspect (or voice),

e.g.

*I went to a typist **to have** my letter **written**.*

The “causative aspect” does not refer to the duration, completeness or incompleteness of an action, but to the semantic meaning of a verb. Causative meaning has a wide range of grammatical realization. All causative constructions have two participants: a *causer* and an *affected* or *effected* participant, i.e. a Subject and an Object, and therefore, they all are transitive.

e.g.

*The fire **caused** human losses.*

[causer] [causative vb.] [effect(result)]

e.g.

*The fire **caused** people **to die**.*

[causer] [causative vb.] [affected] [resulting state]

By passivisation the effected participant may become Subject and the causer, Prepositional Object.

e.g.

*Human losses **were caused** by the fire.*

Although only transitive verbs may render causative meaning, not all causative verbs are inherently transitive. Thus, causative verbs may be transitive or intransitive, but only when recategorized as transitive, and occurring contextually as causatives. According to what they express, they are considered to be - explicit (showing the mere causation),

e.g.

*to cause, to determine, to have, to get, to make, etc.*

- implicit (showing an event in which causation is implied), e.g. *to teach* (to cause somebody to learn), *to persuade* (to cause somebody to believe), *to show* (to cause somebody to see), *to blacken* (to cause somebody/something to turn black).

According to the semantic – syntactic features, the causative verbs may have selectional restrictions of the following type (1):

- NP [+animate] [-abstract], expressing the animate causer of the action, process or state (the agent). In this case the causation is controlled.

e.g.

*Mary caused the orange to become juice.*

[+causer] [+causative] [+affected] [+inchoative] [+affected]  
[+animate] [+controlled]

[-abstract]

- NP [-animate] [-abstract], expressing a physical Object that operates as an instrumental causer which is intentionally employed by an animate causer.

e.g.

*The mixer caused the orange to become juice.*

[+causer] [+causative]

[-animate]

[-abstract]

This sentence could be paraphrased as:

*Mary caused the orange to become juice by using a mixer.*

- NP [-animate] [+abstract], expressing an exterior cause which is neither directly nor indirectly controlled. An uncontrolled cause may be a natural phenomenon or force (e.g. the wind, the heat or the frost, a storm) or a spiritual or material process or state (despair or joy, pneumonia, loss of blood, etc). In this respect, several sentences can be generated:

e.g. *The chill in the fridge caused the meat to freeze.*

[-animate] [+causative]

[-abstract]

*The wind caused the leaves to fall.*

[+natural phenomenon] [+causative]

*Love caused her sister to get married.*

[+feeling] [+causative]

In these last examples no paraphrase with an animate causer is possible.

e.g.

\**John caused the meat to freeze by using the chill in the fridge.*

\**John caused the leaves to fall by using the wind.*

\**John caused her sister to get married by using love.*

The periphrastic causatives differ from other types of causatives such as lexical or morphological ones by the absence of a corresponding intransitive verb, the participation in ampler syntactic constructions which often include a Direct Object Clause and their productivity in everyday English.

Besides a typology of causatives referring to *periphrastic causatives*, *lexical causatives*, *morphological causatives*, *attitudinal causatives*, *Dative causatives*, and *ergative causative* (verbs)

(2), grammarians identify *bare or passive-like causatives*, referring to some constructions with passive meaning that lack the usual auxiliary **be** (3), a causative verb being preferred instead. According to Leech (4), a causative verb is a verb which expresses the meaning of “cause and result” i.e. “someone or something causing something to happen”.

Causative verbs are considered to be: *make, get, have* and *cause*. When one of them is encountered in a sentence with the Past Participle, we can say that there occurs a causative passive (viewed as causative voice). This causative meaning may be conveyed not only by passive forms, but also by active ones.

e.g.

*He is teaching me tennis.*

- active (= He is teaching me himself.)

*I am being taught tennis.*

-passive (=Somebody else does the action.)

*He is having me taught tennis.*

-causative (=He is responsible for causing someone to do this action.)

Or

*I'm repairing my bike.*

-active (=I do the job myself.)

*My bike is being repaired.*

-passive (=The mechanic does it for me.)

*I'm having my bike repaired.*

-causative (=I am responsible for causing someone to do the job.)

At first sight, it may seem that there is no grammatical difference between the passive and the causative when it comes to specifying the person performing the action. In fact, in contrast to the passive, we use the causative to underline that we are totally aware of the fact that somebody else brings the whole situation about. We are “causing” X to do a certain action for us.

Causative verbs may be followed not only by a Past Participle, but also by an infinitive, expressing the same causative meaning. The direct object is always placed between the causative verb and the Past Participle, and therefore such a construction is easy to notice.

Some of the causative constructions express the meaning of “experience something”, “allow somebody to do something” or they merely describe the result of a past action. In all cases the passive content is always present with causatives.

e.g.

*I **will have** a new pair of shoes **made** for the anniversary.*

*I go to the hairdresser **to have** my hair **cut/done/styled**.*

*I **had** my glass **filled** with milk.*

*I don't like **to have** a problem **explained** twice.*

There are cases when the **have + Past Participle** should not be mistaken with a causative. It may be employed to convey in a non-causative way the idea of an accident, disaster or anything else which happens beyond our control. (5)

e.g.

*They **had** their garden **destroyed** in a storm.*

**Have** and **get** can be interchanged in the causative, but **get** is more limited. It is considered stronger and it contains a stronger idea of action by the speaker. (6)

In imperative sentences it is more likely that we encounter the **get** – passive than the **have** one, it sounding more natural.

e.g.

**Get** your hair **cut** immediately!



\***Have** your hair **cut** immediately!

Interrogative sentences in which the causative **get** appears almost suggests an order, while those with **have** are rather neutral:

e.g.

Why don't you **get** your marks **written** in the roll?

Why don't you **have** your marks **written** in the roll?

The verb **get** may combine not only with the bare infinitive to express a causative meaning, but also with an **-ing** form or with the **to**-infinitive. (7)

e.g.

*I tried to **get** my car **to start** by asking a neighbour to push it.*

The use of the infinitive is rather specific to an informal style, and the meaning is that of *persuade* or *manage to*.

Sometimes instead of **have** or **get**, we may use other verbs in the same bare-like constructions: **order** and **see**. (8)

e.g. *He **ordered** the acts **signed**.*

*He **saw** the acts **signed** in front of him.*

Usually such causative verbs cannot replace one another. There are differences both in style and in meaning:

- **Get** is informal, **cause** is rather formal;
- **Have** often describes a situation where one person tells another person to do something, **cause** describes a negative or an unhappy result.

Past Participle may be used without their passive auxiliary (a sort of bare passive, too), being comparable to a relative clause:

e.g.

*I want a problem **solved** until the end of the week.*

*I want a problem **which should be solved** until the end of the week.*

Having a general overview on the above presented constructions, we can conclude that although passive and causative constructions are related and have many characteristics in common (such as: the transitive verb, and consequently, the Object etc.) still the differences don't allow mixing them up. The passive sentence contains one agent and one object, while the causative-like passive constructions imply a second agent that causes the action suffered by the Direct Object.; the causative constructions have an active pattern and the main verb is causative.

#### Notes

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2. Id.ibid., p. 220-225.

3. Huddleston,R.,Pullum,G., *A Student's Introduction to English Grammar*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2005, p.245.

4. Leech,G.et all, *An A –Z English Grammar and Usage*, Harlow Longman, 2006, p.78.

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6. Id. ibid.

7. Leech, G., op.cit., p.178.

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## Modern Theories on Reported Speech

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**Résumé :** *Le but de ce travail est de présenter quelques théories modernes appartenant à des linguistes consacrés, comme D. Freeborn, G. Leech, R. Quirk, M.A.K. Halliday, R.M.W. Dixon, concernant certaines notions linguistiques, essentielles dans la transformation du discours direct en discours indirect.*

**Key Words:** *Reported speech, back-shift, free indirect speech, pointer words, functional grammar: parataxis, hypotaxis; speaking verbs.*

This study is intended to deal with the theories of some grammarians that have set themselves apart from the general approach, i.e. traditional, and created new concepts and terms in grammar. These concepts have been accepted by others and considered to be great works of reference. Some of the concepts have been also adopted by some grammarians such as Dennis Freeborn<sup>1</sup>, Geoffrey Leech and Ian Svartvik<sup>2</sup>, who used for example the concept of backshift from Randolph Quirk<sup>3</sup>, who is seen as father of modern grammar of English. Their theories concerning direct and indirect speech cannot be presented entirely in this work, and as a consequence, we decided to present only the most outstanding elements that differentiate them from the traditional approach.

As Quirk himself mentioned in the introductory part of his grammar “there have been very few attempts at so comprehensive a coverage as is offered by the present work”,<sup>4</sup> his theory and its presentation being easily manageable and comprehensive. We cannot but agree with this statement and support the idea of him putting the basis for modern approach in English grammar. To prove that this statement is not far-fetched we strongly believe that these own words are sufficient enough. The preface of *A Grammar of Contemporary English*<sup>5</sup> points out clearly his purpose, the basis upon which he builds his theory and practice:” It will be obvious that our grammatical framework has drawn heavily both on the long established tradition and on the insights of several contemporary schools of linguistics, but while we have taken account of modern linguistic theory to the extent that we think justifiable in a grammar of this kind, we have not felt that this was the occasion for detailed discussion of theoretical issue. Nor do we see need to justify the fact that we subscribe to no specific one of the current or recently formulated linguistic theories, [...] none, however seems yet adequate to account to our linguistic phenomena. And recent trends suggest that our own compromised position in a fair reflection in the way the major theories are responding to form others.”<sup>6</sup>

Quirk’s grammar is very concise, clear and it deals with commonly encountered problems: differences between direct and indirect speech, tense and other changes in indirect speech, indirect statements, questions, exclamations and commands, modal auxiliaries in indirect speech and free indirect speech<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Freeborn, D., *A Course Book in English Grammar, Second edition*, Macmillan Press Ltd., 1995, p.16.

<sup>2</sup> Leech, G., Svartvik, J. *Base on A Communicative Grammar of English by Quirk, R., Greenbaum, S., Leech, G., Svartvik, J.*, Longman Group Ltd., 1991, p.117-119, 149-150, 248-249.

<sup>3</sup>Quirk, R., et alii, *A Grammar of Contemporary English*, Longman Group Ltd., 1978, pp.785-789.

<sup>4</sup>*Id. ibid.*, p.786.

<sup>5</sup>*Id. ibid. preface.*

<sup>6</sup>*Id. ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> *Id. ibid.*

## 1. Back –shift

According to Quirk,<sup>8</sup> *back-shift* takes place when any reported matter is introduced by a reporting verb in the past tense. In these circumstances, the shift from direct to reported speech is accompanied by a back-shift of verb as follows:

Direct	Back-shifted
Present	/ → Past
	Past
	Present Perfect → Past Perfect
	Past Perfect

Illustrating this, the explanation of the term *back-shift* should become clear, meaning that if there is (semantically) a shift into the past in the reporting clause, there is a corresponding shift into the past (or, if necessary, further into the past) in the reported clause.

Here are some examples of each part of the rule:

1. “*I have work to do*”, *he complained.*  
*He complained that he had work to do.*
2. “*John graduated last year.*” *said his brother.*  
*His brother explained that John had graduated the previous year.*
3. “*We have already visited the castle!*” *explained our classmate.*  
*Their classmate explained that they had already visited the castle.*
4. “*The whole problem had been discussed*”, *said the teacher.*  
*The teacher said that the whole problem had been discussed.*

The last example lacks of change and this is explained<sup>9</sup> by the fact that if a verb is already in the Past Perfect form it expresses “past in the past” by its nature and further “past in the past” can be expressed through the grammar of English verb.

Some exceptions to the rule are possible because *back-shift* is part of the natural “distancing”<sup>10</sup> that takes place when we report what was said in the past, and as a consequence, the rule can be ignored in cases where “the validity of the statement reported holds for the present times as much as for the time of the utterance”<sup>11</sup>:

“*I’m a citizen, not of Athens but of the world*”, *said Socrates.*  
*Socrates said that he was a citizen not of Athens but of the world.*

“*Nothing can harm a good man,*” *said Socrates.*

- (a) *Socrates said that nothing could harm a good man.*
- (b) *Socrates said that nothing can harm a good man.*

In the examples above one can see that the first statement uttered by S applied only in Socrates’ own lifetime, and since the vantage point of a modern reporter deals with what now is past, it has to be reported by applying the rule of the back-shift. The second statement differs from the other it is a universal assertion<sup>12</sup> in which, if it were someone else (John) for Socrates’ lifetime, it should also be true nowadays. It can be therefore reported either by (a) applying or (b) ignoring the back-shift rule.

## 2. Free Indirect Speech

Quirk states that there is another kind of speech in English grammar, „a half-way between direct and indirect speech”<sup>13</sup> and this kind of speech is called by him *free indirect speech*.

<sup>8</sup> Id. *ibid.* p. 787

<sup>9</sup> Quirk, R., op. cit., p. 787

<sup>10</sup> Id. *ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> Id. *ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> Id. *ibid.* p. 789.

<sup>13</sup> Quirk, R., op. cit. p. 789

Generally used in modern narrative writing, *free indirect speech* is basically a form of indirect speech. There is some difference between them and this is<sup>14</sup>:

- the reporting clause is omitted except when retained as a parenthetical comment clause;
- the potentialities of direct speech sentence/structure (direct question forms, vocatives, tag questions, etc.) are retained.

Quirk states<sup>15</sup> that, as a consequence, it is only the back-shift of verb together with the corresponding shifts of pronouns, determiners and adverbs that signals the fact that the words are being reported, rather than being in indirect speech. The following example is relevant:

“So that was their plan, was it?”

He well knew their Nocks, and would show them a thing or two before he was finished. Thank goodness he had been alerted and that there were still a few honest people in the world.

The underlined words show back-shift to the past tense. The function of the *free indirect speech*<sup>16</sup> is usually a person’s stream of thought rather than the actual speech. Therefore, it is possible that he thought would be the equivalent reporting verb that is usually used in indirect speech as he said.

### 3. Pointer-words

In another study of English Grammar<sup>17</sup>, G.Leech and I. Svartvik continue Quirk’s modern approach, but focusing on other topics, one of them being that of *pointer-words*<sup>18</sup> such as: *this, now, here, tomorrow, etc.*, which change in the reported speech into: *that, then, there, the next day, etc.* These *pointer-words* refer to *pointing* to something in the context. They can have different uses:

a) Pointer-words can be *back-pointing* (they can point to something previously mentioned);

*I wanted to punish him, but this/that was a mistake.*

b) Pointer-words can be *forward-pointing* (they can point to something to be mentioned later);

*This is how you obtain a chocolate cream: you mix cocoa with butter and then you add some fresh cream...*

c) Pointer-words can be *outward-pointing* (they can point to something in the context outside language).

*Can I borrow this book? (the one by me)*

*Can I borrow that book? (the one over there)*

*This* in such cases points out to something near the speaker, either physically, in terms of space or time, or psychologically. *That* identifies something not so near the speaker. On this basis, analysing the *pointer-words*, G.Leech and I.Svartvik prove that they may fall into two categories<sup>19</sup>:

1. a class related to *this* (having the near meaning);

2. a class related to *that* (having the distant meaning).

The main elements of these classes are: *this, these; here, now* (in the *this* type) and *that, those;there, then* (in the *that* type).

In English there is a clear contrast in meaning between the above mentioned words, but according to Leech and Svartvik the contrast is less clear in back-pointing and forward-pointing. “This and that can replace each other with no difference of meaning in back-pointing, but this is commoner in formal English”.<sup>20</sup>

For forward-pointing only this and the this-type-words (*these, here, this*) can be used

*This is what I want.* (forward or back-pointing)

<sup>14</sup> Id.*ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> Id.*ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> Id.*ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> Leech, G., Svartvik, J., op. cit. p. 248

<sup>18</sup> Id.*ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> Leech, G., Svartvik, J. op. cit. p. 248

<sup>20</sup> Id.*ibid.*

That is what I want. (back-pointing only)  
Here is the news. (forward pointing)  
And that's the end of the news. (back-pointing)  
Those who are present. (having the meaning *people*, it is back-pointed)

#### 4. Functional Grammar

M.A.K. Halliday<sup>21</sup> refers to direct and indirect speech in terms of *projection*. This notion is used to mean “the logical-semantic relationship whereby a clause comes to function not as a direct representation of nonlinguistic experience, but as a representation of a linguistic representation”<sup>22</sup>. It must be pointed out that Halliday believes that *projection* combines with the same set of interdependencies that occur with expansion: *parataxis*, *hypotaxis* and *embedding*. Out of these notions, only *parataxis* and *hypotaxis* are of interest for the direct and indirect speech.

e.g.)

“Caesar was ambitious”, says Brutus (*parataxis*)

Brutus says that Caesar was ambitious. (*hypotaxis*)

These examples show that the clause (that) *Caesar was ambitious* is a projection clause. Basically, *parataxis* is the term used to name direct speech, while *hypotaxis*, to name indirect speech.

#### **Quoting (direct speech): verbal process, parataxis**

The simplest way of projection is the direct speech as in:

They explain to us “You have to behave yourself”

projecting clause                  projected clause

The projecting clause is a verbal process, one of saying and the projected clause represents that which is said<sup>23</sup>. This is the case of *parataxis* as the “tactic” relationship, the dependency type. In written English the projection is signaled by quotation marks. In spoken English the projecting clause is phonologically less stressed than the projected one. Halliday makes the difference of tone used in some cases of *parataxis*<sup>24</sup>:

- a) Brutus said, “Caesar was ambitious”.
- b) “Caesar was ambitious”, said Brutus.
- c) “Caesar”, said Brutus, “was ambitious”.
- d) “Was Caesar ambitious?” asked Mark Anthony.

According to the author, in the first example (a) the tone is proclitic, in (b) it will fall, Continuing the falling tone on “ambitious”, in (c) it will rise, continuing to rise or fall-rise on “ambitious”.<sup>25</sup>

The conclusion<sup>26</sup> of the grammarian is that *the projecting clause* is thus a *verbal process* while *the projected clause* has the status of a *wording*.

#### 5. Reporting (indirect speech): mental process, hypotaxis

As we use the language not only for speaking, but also for thinking, Halliday says that a process of thinking also serves the project:

e.g.

*The teacher always considered that this student would improve his English.*

Here we deal with a phenomenon (The teacher always considered) and a metaphephenomenon (this student would improve his English). The projection clause is a mental process, one of cognition, and the projected clause is not a wording but a meaning process.

<sup>21</sup>Halliday, M.A.K., *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*, Second edition, U.K., 1994, p250.

<sup>22</sup>*Id. ibid.*

<sup>23</sup>*Id. ibid.*

<sup>24</sup>*Id. ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> Halliday, M.A.K., *op. cit.*, p251

<sup>26</sup> *Id. ibid.* p.252

Something projected as a meaning is still a phenomenon of language – it is a metaphenomenon but it is presented at a different level –semantic, not lexico-grammatical. Halliday’s presentation shows that when something is projected as *meaning*<sup>27</sup> it has already been “processed” by the linguistic system, but processed only once, not twice as in the case of *wording*.

Studying the ideas above one may come to the conclusion that parataxis is not the basic pattern for projection as a freestanding event. It is hypotaxis that makes it depended on the mental process.

## 6. Speaking verbs

Another linguist, R.M.W.Dixon<sup>28</sup>is concerned mostly with speaking and with the “speaking type verbs” encountered in English especially in indirect speech. He states that there are 8 types of speaking verb subtypes, five of which may introduce direct speech:

e.g.

*‘It’s snowing’, he shouted/ said/ informed.*  
*, she told her kids.*  
*, instructed the teacher.*

The other types describe kinds of vocal activity (*speak, discuss, slander*) and usually “do not occur in apposition to direct speech”.<sup>29</sup>

Dixon associates four semantic roles to speaking verbs: the speaker, the addressee, the message, the medium. These semantic roles refer to language or speech, to the style used.

The speaking type verbs are considered to be formed of several subtypes: *the talk subtype, the discuss subtype, the shout subtype, the report subtype, the inform subtype, the tell subtype, the order subtype, and the forgive subtype.*

*The Talk subtype* refers to an activity of vocal communication: *speak, talk, chat, gossip, converse, communicate, quarrel*

- *argue* – with the sense “to have an argument”
- *joke* – involves intersection of the *talk* and *report* subtypes.

Talk verbs do not take a *that* implement or introduce direct speech. *Chat, gossip, communicate, quarrel + argue* generally refer to reciprocal activity.

*The Discuss type* refers to vocal activity that focuses on a specific message: *discuss, refer to, describe*. This type of speaking verbs could be regarded as transitive correspondents of talk.

*The Shout subtype* refers to manner of vocal production: *shout, cell cry, roar, swear, pray, preach, narrate, recite, intone, read, sing*.

*The Report subtype* refers to the manner of processing a message. We can make here a clear distinction between the different sets of verbs within this subtype:

- *say, declare, assert;*
- *state, affirm, rumor;*
- *announce, proclaim, mention, note, report, regret;*
- *remark, comment, explain;*
- *boast(about/of), brag(about/of), complain(about/of), grumble(about/of);*
- *suggest, claim, acknowledge, admit, confess (to);*
- *undertake, offer, propose, agree(with);*
- *promise, threaten.*

For all Report verbs the message may be a *that*-clause or direct speech.

e.g. ‘*John is the most interesting person in the world*’ she **announced/remarked/ boasted/ suggested/proposed.**

*announced*  
*remarked*

<sup>27</sup> Id. *ibid.*, p. 259-262

<sup>28</sup> Dixon, R.M.W., *A New Approach to English Grammar on Semantic Principles*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, pp.32-34;140-155

<sup>29</sup> Id. *ibid.*, p.209

*She boasted that John is the most interesting person in the world.*  
*suggested*  
*proposed*

The *Inform subtype* refers to the way in which a message (which is not an order or instruction) is conveyed to the Addressee.

e.g. *inform, lecture, agree (with)*

The *Tell subtype* contains verbs which relate both to message and Addressee: *tell, ask, request, beg.*

The *Order type* refers to a message (generally an order or instruction) directed to an Addressee.

e.g. – *order, command, urge, instruct, warn, caution, persuade, invite, recommend (to), encourage; some senses of: tell, remind, ask, request, beg;*

- *forbid, discourage, disable, prohibit.*

The message can only be direct speech (often an imperative) or a *that*-complement which generally includes a modal *should* or *would*.

*I instructed the lieutenant: 'Your platoon should be ready at dawn'.*

*I instructed the lieutenant that his platoon should be ready at dawn'.*

The *Forgive type* refers to the speaker saying something to the Addressee which reveals the Speaker's attitude such as his approval of the Addressee or of something the Addressee has done, or saying something which satisfies a social convention.

e.g. - *insult, slander, curse, abuse, scold, blame, rebuke, forgive, pardon, praise, thank, congratulate, compliment; tell...off, pick on...;*

- *accuse, excuse;*

- *greet, welcome, introduce;*

- *cheer, applause, apologize.*

All the notions and terms presented in this study belong to some linguistic theories which take into account direct and indirect speech from a modern point of view. The famous grammarians who define these terms do not give synonymous versions of the same idea, but complementary extended information on Reported speech. This paper is conceived to be a useful informational study on the modern approaches to direct and indirect speech.

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# ***It in Morphology, Syntax and Discourse***

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**Zusammenfassung:** Diese Studie nimmt sich vor, die Funktionen des Pronomen “**it**” aus dreifacher Perspektive zu untersuchen, und zwar aus morphologischer, syntaktischer und Diskurs-analytischer Perspektive. Die Vielfältigkeit der Verwendungs – möglichkeiten des zwei buchstäbigen Wortes ver leiht ihm eine wichtige, wohl verdiente Rolle innerrhalle der Grammatik des Englischen.

**Keywords:** *it*, the functions of *it*, types of reference, substitution, ellipsis.

It is the main assumption of this paper that there has been a shift, in terms of paradigms, generated and presented in linguistic studies that have pointed out new, specific values of some grammatical items.

In the following pages of this paper we’ll try to present the functions of **it** in morphology, syntax and discourse. Since **it** is just a pronoun, not many people would tackle this subject in order to write a paper on *it*’s functions, but they would be surprised to see how many interesting facts could be found concerning this pronoun.

Although a two-lettered word, the pronoun **it** has an important role in English grammar, a role that we shouldn’t minimize or neglect.

In the structure of a noun phrase, the pronoun plays a special part, which is a consequence of its syntactic and semantic properties. Pronouns are pro-forms that replace noun phrases. The pronoun is only one of the several types of pro-forms that exist in the English language. The prefix *pro-* in *pro-form* means “taking the place of; substituting for” (Hulban, 2002: 178).

A pronoun is a word that can substitute for a noun or noun phrase, as the word itself tells us: pro-noun, and **it** is considered to be the third person singular neuter form. Regarding the evolution of the word, the neuter of the third personal pronoun **hit** has lost its initial **h** both in pronunciation and in spelling, because of the lack of stress. Forms without **h** begin to appear in early Middle English, but in Chaucer, **hit** is more common than **it**, and **hit** is found occasionally until the sixteenth century. In most of the personal pronouns, the dative has replaced the accusative, but in the neuter singular analogy, it has acted in the opposite direction, thus introducing a useful distinction between the masculine **him** and the neuter **it**.

**It** can refer to a thing, a quality, an event, a place etc.:

e.g.

That *book* is interesting. **It**’s worth reading *it*.

*Friendship* must be earned. **It** can’t be bought.

Two weeks ago *I missed the train*. **It** taught me a lesson.

We should meet *at the museum*. **It**’s not far from here.

We can use **it** to identify people:

e.g.

Who is **it**? *It*’s *the postman*.

We also use **it** when we don’t know the sex of a baby or child:

e.g.

**It**’s a lovely baby. Is **it** a boy or a girl?

We refer to an animal as **it** when the sex is not known or not worth identifying:

e.g. I’ve seen *a snail*. **It** is on the road. (Alexander, 1988: 74)

## 1. *It* in Morphology

*It* is used in morphology for what is felt as lacking personality, and therefore, it is considered a neuter or non-personal pronoun, labeled as *referring it*. In this respect, it is used to refer not only to inanimate object as in: e.g. *We have an excellent museum here. Would you like to visit it?* (the museum), but also to non-count substances (such as *some soup* in [1] below), to singular abstractions (such as *the sack of Rome* in [2] ) and even to singular collectives of people (such as *jury* in [3]):

e.g.

She made some soup and gave *it* to the children.[1]

The sack of Rome shook the whole of the Western World; in a sense, *it* was the end of the Roman Empire.[2]

The jury addressed itself to the task before *it*.[3]

*It* can also represent proper names and sometimes even names of people considered as abstractions:

e.g.

Paris is still a great attraction for people, just as *it* has always been.

We knew the Indian in them would assert itself when *it* had an opportunity.

*It* is entirely usable for animals, though it gives way to *he* and *she* when they are regarded as personalities, or when sex is mentioned. A dog can be referred to as *it* in complete disregard of obvious sex classification, if there is no interest in the dog as a personality. *It* is quite usable for human babies, though the family and the friends of the family would certainly use *he* or *she*:

e.g.

I know that dog; *it* is always barking.

I saw her baby, but *it* was asleep.

In the personal/non-personal opposition, the non-personal gender is ‘unmarked’, in that for any antecedent for which *he* or *she* is inappropriate, *it* will be used instead. Hence, *it* can co-refer not only to a noun, but also to a whole part of a sentence or clause, especially when it is used as complement of such verbs as *know*, *believe*, *doubt*, *say*, *admit*, and *deny*, enlarging its morphological value with a syntactical one:

e.g.

A: Who said *that I was late*?

B: I said *it*. (‘that you were late’)

I doubt *it*.

London was destroyed by the fire in 1666. *It* (‘the fire of London’) started in a bakery.

*It* can even co-refer to a sequence of sentences:

e.g.

Some people never change. They get no advice and therefore keep repeating the same mistakes. *It’s* a shame!

Sometimes, *it* represents adjectives or adjectival units:

e.g.

He is very *clever*, but he doesn’t show *it*.(Long, 1965:344)

## 2. *It* in Syntax

Syntactically speaking, *it* is looked upon through its diverse functions. *It* is often used in sentences denoting time, weather conditions, distance etc, in which it doesn’t carry any real information, but has to be present because every English sentence has to contain a subject and a verb. When used in this way, *it* has an **anaphoric function** and it is usually called *impersonal subject*, and sometimes, *empty subject*

e.g.

*It’s* 9 o’clock. *It’s* May 22<sup>nd</sup>.

**It's** snowing. **It's** 29centigrade.

**It's** 300 miles from Paris.

**It's** smoky in here.

There are many expressions with **it**, some of them containing a subject-**it**, as in: **it** doesn't matter; **it's** no use; an object-**it**, as in: I've had **it**; that does **it!**; a predicative-**it** as in: this is **it**; she is **it**; or a vague or meaningless or formal-idiomatic, empty object-**it** of some verbs, as in: to come **it**, to catch **it**, to fight **it** out, to lord **it** etc. (Hulban, 2002: 184-185).

In an example like: *You owe **it** to yourself to make the best of your abilities.*, **it** functions as a formal introductory direct object.

Also known as **introductory it** or **preparatory it** or **introductory-anticipatory it**, **it** introduces a clause and anticipates its real (logical) subject. Anticipatory **it** is used when a clause (generally a subject clause) is postponed to provide a more balanced sentence; a sentence where what precedes the verb is shorter than what follows it. Anticipatory **it** then stays in the position that might have been occupied by the clause.

e.g.

**It's** a shame *she's not going to marry him.*

In this example, introductory **it** is the subject and the extraposed clause (the clause taken out of its position and moved to the end) is *she's not going to marry him.*

In fact, introductory-anticipatory constructions have no syntactical function as they are used instead of the real subject:

e.g. **It** useless *to go there.* (it is the grammatical or formal subject, while *to go there* is the logical subject.) This type of **it** is called sometimes *provisional subject*, while **it** as a subject without meaning (**It's** hot or **it's** 9 o'clock) is called *formal it*. (Iofik; Cahojan, 1967: 143).

The usual word order in English sentences is subject + predicate: e.g. *His interest was obvious.* But when the subject is a clause, we often prefer to use introductory **it** + predicate + subject:

e.g.

That his interest was in music was obvious.

**It** was obvious that his interest was in music.

Any kind of noun clause can take introductory **it**. There is a tendency in English to put longer parts of a sentence towards the end, giving them end-weight. Introductory **it** is part of this tendency, but it also gives the subject clause end-focus. Anticipatory **it** is often used with a *that*-clause, to show an attitude:

e.g. **It** was clear *that I could not make head or tail of his explanation.*

Sometimes the postponed subject is elliptical, having lost *that*:

e.g. **It** is true I like her more.

Introductory, anticipatory or preparatory **it** may function as:

- **IT**-preparatory subject;
- **IT**-preparatory object.

#### **IT**-preparatory subject

##### ► *infinitive subjects*

When the subject of a clause is an infinitive expression, this does not normally come at the beginning. We usually prefer to start with the 'preparatory subject' **it**, and to put the infinitive expression later. Preparatory **it** is common before *be* + adjective / noun complement.

**It's** nice *to talk* to you. (more natural than *To talk to you is nice.*)

**It** upsets me *to hear* you talking like that.

**It** can also be used as a preparatory subject for the *for* + infinitive structure.

e.g. **It's** important *for you to get* there on time.

##### ► *clause subjects*

Preparatory **it** is also normally used when the subject of a clause is itself another clause.

e.g.

**It's** important *that you should get there on time.*

**It's** surprising *how many mistakes you can make.*

▶ *-ing form subjects*

**It** can be a preparatory subject for an *-ing* form. This is usually rather informal.  
e.g.

**It's** worth *visiting the museum* if you have time.

**It** surprised me *your not remembering his name.*

▶ **it takes...** + *infinitive*

We can use this structure to talk about the time necessary for things to happen.

e.g. **It** took me two years *to finish* my book.

▶ **it ...** + *if, as if, as though*

**It** is used to introduce some clauses with *if, as if, as though.*

e.g.

**It** will be a pity *if he has to lie again.*

**It** looks *as if they were going to quarrel again.*

**It's** not *as though this was the first time* he lied.

▶ *emphasis: 'cleft sentences'*

**It** can be used in 'cleft sentences' with *who-* and *that-*clauses to emphasize one part of a sentence. In this case, **it** is also called *introductory – emphatic it.*

e.g. **It** was John *who won* the contest, not George. (emphasizing *John*).

### *IT-preparatory object*

▶ *infinitive or clause object + complement*

We can sometimes use **it** as a preparatory object. This happens when the object of a verb is an infinitive expression or a clause with an adjective or noun complement: *subject + verb + it + complement + infinitive / clause.*

e.g.

I find **it** *difficult to work* with you.

I thought **it** *strange that they hadn't come.*

This structure is not normally used when there is no adjective or noun complement after the verb.

e.g. I remember that we were very happy. (not \* I remember it that we were very happy.)

But verbs like *to like, to love, to hate* allow the structure:

e.g. I love **it** *when you talk* to me.

▶ *-ing form object + complement*

e.g. I find **it** *interesting talking* to you.

▶ *if – clauses*

**It** is used as a preparatory object for an *if – clause* after *would appreciate.*

e.g. I would appreciate **it** *if you would keep me informed.* (not \* I would appreciate if you would...)

▶ *owe, leave + indirect object and take + direct object*

e.g.

I owe **it** to my teacher *to love English so much.*

I'll leave **it** to you *to take the best decision.*

I take **it** that you *have to agree with that.*

In this last example the preparatory **it** has the function of a provisional object, and the direct object clause stands in the apposition of the pronoun **it.**

In most of the examples given so far, one can notice that introductory **it** always occurs first in the sentence, or immediately after an adverbial. In every day speech we often use ellipsis to shorten sentences with introductory **it:**

e.g.

**It** won't take long. (to get there)

**It's** O.K. (to watch T.V.)

In such situations the shortened sentence is more likely to be used than the full one.

## 2.1. Extraposition

Postponement which involves the replacement of the postponed element by a substitute form is termed *extraposition*. It operates almost exclusively on subordinate nominal clauses.

The most important type of extraposition is that of a subject realized by a finite or non – finite clause. The subject is moved to the end of the sentence, and the normal subject position is filled by the anticipatory pronoun **it**. The resulting sentence thus contains two subjects, which we may identify as the **postponed subject** (the clause which is notionally the subject of the sentence) and the **anticipatory subject (it)**. A simple rule for deriving a sentence with subject extraposition from one of more traditional ordering is:

Subject + predicate → **it** + predicate + subject

e.g.

*To see him do that*, surprised me.

**It** surprised me *to see him do that*.

The extraposed clause may be any kind of nominal clause, except a nominal relative clause. For example, *Whoever said that was wrong.*, cannot be rendered \* **It was wrong** *whoever said that*. Extraposition of a participial clause is possible:

e.g. **It** was easy *telling him the truth*.

but is not very common outside informal speech. Familiar informal examples are:

**It's** no use *trying to fix the car*.

**It** wouldn't be any good *telling her that*.

It is significant that non – extraposed clauses which are noun-phrases can be focused in pseudo-cleft constructions, while extraposed clauses cannot be focused. This shows that extraposed clauses are not NPs, but sentences.

e.g.

a) *That John said he wouldn't come is most likely*.

b) *What is most likely is that John said he wouldn't come*.

c) **It is more likely that John said he wouldn't come**.

d) \**What **it** is most likely is that John said he wouldn't come*.

## 2.2. Inserted **it**

The inserted pronoun **it** is a formal subject or object, anticipating the real extraposed subject or object. Some grammarians state that this **it** is different from the referential pronoun **it**, in that it cannot be interrogated.

e.g.

a) *I know **it**. What do you know?*

b) *I know **it** that he's here. \*What do you know that he is here?*

In the case of extraposition from subject position, we have the strongest case for **it** as a grammatically introduced particle which has no semantic role. The situation is different for object clauses, where the extraposed construction is the marked pattern.

Other grammarians suggest that **it** will be inserted in those cases where it can somehow be assimilated to an ordinary pronoun with anaphoric function. Thus extraposition occurs with those verbs, or in those contexts, where the content of the complement clause is assumed to be known or true in the respective discourse.

The meaning of the governing verb is the first factor which influences the acceptability of an extraposed object clause. Factive verbs, emotive factives will permit object extraposition.

e.g. You shouldn't regret **it** that you were helpful.

Although the difference is not always clear-cut, most speakers find **it** unacceptable with non-factive verbs.

e.g.

a) \*John *claims it* that his sister is always speaking about him.

b) John *doubts it* that his sister caught the train.

While factives often require *it*, verbs that express suppositions – normally having to do with bringing forward something new – generally exclude the formal *it* construction.

e.g.

a) Who *would have thought (it)* that he would fail in the exam?

b) Who *would have supposed (\*it)* that he would fail in the exam?

c) He *pretended (\*it)* that he did that.

d) I *presume (\*it)* that he is your brother.

### 2.3. Prop *it*

**Prop *it***, also known as *dummy it* or *empty it* is used in a variety of structures where there is no obvious subject or object. It is the most neutral and semantically unmarked of the personal pronouns and is best suited to the role of empty subject or object. As we have mentioned before, this *prop it* carries no real information, but is present because every English sentence or clause has to contain a subject. This *prop it*, supporting the subject function, is used especially in expressions denoting time, atmospheric conditions or distance:

e.g. *It's* eight o'clock sharp./*It's* Saturday./*It's* almost midnight./*It's* raining./*It's* getting dark./*It's* very cold in here./*It's* not far from here./ *It's* a long way to Paris.

In many cases a clause with *prop it* subject corresponds to a clause in which a locative or temporal phrase is the subject. The correspondence applies for the following set of examples when the subject complement refers to a period of time and an adverbial is present:

e.g. *It's* Saturday tomorrow. → Tomorrow is Saturday.

The following examples seem to have the same structure, but they are completely different:

e.g. *It's* my birthday next month. → Next month is my birthday.

In the first set, *tomorrow* is identified as *Saturday*, the latter having the function of subject complement and the role of identifying attribute. In the second set, on the other hand, *next month* appears to be fronted adverbial with consequent subject-verb inversion ('My birthday takes place next month').

If *it* has any meaning at all, the *prop it* refers quite generally to the time or place of the event or state in question (as seen in the examples above). Even less meaning can be claimed for the *it*, which occurs as an anticipatory subject in cleft sentences or in clauses with extraposition, as in:

e.g. *It* is a shame *that they didn't come*.

Perhaps the best case for a completely empty or 'nonreferring' *it* can be made with idioms in which *it* follows a verb and has vague implications of 'life in general':

e.g.

make a go of *it* ('to make a success of something')

take *it* easy! ('take *things* easy!').

*Prop it* has also been termed *ambient it*, in accordance with the view that it has some generalized reference to the environment in a given context. Thus, we can use *it* for a more restricted environment in *It's too dirty to touch*. In clauses of time and weather, the environment may be general and unspecified, but it may be specified by a locative or temporal phrase, as in *It was very hot in my kitchen*.

Another term for *prop it* is *expletive it*, the term indicating the view that this *it* merely fills a syntactic gap (that of subject) and is otherwise meaningless. Some grammarians also call this *it impersonal it*, the term being related to situational *it*, in that it refers to a given situation, but it does not point to a definite or an indefinite person or thing, and therefore, it is practically meaningless. This *it*, though containing no real meaning, serves the useful purpose of giving the statement the outward form of an ordinary declarative sentence with an expressed subject.

## 2.4. Cleft *it*

**Cleft *it***, also known as *introductory – emphatic *it** serves as subject of a cleft sentence (or cleft clause). The cleft sentence is a special construction which gives both thematic and focal prominence to a particular element of the clause. It is so called – cleft sentence – because a sentence is split up (cleft) into two clauses, each with its own verb. The cleft sentence is introduced by cleft ***it*** followed by a verb phrase whose main verb is a copular verb, generally *be*. The focused part comes next, followed by the rest of the sentence introduced by a relative item. Cleft ***it*** constructions underline various parts of a sentence:

e.g.

***It*** is *he* that / who came yesterday. (subject)

***It*** was *her* that he was talking about. (direct object)

***It*** was *three years ago* that I talked to her last. (adverbial modifier of time)

***It's light blue*** that he has painted the house. (object complement) etc.

### **Demonstrative *it* and modifying *it***

*Demonstrative *it** and *modifying *it** are other two more or less distinct functions of the pronoun ***it***. Some grammarians include them with the other functions of ***it***, without naming them, while others analyze them separately.

Also known as *situation *it**, the *demonstrative subject *it** is used to point to a person or thing that is at first presented by the situation, but is later identified by a predicate noun (such subjects are called *anticipatory*). Demonstrative ***it*** also points to a thing or idea expressed by some word, words, sentence, or even by the whole of the previous context, in which case is called *anaphoric*.

e.g.

'Who's listening to music?'

'***It's*** my neighbours.'

The anticipatory demonstrative subject expressed by the pronoun ***it*** is often used in emphatic complex sentences:

e.g.

***It*** was my sister who answered the phone.

***It*** was two days ago that the idea occurred to me.

Modifying ***it*** is used to form with other parts of speech new words, especially verbs. For instance, the adjective *rough* becomes a verb: *to rough it* (to manage, to find one's way out); the intransitive verb *to come* becomes a transitive verb, as in *to come it* (to understand) or *to lord it* (to act like a lord). This modifying ***it*** has no clear semantic content and yet it is an integral part of the phrasing. It is mainly used in colloquial speech.

e.g. John likes to lord ***it*** over people.

## 2.5. Affective (emotional) *it*

A separate category in Alice Badescu's view (1984:178) is ***it*** functioning as a noun with a strong affective value. This ***it*** is mainly used in colloquial style and it may express: 'disdain', 'aversion' or on the contrary: 'admiration', 'enthusiasm', or the idea of 'importance', 'charm':

e.g.

Is this a friend of yours? Where did you pick ***it*** up? (disdain)

I can't stand him: he is a perfect "***it***". (aversion)

Isn't his novel absolutely "***it***"? (admiration)

It's no surprising you are a success: you've got "***it***". (charm) etc.

## 3. *It* in Discourse

From a formal point of view, pronouns are the paradigm examples of expressions used by speakers to refer to 'given' entities. Because of their lack of 'content', the pronouns have become the crucial test-case items for any theory of reference. After all, to what does the expression ***it*** refer, in isolation? The fact that there is no reasonable answer to this question has led many linguists to suggest that a pronominal such as ***it*** is not actually a referring expression, but can only be used co-

referentially, i.e. within a text which also includes a full nominal expression. The relationship between the full nominal expression and the pronominal expression is then described as an antecedent-anaphor relation. The occasional use of pronouns in situations such as the example below is treated as an example of deixis<sup>1</sup>.

e.g.

(A nice cat approaches John and Jim. John says to Jim:)

I hope it's friendly.

The use of *it* in this example is also described by some grammarians as an example of 'pragmatically controlled anaphora'. In this use of the term 'anaphora', the requirement of an antecedent expression in the text is not considered crucial. In this sense, 'anaphora' covers any expression which the speaker uses in referring, on the basis of which the hearer will be able to pick out the intended referent given in certain contextual and co-textual conditions. One other aspect of the treatment of pronouns, or anaphors, is that both theoretical and experimental work on pronouns has concentrated almost exclusively on the interpretation, and not on the production of pronouns.

### 3.1. Reference

Reference is the relation between an element of the text and something else by reference to which it is interpreted in the given instance. Reference is a potentially cohesive relation because the thing that serves as the source of the interpretation may itself be an element of text.

Reference may be anaphoric, i.e. the referent is mentioned earlier, so we have to move backwards in the text:

e.g. John was given a nice cat. It is white.

or cataphoric, i.e. the referent is mentioned later in the text:

e.g. 'Take it!' 'What?' 'The book!'

It may also be exophoric, i.e. the referent is outside the text:

e.g.

A: 'What's that instrument for?'

B: 'Take it!' –the speaker.

or endophoric, i.e. the referent is in the text:

e.g. The book is on the table. It seems interesting.

According to Halliday and Hasan (1976:308) there are three types of reference: personal, demonstrative and comparative. Personal reference is reference by means of function in the speech situation, through the category of person.

e.g. What a nice dog! It seems so friendly!

In this example *it* refers anaphorically to a nice dog. It is the case of a simple reference, i.e. when we have a clear-cut referent (here, a nice dog). There is also an extended reference, i.e. when the referent points back to a whole situation, as in the following example:

e.g. Somebody was always calling her in the middle of the night and it frightened. (the fact that somebody was calling her in the middle of the night).

Demonstrative reference is reference by means of location, on a scale of proximity, while comparative reference is indirect reference by means of identity or similarity, but neither is expressed by it. (I went to Paris and I'll go there again.; What would you like? The same as John.) Some grammarians also take into account a fourth type of reference, the possessive reference, expressed by possessive pronouns. (Give her a sheet of paper. She lost hers.)

#### 3.1.1. Extended reference and text reference

The word *it* differs from all other personals in that it may refer not only to a particular person or object, some entity that is encoded linguistically as a 'participant' – a noun or a nominal expression – but also to any identifiable part of text. This actually involves two distinct phenomena, the extended reference and the text reference.

e.g. 'Read a book while you are listening to music. It may help'.

---

<sup>1</sup> **Deixis** involves the use of expressions to refer directly to the situation within which an utterance is taking place.



I thought a little but I had no reason to disbelieve it.

In this case the first *it* refers to read(-ing) while you are listening to music; the reference is still to a 'thing' but not in a narrow sense of a participant (person or object). It is a whole process or complex phenomenon which is in question. Only *it* has the property of extended reference. The second *it* refers not to a thing but to a fact: (that) read(-ing) while you are listening to music...may help. This is an instance of text reference.

### 3.1.2. Generalized exophoric reference

*It* occurs as a universal meteorological operator in a few expressions, such as: *it's snowing*, *it's hot today*, etc. All these are exophoric, but with a kind of institutionalized exophora; they make it possible to conform to the structural requirements of the clause, which demands a nominal in various places. For this reason they are often untranslatable, since other languages make different requirements.

### 3.1.3. Cataphoric personal reference

*It* is very frequently used in this way where the subject of the clause is a nominalization, as in: *It's true that she is a kind person*. This is the typical form, while the alternative, *That she is a kind person is true*, is possible but restricted.

#### Referring pronouns

Anaphoric and cataphoric expressions not only provide connections between sentences, but also enable us to avoid repetition; *it*, for example, replaces the possible repetition of English book in the following example:

A: The English book is among other books.

B: I don't see it (the English book).

### 3.2. Substitution

We reduce the length of sentences – reduction –by two processes. One is ellipsis (sometimes called omission), in which we leave out unnecessary items, and the other is substitution. In this process, we replace items which are too long or too well-known to be repeated. Substitute words of this kind are called *pro-forms*, the most common of which is the group of noun substitutes called pronouns.

The *do it* pro-form may be used both with activity verbs, and with momentary verbs:

e.g.

John went (activity verb) to Paris alone. I wonder why he did it

/so/that.

John kicked (momentary verb) the door several times. He always

does it/so/that.

*It* is used as pro-form for direct object clauses in direct or indirect speech when the reference is primarily to the actual words used:

e.g.

A: Who said that I was wrong?

B: I said it. (or that)

### 3.3. Ellipsis

There are cases of ellipsis – non-dependent on linguistic context, but dependent on the situational one. These forms of ellipsis are restricted to familiar style. The ellipsis may occur when only the subject is omitted: *Doesn't matter*; *Looks like rain*; *Sounds good for me*; *Works for me* etc., or when subject and operator are ellipted (in this case, the ellipted *it* is the anticipatory *it*): *Nice to see you*; *No wonder he won the contest*.

The pronoun *it* is generally omitted after *as* and *than* in comparative sentences where *it*-subject replaces a whole sentence:

e.g. He works more than ( it was )necessary.

Substitution and ellipsis make the message shorter by cutting out needless repetition. This helps us to concentrate on the new information and, therefore improves understanding.

In order to conclude, we resort to the opinion that this ‘taxonomic’ presentation of some of the complexities involved in the study of the functions of *it* in morphology, syntax and discourse will discourage anyone from accepting any simplistic view on this part of the English grammar.

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# The Adjective Complement

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**Résumé:** Cet article se propose de clarifier le statut du Complément de l'Adjectif en anglais en le comparant avec la catégorie de l'Objet Prépositionnel, à laquelle il ressemble. Après avoir défini le complément de l'adjectif et l'objet, nous essayerons de présenter quelques aspects particuliers concernant le Complément de l'Adjectif, en envisageant son comportement comme tête et adjoind. Nous essayerons aussi de suggérer la meilleure interprétation du complément du point de vue grammatical et didactique.

**Key words:** Adjective Complement, Prepositional Object, head, adjunct, omission test.

## 1. Objects vs. Complements

As in Romanian language, in English there are both principal parts of the sentence and secondary parts of the sentence.

Still, in English grammar among the secondary parts, besides the noun modifier (like in Romanian grammar) and adverbials, there are objects and complements, which are totally different (syntactically speaking).

Therefore, **a complement** is any word or phrase that completes the sense of a subject, an object or a verb. A complement is a noun phrase, an adjective phrase or a clause with nominal function. (Quirk, 1978) It follows the subject, the verb phrase and the object, but it does not become a subject if turned into passive.

**The object** is a noun phrase or clause with nominal function, formally follows the subject and the verb phrase and by passive transformation assumes the status of subject. (Quirk, 1978)

e.g. He told me **the truth** yesterday.

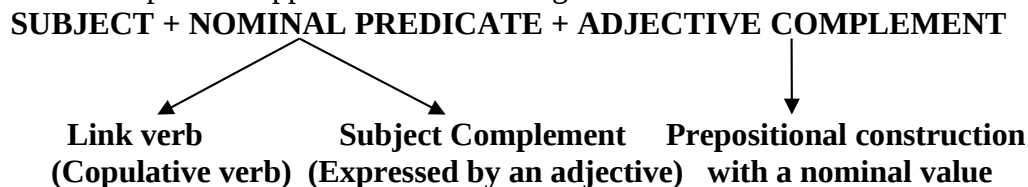
**The truth** was told yesterday.

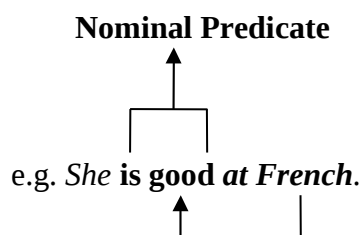
OBJECTS		COMPLEMENTS	
1.	DIRECT OBJECT (D.O.)	1.	OBJECT COMPLEMENT (OBJ.C.)
2.	INDIRECT OBJECT (I.O.)	2.	ADJECTIVE COMPLEMENT (ADJ.C.)
3.	PREPOSITIONAL OBJECT (PREP.O)	3.	SUBJECT COMPLEMENT (SBJ.C.)

## 1. The Adjective Complement – Defining Aspects

The Adjective Complement is the secondary part of the sentence that completes the meaning of an adjective which functions as a Subject Complement.

Besides nouns, pronouns, numerals etc., the Subject Complement (part of a Nominal Predicate) may be expressed by an adjective. In this case, the adjective has an incomplete semantic value. The Adjective Complement appears in the following construction:





Link verb + Subject Complement + Adjective Complement

Other examples:

*He is very fond of literature.*

*I'm afraid of dogs.*

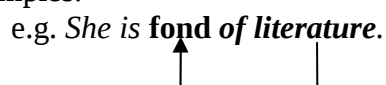
The Generative Transformational Grammars consider the **Adjective Complement as part of an Adjective Phrase**.

- Adjectives may be **pre-modified** by:
  1. Adverbs: *very*
  2. Nouns (forming expressions): *stone cold* etc.
- Adjectives may be **post-modified** by:
  1. Prepositional phrases functioning as adjective complements: *She is good at French.*
  2. The adverb **enough**: *good enough*
  3. Non-finite verbal phrase: *interested in learning*

As for the terminology, many of the Romanian grammarians included this part of the sentence in the category of **Prepositional Objects**, which is, so to say, an old fashioned perspective.

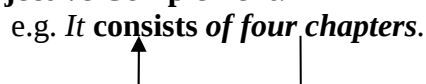
For example, Leon Levițchi considered it a Prepositional Object with Nominal Predicate, Georgiana Gălățeanu and Ecaterina Comișel included it in the large category of Prepositional Object and Alice Bădescu also included it in the large category of Prepositional Object, saying that *the Prepositional Object determines intransitive verbs, transitive verbs, reflexive verbs, nouns, adjectives and interjections*. (Bădescu, 1984: 557)

As a consequence, in my opinion, the distinction between a Prepositional Object and an Adjective Complement should be strongly recommended. In order to draw the distinction we take two examples:



Adjective + Adjective Complement

The preposition is required by the Subject Complement, which is an adjective, hence the term **Adjective Complement**.



Verb + Prepositional Object

The preposition is required by the verb.

Both constructions (*of literature*, *of four chapters*) are prepositional, but the preposition is required by two different parts of speech (an adjective and a verb).

- Other **adjectives followed by a preposition**:

cruel to	keen on	Delighted with
excited about	kind to	proud of
nervous with	upset about	scared of
pleased with	worried about	suspicious of
impressed with/by	satisfied with	similar to
fed up with	envious of	Different from
ashamed of	aware of	dependent on

- Some adjectives may be governed by two prepositions:

e.g. *You will be **responsible for their safety**.*

*Sunteți răspunzători **de** siguranța lor.*

*You will be **responsible to me**.*

*Sunteți răspunzători **în** fața mea.*

Please note the semantic difference between these two examples.

- Generally, the Adjective Complement is found in the **Accusative case**. Even if many adjectives select the preposition **of**, they are not in the Genitive (The Analytical Genitive). The following examples show the difference in meaning:

e.g. *I'm a great admirer **of this book**. [GENITIVE]*

*I'm aware **of your efforts**. [ACCUSATIVE]*

The difference in meaning reveals the morphological distinction between the two cases. In the first example, the structure **of this book** has the semantic feature [+ Possession] (the most important function of the Genitive is to show the possession) and determines the noun **admirer**. In the second example, the preposition is required by an adjective and does not show possession.

- On the other hand, the adjectives followed by the preposition **to** are, as the nouns followed by this preposition, in the **DATIVE CASE**:

e.g. *You shouldn't be cruel **to animals**.*

*You should be kind **to the little girl**.*

These adjectives, in the contexts have a **DATIVE VALENCE**. Still, **kind** may select another preposition – **of**, but the complement stays in the **Accusative**:

Compare:

*[It is] **kind of you to help me**. (Accusative)*

*You are **kind to me**. (Dative)*

- As for the function, in Romanian grammar the Adjective Complement discharges **three values**:
  1. **Complement de relație** (Relational Complement)
  2. **Complement prepozițional** (Prepositional Object)
  3. **Complement indirect** (Indirect Object)

The first two functions have an **ACCUSATIVE VALENCE** and, the last one, a **DATIVE VALENCE**:

e.g. *Ea este bună la matematică.*

Relational Complement showing the thing the adjective is limited / restricted to

*Este tipic Evului Mediu.*

Indirect Object satisfying the Dative valence of the adjective.

*Sunt conștient de eforturile tale.*

Prepositional Object satisfying the Accusative valence of the adjective

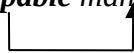
## 2. The Adjective: head („centru”) and adjunct (modifier) (determinant facultativ)

In a certain context, an adjective may be head or adjunct or even both. **According to the combinatory possibilities**, an adjective may discharge two values: **head** and **adjunct / modifier**, but the main value is that of an adjunct. The adjective functions as **ADJUNCT** in a Noun Phrase / Verb Phrase and it also functions as **HEAD** for an Adjective Phrase, having its own complements.

- The adjective functioning as **ADJUNCT**

**In a Noun Phrase**, the adjective may discharge the function of a **NOUN MODIFIER**:

e.g. *He was known as a **capable** manager.*



Here, if we “delete” the adjective, the sentence has a meaning, remains grammatically correct.

**The omission test** (= criteriul / testul înlocuirii cu zero) says that if we delete a certain part of speech from a sentence and the sentence remains grammatically correct, the omitted part of speech is **an adjunct**.

**In a Verb Phrase**, the adjective may discharge the function of **SUBJECT COMPLEMENT**: *The book seems **very interesting**.*, or that of **PREDICATIVE ADJUNCT** (PREDICATIV SUPLIMENTAR)

e.g. *The letter **came opened**.*



- The adjective functioning as **HEAD**

In this situation, the adjective has a double syntactical role, i.e. it is both **an adjunct** in a Noun Phrase or Verb Phrase and **a head** for one or more adjuncts (in our case, for one or more Adjective Complements).

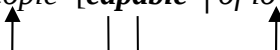
Compare:

*capable manager/ people*



Only **adjunct**

| *people*<sup>1</sup> [*capable* | *of love*<sup>2</sup>]



Adjunct for the noun *people* and head for the structure *of love*

Therefore, the structure **people capable of love** contains two phrases: a Noun Phrase and an Adjective Phrase. In the first part of the structure, we may omit the adjective, but in the second part, we are not allowed to omit it – *\*of love* (\*= grammatically incorrect structure/ sentence)

The structure **of love** may be transformed in a **non-finite subordinate clause**, which we call **NOMINAL ADJECTIVE COMPLEMENT CLAUSE**:

e.g. | *They are people capable*<sup>1</sup> | [**to love**.<sup>2</sup>]

The adjective **capable** becomes the head for a subordinate clause.

- **Grammatically** and from a **didactic perspective**, we analyse the structure **of love separately** and say that it functions as an Adjective Complement. But from a **semantic** and **logical perspective**, we can't separate the adjective from its complement. The adjective has a complete meaningful value together with the Adjective Complement.
- The Adjective Complement **of love** may be taken as **adjunct**, but deleting it, the meaning of the adjective is different, like in the following examples:

e.g. *She is good.* but *She is good at Grammar.*

**The semantic function** of the structure at **Grammar** is to reduce the inexplicit meaning of the given adjective.

### 3. Conclusions

In this study, my aim was to point out some semantic and syntactic facts that prove the existence of a syntactic function, the **Adjective Complement**, totally different from the **Prepositional Object**. Although a secondary part of the sentence, the Adjective Complement is subject to controversial approaches.

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**TEACHING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE/  
DIDACTIQUE DU FLE/ DaF DIDAKTIK**

# Redesigning TOEFL in/for the Twenty-First Century

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**Résumé:** Dans ce travail il s'agit de l'importance des moyens mass média dans l'enseignement d'une langue étrangère et plus particulièrement de l'anglais. Ainsi ces moyens mass média sont considérés comme un stimulent très important dans le processus de l'enseignement des langues modernes. L'avantage de l'emploi de ces moyens est celui qu'il s'adresse aussi bien aux élèves qui ont une mémoire visuelle qu'à ceux qui ont une mémoire auditive.

Dans ce travail on aborde aussi la question du „parlant natif idéal” et on propose le terme de „compétence communicative” pour représenter l'utilisation de la langue anglaise en contexte social.

Le développement de la technologie a créé des opportunités d'utilisation immédiate de tous les matériaux existants à un moment donné.

Pour conclure, l'utilisation des moyens mass média dans le processus éducationnel a une variété infinie de formes et elle peut jouer aussi des rôles multiples dans le processus d'enseignement. De cette manière, on facilite l'enseignement des langues étrangères d'une façon authentique en le transformant dans un processus méritoire.

**Key words:** media, language teaching, communicative skills, curriculum planning

## 1. Introduction

Prior to the twentieth century, language teaching methodology vacillated between two types of approaches: *getting learners to use* a language (i.e., to speak and understand it) versus *getting learners to analyze* a language (i.e., to learn its grammatical rules).

Both the classical Greek and medieval Latin periods were characterized by an emphasis on teaching people to use foreign languages. The classical languages, first Greek and then Latin, were used as lingua francas. Higher learning was conducted primarily through these languages all over Europe. They were used widely in philosophy, religion, politics, and business. Thus the educated elite became fluent speakers, readers, and writers of the appropriate classical language.

## 2. The Use of Media in Language Teaching

Media means many different things to different people. The most immediate connotation of the term “media”, at least as related to language teaching, is that of the “large M media” - of technological innovations in language teaching, of mechanical paraphernalia, and of glossy, polished audiovisual aids - with all the media anxiety that these can conjure up in teachers.

In Lynch's view

as tool for language learning/teaching, media have undoubtedly always facilitated the task of language learning for both instructed and non-instructed learners. Just as children learning a first or second language grasp the meaning of words from the objects that surround them, non-native speakers (both inside and outside the classroom) make use of the here and now or objects in the immediate environment to process incoming speech<sup>1</sup>.

The underlying approach assumed that language is an acoustic-visual whole that cannot be separated from its constituent elements. Similarly, in the Silent Way, the sound-color charts and rods form a central visual component of the method, allowing the teacher to present and elicit language while at the same time providing the students with tools for the creative construction of language.

In other methods, media are relegated more to design or procedure level. For example, much emphasis is placed on the need for real-life objects or texts to lend authenticity to the communicative situation, while magazine pictures are used as an elicitation device in the listening comprehension and early production stages, charts, maps, and props are used to motivate and enhance communicative interchange in later stages of acquisition. Finally, in experimental approaches to language learning, language teaching media are often taken out of the hands of the teacher and placed in the hands of the students, so that students involved in project work might be expected to produce a scripted slide show or a voice-over video documentary as their final class product.

Non-mechanical aids such as household objects, flashcards, and magazine pictures all the way up to sophisticated mechanical aids such as video cameras and computers - assisting teachers in their jobs, bringing the outside world into the classroom, and, in short, making the task of language learning a more meaningful and exciting one. Keeping this fact in mind, let us examine the types of instructional media used in the language classroom.

It is important to summarize the rationale for using media in the language classroom:

1. Given the role media play in the world *outside* the classroom, students expect to find media *inside* the classroom as well. Media thus serve as an important motivator in the language process.

2. Media materials can lend authenticity to the classroom situation, reinforcing for students the direct relation between the language classroom and the outside world. Since the learning styles of students differ, media provide us with a way of addressing the needs of both visual and auditory learners.

3. The role that input plays in language learning is virtually uncontested. By bringing media into the classroom, teachers can expose their students to multiple input sources. Thus, while decreasing the risk of the students' becoming dependent on their teacher's dialect or idiolect, they can also enrich their language learning experiences.

4. By scanning our memory banks for related knowledge, media can help students call up existing schemata and therefore maximize their use of prior background knowledge in the language learning process.

5. Finally, Mollica suggested that "media provide teachers with a means of presenting material in a time-efficient and compact manner, and of stimulating students' senses, thereby helping them to process information more readily"<sup>2</sup>.

### **3. The Development of Communicative Language Teaching**

The origins of communicative language teaching (CLT) can be traced to concurrent developments in both Europe and North America.

The term *communicative* attached itself to programs that used a functional -notional syllabus based on needs assessment, and the language for specific purpose (LSP) movement was launched.

Their systematic collection of exercise types for communicatively oriented English language teaching were used in teacher in-service courses and workshops to guide curriculum change.

Hymes had reacted to Chomsky's characterization of the linguistic competence of the "ideal native speaker" and proposed the term *communicative competence* to represent the use of language in social context, or the observance of sociolinguistic norms of appropriacy.

Viewed from a multicultural *intranational* as well as *international* perspective, diverse sociopolitical contexts mandate not only a diverse set of language learning goals, but also a diverse set of teaching strategies.

English often serves as a language of communication between speakers of different primary languages. Participants in multicultural communication are sensitive not only to the cultural meanings attached to the language itself, but also to social conventions concerning language use, such as turn-taking, appropriacy of content, nonverbal language, and tone of voice. These

conventions influence the way messages are interpreted. Thus, cultural *awareness* rather than cultural *knowledge* becomes increasingly important. What must be learned is a general empathy and openness towards other cultures. Together these features might be subsumed under the term cultural flexibility or *cultural awareness*.

The “ideal native speaker”, someone who knows a language perfectly and uses it appropriately in all social interactions, exists only in theory. Communicative competence is always *relative*. With practice and experience, we gain in grammatical discourse, and sociocultural competence. By definition, CLT focuses on the learner.

#### **4. Curriculum Planning**

In recent years, many innovations in curriculum planning have been proposed that offer both novice and veteran teachers a dizzying array of alternatives. Games, yoga, juggling, and jazz have been proposed as aids to language learning. Rapidly increasing opportunities for computer-mediated communication, both synchronous - online chat rooms - and asynchronous - the full spectrum of information and interactions available on the Internet as well as specialized bulletin boards and e-mail - hold promise for further integration of communicative opportunities for learners worldwide.

As the English language is increasingly used as language of global communication, so called “non-native” users of its many varieties overwhelmingly outnumber so-called “native speakers” . The decision of what is or is not one’s “native” language is arbitrary and irrelevant for ELT and is perhaps best left to the individual concerned.

Since a personality inevitably takes on a new dimension through expression in another language, that dimension needs to be discovered on its own terms. Learners should not only be given the opportunity to say what they want to say in English, they also should be encouraged to develop an English language personality to feel comfortable with. They may be more comfortable maintaining a degree of formality not found in the interpersonal transactions of native speakers. The diary entry of a Japanese or Romanian learner of English offers important insight on the matter of identity. Learners may discover a new freedom of self-expression in their new language.

If the world can be thought of as a stage, with actors and actresses who play their parts as best they can, theater may be seen as an opportunity to experiment with roles, to try things out. Fantasy and play acting are a natural and important part of childhood. Make-believe and the “you are, I’ll be” improvisations familiar to children the world over are important to self-discovery and growth. They allow young learners to experiment and try things out, such as hats and wigs, moods and postures, gestures and words. As occasions for language use, role-playing and the many related activities that constitute Theater Arts are likewise a natural component of language learning. Theater Arts can provide learners with the tools they need to *act*, that is, to interpret, express, and negotiate meaning in a new language. Activities can include both scripted and unscripted role play, simulations, and even pantomime. Ensemble-building activities familiar in theater training have been used very successfully in ELT to create an atmosphere of trust so necessary for the incorporation of Theater Arts activities. The role of the teacher in Theater Arts is that of a coach, providing support, strategies, and encouragement for learners as they explore new ways of being.

#### **5. What Communicative Language Teaching Is Not**

We might begin by asking ourselves whose language we teach and for what purpose. What is our own relationship with English?

Communicative language teaching is not exclusively concerned with face-to-face oral communication. The principles of CLT apply equally to reading and writing activities that involve readers and writers engaged in the interpretation, expression, and negotiation of meaning; the goals of CLT depend on learner needs in a given context. CLT does *not* require small-groups of pair work; **group tasks** have been found helpful in many contexts as a way of providing increased opportunity and motivation for communication. CLT does *not* exclude a focus on metalinguistic awareness or knowledge of rules of syntax, discourse, and social appropriateness.

The essence of CLT is the engagement of learners in communication in order to allow them to develop their communicative competence. Terms sometimes used to refer to features of CLT include *process-oriented*, *task-based*, and *inductive*, or *discovery-oriented*. In keeping with the notion of context of situation, CLT is properly seen as an approach or theory of intercultural communicative competence to be used in developing materials and methods appropriate to a given context of learning. Contexts change. A world of carriages and petticoats evolves into one of gnomes and cyberspace. No less than the means and norms of communications they are designed to reflect, communicative teaching methods designed to enhance the interpretation, expression, and negotiation of meaning will continue to be explored and adapted.

When a second language (SL) is taught, a number of major steps must be taken. **First:** elements of the language or its use, or skills such as learning strategies, must be brought into classroom and presented or highlighted. The teacher and, under certain learner-centered conditions, the students select elements of the SL in this phase. **Second:** that which has been selected and presented must be learned; the teacher has to arrange matters and events to bring this about. **Third:** the teacher must provide knowledge of results, that is, correction or feedback, to the students. SL teachers usually come out of a class asking themselves how the class went - in other words, engaging in a process of self-assessment.

For example, “an increasingly well-established line of work has stressed the role of attention and awareness in SL learning and the importance of drawing the learner’s attention to certain characteristics of the language which might otherwise be missed” (referred to as “input enhancement” in Rutherford’s book<sup>3</sup>). The teacher should usually present the text or illustrative material with an immediate focus on the target points.

Developments in technology have made the creation and almost immediate use of in-house materials increasingly possible. The advantages of personalization and localization of materials are clear. In addition, of course, the ease of access to all kinds of supplementary resource materials and stimulus materials via the Web has helped teachers supplement textbooks while at the same time raising students’ expectations.

## 6. Steps in the Information and Motivation Phase

**Warm-up activities:** mime, dance, song, jokes, play, etc.; the purpose is to get the students stimulated, relaxed, motivated, attentive, or otherwise engaged and ready for the classroom lesson; not necessarily related to the target language.

**Settings:** teacher directs attention to the upcoming topic by questioning, miming, or picture presentation, or possibly a tape recording.

**Brainstorming:** free, undirected contributions by the students and teacher on a given topic to generate multiple associations without linking them.

**Story telling:** oral presentation by the teacher of a story or an event as lengthy practice, although not necessarily lesson-based; it implies the use of extended discourse; it usually aims at maintaining attention or motivation and is often entertaining.

**Conversation** and other socially oriented interaction/speech by teacher, students, or even visitors on general real-life topics; typically authentic and genuine.

**Information transfer:** students extract information from a text (oral or written) which they apply to another mode (e.g., visual → written; oral → written, etc.); it implies some transformation of the information by filling out diagrams, graphs, answering questions, etc., while listening or reading; distinguished from *identification* in that students are expected to reinterpret the information.

**Simulation:** activity that involves complex interaction between groups and individuals based on simulation of real-life actions and experiences.

## 7. Class Organization

1. The dominant view of second language classroom processes today favors student-centered learning instead of the traditional teacher-dominated classroom.

2. Learner-centered instruction has the benefits of greater individualization of learning objectives, increased student opportunities to perform using the target language, and increased personal sense of relevance and achievement, thus relieving the teacher of the need to constantly supervise all students.

Consequently, group work has been shown to result in many advantages for SL learners. As Pica underlined in his research “learners speak more frequently and with longer stretches of speech”<sup>4</sup>.

Teaching English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is a movement based on the proposition that *all* language teaching should be tailored to the specific learning and language use needs of identified groups of students – and also sensitive to the sociocultural contexts in which these students will be using English. An increasing number of ESP practitioners live and work in English-speaking countries, teaching in programs offering vocational ESL (VESL) or English for Occupational Purposes (EOP) programs for new emigrants and refugee populations or in contexts emphasizing academic purposes (EAP) or business language (EBP). Therefore, the ESP movement can be defined in several ways.

An ESP definition needs to distinguish between four absolute and two variable characteristics:

Absolute characteristics: ESP consists of a language teaching which is

- designed to meet the specific needs of learner
- related to content
- centered on the language appropriate to these activities in syntax, lexis, discourse, semantics, and discourse analysis
- in contrast to “General English”.

**Variable characteristics: ESP may be, but is *not* necessarily**

- restricted to the language skills to be learned (e.g. reading only)
- taught according to any preordained methodology

## **8. Classroom Media: An Overview**

Today, needless to say, that range of responses would be even larger, as the ever-expanding horizons of technology present us with exciting new advances such as computer-assisted instruction, satellite transmission, and interactive video.

As Penfield rightfully notes, “too often [media] are neglected because teachers are not always certain how to adapt these rich and complex learning materials to students’ needs and language competencies”<sup>5</sup>. Clearly, guidelines for use are in order.

In fact, guidelines for the selection, adaptation, development, and implementation of media-based materials do not differ radically from the kinds of guidelines regarding lesson planning and textbook evaluation. Thus, such issues as the appropriateness of the materials for the target audience, their technical and pedagogical quality, their teaching objective(s), and pre-/post-procedures to be used. All play as important a role in the selection and use of *audiovisual* media in the classroom as they do in those of conventional *print* media. Further, and this point cannot be stressed enough, media-based materials should not be viewed simply as irrelevant to the lesson, or as contingency plans. Rather, they should be planned as carefully as the lesson itself and should form a central (if not *the* central) component of the lesson - one that is interwoven with the other lesson components, such as the reading text, the writing assignment, or the speaking task.

## **9. Conclusion**

Instructional media come in an almost infinite variety of forms and can play equally varied roles. We find the following factors essential for incorporating instructional media into our language teaching goals:

- Type of skill/concept to be presented.

➤ Student preference: the age, interests, experiences, and learning styles of the students concerned.

➤ Teacher preference: facility with equipment, familiarity/adroitness with the given medium, teaching style.

➤ Availability of software and hardware.

➤ Physical circumstances of the classroom/lab.

Above all, by using media we involve students more integrally in the learning process and we facilitate language learning by making it a more authentic, meaningful process.

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## Teaching Advanced English through Image and Word

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***Résumé:** Le mot et l'image constituent une entité. Le mot est l'expression d'une image et l'image est "le miroir" d'un mot. En même temps, le mot peut être le symbole de la littérature et l'image peut suggérer l'idée des moyens visuels. On peut enseigner l'anglais avancé à l'aide de la littérature et de la technologie qui peut consister en DVDs, vidéo projecteur, ordinateur, etc., vu que l'on vit dans "l'ère de l'image" et de la technique. Ces moyens peuvent rendre une leçon de littérature beaucoup plus intéressante et attractive pour les élèves de niveau avancé et non seulement.*

Word and image are two elements that constitute an entity. The word is an "image carrier", the image is a "word construct". A word names an image and an image is reflected by a word. If a word does not define an image, that word is meaningless. If an image cannot be translated into words, that image is lifeless.

Meanings begin in people. But sometimes meanings do not come across clearly, and we hear speakers protest: "But that's not what I meant". In an attempt to convey an intended meaning, speakers choose words and arrange them into sentences or partial sentences, groups of sentences, and larger pieces of monologue or dialogue discourse. Both the words chosen, and their intrasentential and intersentential arrangements map affect (i.e. feelings) onto the linguistic information.

Literature is a specialized form of language, as language is of communication. The reason for producing the literary structure is apparently that the inward meaning, the self contained verbal pattern, is the field of the responses connected with pleasure, beauty and interest. In literature, what entertains is prior to what instructs or the reality principle is subordinate to the pleasure principle.

A painting may be studied as the track of an intricate dance of the eye. Works of literature also move in time like music and spread out in images like painting. For instance, we listen to a poem as it moves from beginning to end, but as soon as the whole of it is in our minds at once we "see" what it means; we have a vision of meaning whenever any simultaneous apprehension is possible. Literary texts represent valuable authentic material that provides for more subtle and meaningful learning. They can generate genuine discussions in the classroom. The ambiguity of a text furnishes a stimulus for expressing different opinions.

Reading, talking and writing about literature imply both affective and cognitive processes. Literature appeals to personal experience and triggers personal response. It also implies analysis of words, structures discourse, patterns, content and interpretation.

Learners learn how literary effects are created through language. Literature provides cultural knowledge. It enhances the learners' understanding of the cultural values of the English – speaking peoples.

Literature is an art form with two centres, one being the author, who, with his linguistic competence and his subtle, creative power of words, sparks the imagination and the creative power of the other – the reader. The reader – if competent – brings with him the ability to understand the language, themes, etc. – the ability to "see" and interpret the descriptions, the images.

However, some readers suffer from a lack of imagination – or, rather, their imagination, unstimulated, remains idle in the far corners of their minds, so that they are not capable of projecting the scene and characters on their mental screens. A filmed version of a novel or story provides such a stimulus and helps the reader – the student – to imagine, "to see".

Using video tapes or DVDs for teaching purposes means bringing authenticity, reality, variety and flexibility into the classroom. This not only enhances language - skill development but

incorporates the study of culture as well. Although many teachers may use videos/DVDs solely for viewing comprehension – that is, the process of comprehending visual and verbal messages – many more may focus on their use as springboards for other classroom activities, primarily for speaking, listening and writing skills development. As many teachers can attest, learners seem to become more motivated about language learning when video is involved, especially authentic video. Feature films attract learners' attention with dazzling Hollywood effects, and because they are not designed for instructional purposes, they reflect authentic use of the target language.

In order to ensure reasonable success with a lesson based on video, it is essential to bear the following in mind:

1. we should carefully plan level and language objectives – what do we expect the class to learn, understand and achieve?
2. the video sequences should be stimulating enough to motivate students to respond and they should be combined with useful language practice;
3. the subject matter and the information given should not be too complex or too extensive, but must be straight-forward and easy to understand;
4. the video sequence should be no longer than approximately 15-20 minutes in all, to maintain the students' full concentration;
5. it must be possible to divide the whole sequence into smaller portions of three or four minutes each for more intensive use.

### **Pre-viewing activities**

Their primary purpose is to prepare students for the actual viewing of the fragment.

Existing knowledge on the subject is elicited through a discussion or through questions:

- what are the protagonists in the fragment?
- what is their attitude to each other?
- is there an evaluation/change in their attitude during the scene? etc
- after introducing students to the topic of the video, they can fill in a grid similar to the one below:

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What I know about the characters	What I am unsure of about the characters	What I hope to learn about the characters
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### **Viewing activities**

This time, portions of the film are viewed intensively:

- to exploit the language further for its vocabulary, structures functions, pronunciation and intonation
- to focus attention on register and non-verbal features
- to reveal other features of the characters
- to promote practice and communication among learners
- to develop a general awareness of this visual medium

### **Post-viewing activities**

These activities stimulate both written and oral use of the target language, utilizing information and/or insights from the video. Because the entire class now has a shared experience, designing post-viewing activities that extract main ideas, concepts and/or issues from the video is effective. These activities can easily lend themselves to writing and/or speaking practice. Ideally the two skills can be linked, allowing the students to use the information from a speaking activity, for example, in a writing assignment:

- students can interview classmates to find out reactions to the film or to explore issues raised in the video. They can report findings orally (either to the entire class or to a small group) and/or in a written essay.
- students can then summarize main issues raised in the film in written and/or spoken form.
- similarly, students can examine problems central to the theme of the video; working together, they can share insights, propose solutions and later report them in spoken and/or written form.
- students can compare what they knew about the video topic before the viewing with what they learned as a result of the viewing.

Alan (1985/91) says that "there is no one right way to use video in the classroom. There are as many right ways as there are effective uses of video to assist the learning of the language".

Other examples:

- each student has a "film watching card" (Alexandrescu, 1995) as follows: title; characters; background; plot; message; new words
- in order to stimulate learners to produce the language themselves "freeze frame" is being exploited to the maximum
- "freeze frame" has also a reassuring role in keeping the pace of the story and letting the teacher talk with the classroom
- the learners are instructed to create their own questions varying from the simple "wh" type to more creative ones like "How do you imagine...?" "Can you describe... ?" "What would you do if you were?" Then, learners are required to present their own "theory" on what they have seen.
- students could present their own philosophy on the subject by using both the newly acquired linguistic items and their own linguistic skills

It gives them the freedom of choosing what they find more interesting to mention in their own "subjective reports" on the matter. Here is a simple checking scheme (Alexandrescu, 1995):

- group conversation
- question challenge (general and specific chain questions with the whole class)
- cross – questioning (the whole class targets three or four selected students with "more difficult questions")
- the film's message

Most of the messages are synthesized in one or two words. The teacher lists the words on the blackboard: (ex. friendship; nature; love; hatred; peace etc).

Breaking with old routines and making use for video viewing is quite a "lucky break " for the Romanian learners. It strengthens the grammar basis through exposure to viable language structures and it builds up confidence by opening the students to a new world.

Whatever the approach, language teachers seem to agree that media can and do enhance language teaching, and thus in the daily practice of language teaching we find the entire range of media – from nonmechanical aids such as household objects, flashcards and magazine pictures all the way up to sophisticated mechanical aids such as video cameras and computers assisting teachers in their jobs, bringing the outside world into the classroom and, in short, making the task of language learning a more meaningful and exciting one.

Audiovisual materials provide students with content, meaning and guidance. They thus create a contextualized situation within which language items are presented and practiced. Since the learning styles of students differ, media provide us with a way of addressing the needs of both visual and auditory learners.

Because students in today's language classes tend to surround themselves with technology in their daily lives, they may grow to expect it in the language classroom as well. Items that belong in this category typically include: record player, audiotape player/recorder, CD player/recorder

videoplayer/recorder, telephone, overhead projector, filmstrip/film projector, slide projector, computer, language lab, computer lab, multimedia lab, self-access center.

Each form of media presents unique advantages: the economy of time that the pre-prepared overhead transparencies or a Power Point presentation can provide the teacher, or the richness of authentic input that film or the Internet can offer. Each medium leaves its own imprint on the teaching/learning process, and it is up to the teacher to decide which one to select in order to teach a given point.

In a final discussion, the teacher should point out that the study of literature in combination with video/DVD offers excellent opportunities for students to discover otherwise minute details of language and narration. Thus, using such a type of lesson means providing an extradimension in the study of literature.

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## Equipping the Classroom in Teaching English as a Foreign Language with Senior Grades: Using the Multimedia Laboratory

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**Résumé:** *Cet article est basé sur mon travail de recherche pour l'obtention du premier degré, ayant le même titre. Mon travail est structuré en quatre chapitres, précédés par une motivation du choix du sujet(l'argument) et finit par une brève conclusion. Le premier chapitre porte sur deux problèmes fondamentaux de l'enseignement de l'anglais. Le premier concerne l'enseignement d'une langue étrangère aux enfants et aux adolescents, insistant sur les derniers dont l'âge rend plus difficile et aide à la fois le processus éducatif. Le deuxième problème posé c'est l'utilisation des techniques modernes dans l'enseignement d'une langue étrangère et l'on insiste sur leur emploi par rapport aux quatre „skills” (abilités): „listening, reading, speaking and writing”. Le deuxième chapitre contient des conseils pratiques pour l'utilisation de l'équipement traditionnel d'enseignement. Le troisième chapitre décrit les appareils du XXIème siècle, utilisés dans l'enseignement d'une langue étrangère, par exemple: la chaîne hi-fi, le lecteur de CD, le lecteur MP3, la vidéo, le lecteur de DVD, le projecteur digital et la télé. L'ordinateur et l'usage de l'Internet sont traités séparément. Le dernier chapitre traite des problèmes liés à l'emploi correcte du laboratoire multimédia, des méthodes modernes avec ou sans l'aide du laboratoire dans l'enseignement de l'anglais. A la fin, j'ai présenté des photos prises dans des labos multimédia de Roumanie et à l'étranger. J'ai présenté aussi, en détail, quelques leçons (qui se sont déroulés dans le lycée où je travaille) basées sur l'utilisation de la technique moderne dans l'enseignement d'une langue étrangère. Un DVD avec des activités de ce type est annexé à mon travail. Pour conclure, les appareils multimédia peuvent améliorer la qualité de l'acte éducatif mais, ils ne pourront jamais remplacer le professeur.*

**Key words:** *multimedia; modern; practical; organised*

The title and the topic of the present paper were suggested by my coordinating teacher, Professor Mariana Morgovan, and open-heartedly embraced by myself. Thinking about the topic of an educational degree paper, it is hard for me to imagine that a different topic would suit me better.

I organised my paper under four chapters, starting with an academic part and continuing with practical examples of activities and exercises performed with the help of either multimedia technology or multimedia laboratory. Obviously, a motivation introduced the paper proper and a concluding chapter followed it.

I thought it suitable to start with a suggestive motto, belonging to Julius A. Stratton: *Modern man is the child of technology, which is influencing and shaping the progress of all his affairs. But though we be the children of technology, we must be its masters and not its slaves.* This is the sentence I started from, being convinced that modern technology can shape our lives in a way we are not prepared to handle. Its influence can have negative and, in some cases, disastrous consequences if our personality is overwhelmed by all the facilities technology offers. This is why I so much agree with the quotation above: we must be its masters and not its slaves. We must influence and shape technology so as it could be helpful for us and not the other way round.

Then I explained the way of thinking that led me to writing such a paper. The reason why I chose this topic is, by and large, a simple one. I have always liked electrical devices, the way they work, how you can “get along” with them and the way they “listen” to you. I am not the practical type, I do not like “getting my hands dirty”, but I like to think that I understand them.

Moreover, this electronic equipment is part of my financial life and makes a living for me. My second job implies using a photo and filming camera, but also a high-technology sound system. So, knitting my two basic professions – teaching and filming/photographing – would have just been

a question of time. I also consider that combining my knowledge in both the fields I mentioned above can improve my teaching experience, allowing me to use more effectively the multimedia technology.

The first chapter is called *TEOFL with Junior and Senior Students; Virtues of Modern Techniques and Procedures with Senior Students*, and, as probably suggested in the title, deals with two important problems when it comes to language teaching. The first subchapter is *Teaching English to Junior and Senior Students*. Although I do not have the necessary experience to talk about teaching junior students, as I have never taught small children, I can imagine what the problems encountered could be. Talking to elementary school teachers and my parent experience allowed me to tackle the problem in just a couple of pages. Characteristics of junior students were emphasized and developed. Children need the individual attention and encouragement of the teacher, getting involved more personally in the teaching experience.

Teaching small kids can be a demanding task, and not all the teachers can do that. Some educators admit so and frankly agree that they would not have the necessary patience to teach them. In a way, it means being able to lower your expectations and empathise with your students. If you do not understand them, you will never be able to establish a meaningful relationship with them.

On the other hand, teenagers, especially boys, are attracted to the newest gadgets on the market, so there is a chance that they would be more motivated to learn. Teaching such students can be a real way of life, a life within your life. They can be contaminating if we think about their vitality, energy, sense of humour, and attitude. Living your class with them might be also challenging, but, beware!, in no time it can become a nightmare. There are problems that need to be avoided if you want to have a good relationship with them. Teaching senior students is unique, as they are neither children nor adults. Better still, both children and adults.

Nobody can say that teaching adolescents is an easy task. On the contrary, it is a tremendously difficult endeavour. A deeper look into such a problematic time of anybody's life was considered necessary at that point. So I attempted to answer the question, "Why is adolescence a difficult period of life?" The answers I found were structured under seven paragraphs, enumerating possible issues of teenagers' lives, such as generation gap; parents leaving them and looking for a better paid job abroad (thus an essential part of students' education being skipped); financial difficulties; sexual revolution; personalities influenced by the society they live in and by television channels and programmes; even appearance can be a reason why students can become stressed.

Populated with such personalities, a teenager class has some particular characteristics. I tried to approach them in a subchapter of the first chapter. Afterwards, taking into consideration these characteristics, I attempted to find reasonable answers to the question, "How should we deal with teenager classes?" With the help of some suggestions advanced by methodologists and with my teaching experience leading me, I mentioned some hints for teaching teenager classes.

Finally, the first half of this chapter ends with a trip into various personality types, which should explain why a teenager class can be so demanding. The four important types which were developed here were Extroverted versus Introverted, Intuitive-Random versus Sensing-Sequential, Thinking versus feeling and Closure-oriented/Judging versus Open/Perceiving.

In the second part of the first chapter, *Virtues of Modern Techniques and Procedures*, I started with a short history of old techniques, saying that, although centred towards aspects which were considered relevant by their initiators, these old techniques helped us to consider teaching methods more attentively and to take whatever was good from those old methods. A brief look into what is called modern techniques followed, insisting that modern teaching implies communication. Taking into account the fact that nowadays, the four skills – speaking, reading, listening and writing - are the basis of what is called modern approach; I tried to find modern procedures in all the four skills, giving examples of exercises that are done in the class in our time.

Having concluded the first chapter, the second one, *Traditional Classroom Equipment*, became more classroom oriented, describing the equipment that teachers of modern languages have been using for some time in their teaching experience. For a start, a look into some accepted definitions of *multimedia* was considered relevant. Then, a very personal history of audio and video

devices found its place within the chapter, beginning with the pioneers of audio sound and continuing up to the extremely modern DVD player.

Coming closer to the place where the teaching experience takes place, the classroom, I emphasized the importance of this place, its role of accommodating the students during the morning being supplemented by the atmosphere it can create. Some of the most important pieces of equipment used by the teacher in the classroom were described next, beginning with the textbook and going on with posters and pictures, the blackboard, the flipchart, realia, and the overhead projector. The advantages and disadvantages of these devices were brought into discussion, and also possible uses and examples of activities.

The third chapter is called *Modern Classroom Equipment* and comes as a modern continuation of the second chapter. Before taking into consideration the devices which can be considered modern in education, a concise reference to audio devices in general was thought significant.

Out of the most popular devices still helping the teacher, the cassette player can be considered to be the oldest audio equipment to be used in the classroom. It is the means through which listening could be performed in a class. It is a device that broadcasts the sound recorded onto a cassette. They are advantageous as many of them are small portable devices that can be carried to the classroom without difficulty. In fact, it implies taking a native speaker with you to the class, and this is the main and most important advantage. Not only does the cassette player reproduce recording coming with the textbook, but it can also help the educator in other ways.

Music can be used regularly in your teaching in various ways. It can be used as background for any activity, having the purpose to relax the students, and get them into the right mood for the lesson. Another possible use is for students to record their own voices on the tape. This way they can realise the mistakes they make and can find ways to correct them. An advanced option is to record a lesson or part of it, for example a mock radio show with students being the characters in the show, or a questionnaire with answers from common people.

A more technologically advanced brother of the cassette player is the CD player, which shares the same characteristics with the cassette player, but comes with a few more advantages. It is the same versatile player, but the signal comes from a CD this time, which implies a better quality of the sound. Along with this, the CD player offers a solution for finding the beginning of a listening exercise. There is no need for the teacher to rewind the antiquated tape, but only play the track again. The MP3 player comes as a follower of these players, adding among qualities the fact that the storage capacity is much higher.

Special attention was given to video equipment, as these pieces of equipment have everything that an audio system has to offer, and more. Not only will students be able to experience the meaningful listening exercises, but they will also be able to view the characters as they speak. A lot more exercises can be imagined now. In a way, it is a combination of listening and watching, which stimulates both the auditory learners and the visual ones.

When teaching with video, any teacher should take into consideration some principles of using video, as keeping it short, exploiting the material, exceptional preparation before the lesson, and so on. As to using video during the class, I made up a list of possible activities which can be done in the classroom, from pre-viewing activities to viewing activities, and, obviously, after-viewing procedures.

Video in teaching is a concept which has to be 'thankful' to the invention of the video cassette recorder, the bulky and somewhat antiquated device which used to be found (still is!) in our homes. Although slow and linear, the VCR is a term which is still associated nowadays with video in education. Its follower, the DVD player, corrects the drawbacks of the VCR and immensely adds to the quality of image.

The digital projector and the TV set are treated together as they have no other role than that of showing the images transmitted by another device. They are essential tools in a multimedia laboratory.

When it comes to creativity, the filming camera and the digital photo camera can be taken into account. The camera can be a very useful piece of equipment when producing learning material. A teacher can record entire lessons with the help of a camera. The teacher can do this himself or, better, can ask somebody else to record the lessons. These recordings might be viewed later and a correction work done. It is of real help to the teacher, as he can assess the quality of his teaching, any possible mistakes that he or she has done, if the objectives have been achieved and so on. The camera is also useful to students as they can hear their pronunciation, correct the mistakes they have made and compare their performance with other students'.

A digital camera can be also a great material producer. Whenever you need some pictures or images to base your lesson on, a camera may be of help. A conversation, activity, discussion starts many times with a picture to be shown to the students, who then comment on it. There are cases when the teacher cannot find the image he wants so easily, so, if possible, he just takes the camera and shoots an image he wants to use during the lesson. This image has the advantage that it is realistic, as many times we use images downloaded from the internet which lack this essential quality.

The third chapter ends with *Teaching in the Future or the Future of Teaching*, a subchapter which tackles, as suggested, the means of teaching in the years to come, and the way teachers can take advantage of the discoveries in technology. The computer is thought to be common place in the classroom of the future, as is the internet connection. Before anything, the internet puts the learner in the centre of the learning process. Its familiarity to the students and the fact that they do the work and not somebody else, that they have found the information they needed, cannot be equaled by anything. It is also worth remembering that when you find a thing by yourself, it is more likely for you to remember it in the future than when somebody else tells you about it.

The internet can be of great help outside and inside the classroom. If students can be motivated in any way to use the internet in a way that helps their attempt of learning a language, the teacher has surely done a grand thing. In the case of the internet, the advantages outweigh the disadvantages. Searching for information has never been easier, and the computers and the internet are always there for you, helping you in your educational process, shaping your abilities and knowledge as a teacher. Reading between the lines when it is the case and skipping irrelevant information offered to you are necessary skills when using the internet.

Finally, the interactive whiteboard can be considered to be the electronic successor of the antiquated blackboard. It is in fact a combination of blackboard, computer and digital projector. It can project images from a computer and it has the almost unbelievable advantage that the teacher can write on the page shown, using only a pen or his fingers. In fact, the finger may be thought as the mouse of the computer.

As a conclusion of the third chapter, all the devices presented here might make the job of the teacher easier, but they should be used after deep and realistic thinking. These multimedia machines can be made to work for the teacher but can never replace the educator, and they should not be used just for the sake of including multimedia in your teaching process.

The fourth chapter, simply named *The Multimedia Laboratory*, deals with some aspects concerning the lab: laboratory between use and misuse; modern methods with and without laboratory; identifying the advantages of the multimedia laboratory in teaching English.

Not being given any instructions on how to use it, many times the use of the multimedia lab becomes ... misuse. Not everybody knows how to use it and what the purpose or abilities of each device were. There is no teacher born with the ability to utilize technology professionally; we all have to learn how to use it.

There is no general regulation on what devices a multimedia lab should have, but any teacher would be happy if they found a TV screen, at least a computer with an internet connection, a VCR and/or a DVD player or writer, a digital projector or an OHP and a screen on which the image can be shown, a printer and maybe a video or digital camera. A blackboard or a flipchart can be considered as necessary as a matter of course.



The multimedia lab can only add to the quality of the educational act, and is by no means a mark of necessary improvement. Education has always existed, with or without labs, and always will. Teachers have found ways to improve the effectiveness of their instructional performance, because education can be assessed through the effectiveness of the teacher. If the student can speak the foreign language that they have been taught, it means that the teacher has done their job.

When it comes to the real use of technology in the classroom, many teachers used to believe that using new technology was just a trend, and it would disappear in time. The way one teaches would remain the same as it has been for ages. Now we can say that this attitude and way of thinking are obsolete, as, without new technology, one cannot conceive the teaching experience.

The gist of the chapter consists of actual examples of activities to be employed in the classroom. There is no need to say that all the activities presented here either take place in the multimedia laboratory or make use of new technology. The exercises described can be 'seen' better with the help of the pictures taken during these lessons. Also, a DVD with these activities is attached to the back cover of the paper.

The advantages of these activities are mentioned at the end of the chapter. The examples I gave come to prove that school can be fun too, especially when you get involved in doing things which are pleasant for you. Sometimes, getting closer to the student and giving them freedom to use their imagination and knowledge is a way to make them interested in the so strict, old-fashioned and unattractive school, as they saw it.

**The appendices**, with lesson plans and pictures of multimedia laboratories around the country and not only, and **works cited** add the necessary information to the present paper.

To refer to the subject of my work, the multimedia laboratory, I can say that it should not be considered a method of teaching, or a tool that will inevitably lead to 'quality teaching'. It is a tool, indeed, but one which only adds to the quality I mentioned above, and only if used properly. As I said in the fourth chapter, one can be easily misled by the endless possibilities it offers, and so the good use of the lab can turn instantly into misuse. The devices we talked about should be included in the teaching experience with a certain reason, which is to add to its quality. One mistake which should be avoided is to use the equipment just for the sake of it; to prove that you, as a teacher, **can** and **do** use such devices. It is a wrong way to start using them. Overuse is also to be kept away from.

Multimedia equipment can never replace the teacher. It is there just to improve the teaching act, not to replace the educator. In the end, it is just ... equipment. The humanity and the feelings of the man in front of the children will never waste away.

In the motivation of this paper I wrote that I hoped my enthusiasm would not have disappeared before reaching the conclusions of the work. I had to admit my hopes proved right. Writing the paper gradually became a challenge, my initial interest grew day by day, and the writing itself came more easily. It was a satisfactory and rewarding experience.

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## How Smart Can a “Smart Board” Be in the Teaching of Reading (the Campus Novels)?

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**Riassunto:** *Prima di rispondere a questa domanda, intendo soffermarmi un attimo sui termini “Lavagna interattiva Smart Board” e “Campus novels”. Una “Lavagna Smart Board” è una lavagna interattiva, utilizzata dalle persone di tutto il mondo, inserendo qui gli astronauti, i CEO e i professori, dato che essa aiuta ad energizzare le presentazioni e motivare i lettori. È considerata essere la lavagna interattiva numero uno nel mondo perché unisce la semplicità di una lavagna al potere di un computer. Lo schermo touch sensitive è connesso al tuo computer per proiettare la immagine tratta da esso. Uno può controllare le applicazioni del computer direttamente dallo schermo, scrivere appunti con inchiostro digitale a salvare i propri documenti per utilizzarli in seguito. In più, questa lavagna è molto facile da usare. Se uno sa utilizzare il computer, è capace anche di utilizzare la Lavagna Smart Board. I cosiddetti Campus novels o romanzi sul mondo accademico sono quei romanzi ambientati in un campus dell’università. Il primo romanzo di questo genere è considerato da molti The Groves of Academe di Mary McCarthy, pubblicato nel 1952, mentre altri letterati prendono The Masters di C.P. Snow per primo. Il termine “campus” è uno di origine americana, e fa riferimento a tutto lo spazio destinato all’università, al mondo accademico. Alcuni romanzi famosi sul mondo dell’università sono satirici o divertenti, come per esempio la trilogia di David Lodge o Lucky Jim di Kingsley Amis, mentre altri trattano delle tematiche serie, storie terribili e tristi, come The Masters di C.P. Snow, Disgrace di J.M. Coetzee e The Human Stain di Phillip Roth. I cosiddetti campus novels esplorano il mondo dell’università, mettendo in rilievo delle pretese intellettuali ma allo stesso tempo anche la debolezza dell’individuo, descrivendo alcune volte la reazione di una prospettiva socio-culturale fissa (lo staff accademico) alle nuove attitudini sociali inserite dagli studenti. Dopo aver spiegato i nuovi termini, ho cercato di rispondere alla domanda che dà il titolo a questo brano. Sono arrivata alla conclusione che la Lavagna Smart Board può essere tanto intelligente da insegnare quasi tutto. Sono riuscita ad insegnare la lettura, specialmente i cosiddetti Campus novels. Prima di passare alla lezione propriamente detta, ho cercato di capire quello che pensano gli allievi su questo tema, per cui ho realizzato un questionario che consisteva in tre semplici domande:*

1. *Di cosa credi di aver bisogno per migliorare la tua capacità di leggere in Inglese?*
2. *Da che genere di testi saresti interessato?*
3. *Saresti interessato a leggere i campus novels?*

*Le risposte degli allievi sottolineano la loro consapevolezza di dover leggere di più, di migliorare le loro abilità linguistiche, e allo stesso tempo la loro volontà di leggere testi con una tematica diversa. Ritornando alla domanda su quanto possa essere intelligente una lavagna Smart Board, la risposta giusta sarebbe “molto intelligente” o “il mezzo di insegnamento più intelligente che si può utilizzare in classe.”*

Before answering this question let me tackle the terms: “Smart board” and “Campus novels”. A “Smart board” is an interactive whiteboard, used by people worldwide, including astronauts, CEOs and teachers, as it helps energize presentations and motivate learners. It is considered to be the world’s leading interactive whiteboard because it combines the simplicity of a board with the power of a computer. The touch-sensitive display connects to your computer and digital projection to show your computer image. You can control computer applications directly from the display, write notes in digital ink and save your work to share later. And what’s more it is very easy to use. If you can use a computer, you can use a Smart board.

Campus novels or academic novels are those novels whose main action is set in and around the campus of a university. The first campus novel is considered by some researchers to be *The Groves of Academe* by Mary McCarthy, published in 1952, while others take *The Masters* by C.P. Snow to be the first. As to the origin of the first campus novels this caused again a debate: was the first campus novel British or American? If we consider the first campus novel to be Mary McCarthy's *The Groves of Academe*, then the campus novel began in America with it and with Randall Jarrell's reply to it: *Pictures from an Institution*, 1954 and Nabokov's *Invitation to a Beheading*, (1955). David Lodge claims Kingsley Amis's *Lucky Jim*, 1954 to be the first British campus novel and a template.

"Campus" is an American word meaning college grounds and buildings, or college or self contained division of a university; the academic world.

Some famous campus novels are satirical or amusing, like David Lodge's trilogy or Kingsley Amis's *Lucky Jim*, others are quite serious, treating sad and terrible themes like C.P. Snow's *The Masters*, J.M. Coetzee's *Disgrace* and Phillip Roth's *The Human Stain*.

Those campus novels that focus on students rather than faculty are sometimes considered to belong to a different genre that is called "varsity novels".

Campus novels exploit the world of the university setting, often counterpoint intellectual pretensions and human weakness, sometimes describe the reaction of a fixed socio-cultural perspective (the academic staff) to the new social attitude (students' intake).

The appeal of the campus novels have not changed, a proof being the success of David Lodge's trilogy and the translations of it into Romanian. It is a finite, enclosed space, like a boarding school where there are clear power relationships: teacher/student; tenured professor/scrabbling lecturer- and thus lots of scope for illicit affairs. Some compare the setting of a campus novel to Agatha Christie's country- houses (a subgenre is "the campus murder mystery").

Now that we referred to the terms used in the question let me try and answer it. A Smart board can be very smart in teaching almost everything. I successfully resorted to it in teaching reading and mainly Campus novels.

Before teaching proper reading, I tried to find out what pupils thought about this, so I conceived a questionnaire.

I applied it to four classes of students, of different levels, i.e.: the 7th grade, 9th grade, 10th grade and 12th grade. The questionnaire consisted of three simple questions:

1."What do you think you need to improve your reading skills in English?"

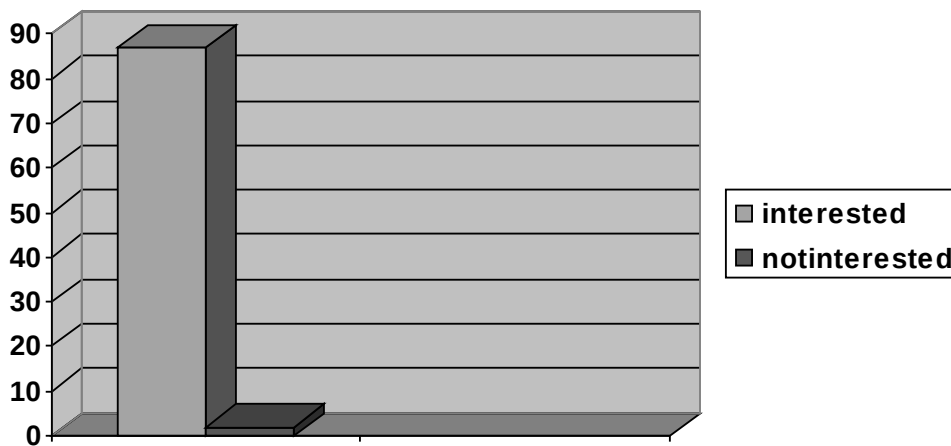
2."What types of texts would be of interest to you?"

3."Would you be interested in reading campus novels?"

The first question:" What would be useful for you to improve your reading skills in English?" was meant mainly to see if the students feel they need to develop their reading skill and if they are ready to spend some of their spare time reading English novels.

After studying the questionnaire carefully, some interesting aspects have been revealed, aspects that give us information to be used in the teaching of reading. The answers to the first question prove the fact that the students are aware of their need to improve their reading skills as they realize they have to read more supplementary texts and what is more important to read more.

However 3 pupils from the 90, who were questioned, consider they do not need to improve their reading skills, as one of them said his English reading was good enough, another said: "it is the teacher's business to look for methods to improve his reading skills", and one confessed that he needed to be obliged to read books in English.



1.

A further analysis of the questionnaire identified some aspects that were and still are very useful in the teaching of reading.

Pupils from the 8th grade consider that by reading more, and by reading supplementary texts, texts that must be interesting for them, their reading skills can be further developed.

For the 9th grade students, to read more at home, to watch films that are subtitled in English would be more useful than only reading in the classroom.

The 10th grade students think that hearing the texts read first by a native speaker, would be useful.

What students of the 12th grade need is just to read more at school and at home.

An interesting fact is that all the students questionnaired think they need a class per week just for their English reading practice.

As a conclusion to the answers for the first question, we can see that the great majority of the students feel they need to improve their reading skills, and the younger they are the greater this need/ desire is.

Question number 2 was asked to find out students` interests, more exactly what texts would they like to read. Reading their answers, it is obvious that they have a great variety of interests, which depend on their age particularities. This question`s task was to help the teacher choose the most interesting and attractive texts for the students. As mentioned before, there is a large variety of topics that students would be interested in reading about, but some of them are common to a large number of students.

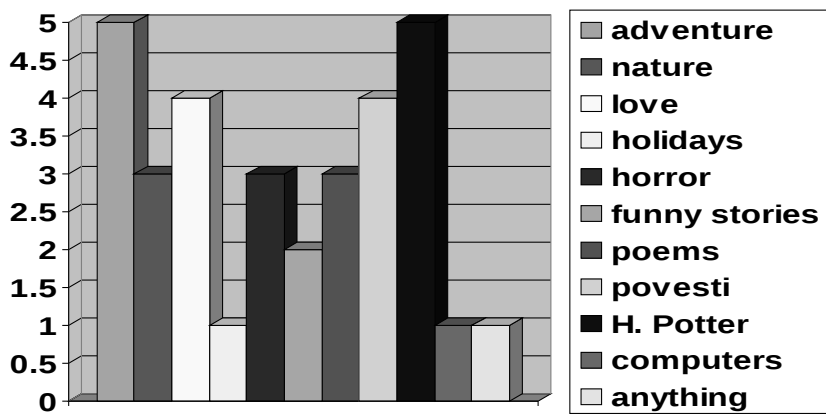
What would they like to read about?

Pupils from the 8th grade would like to read about: animals, adventures, personal relationship ( love), how to spend a holiday, computers, funny stories or horror one, poems, texts from "Harry Potter" or about anything "that would give them useful information in their lives" ( this is what a boy said).

The 9th grade students gave a general answer: "texts about different topics", they only want the texts to be interesting, not boring, without many descriptions".

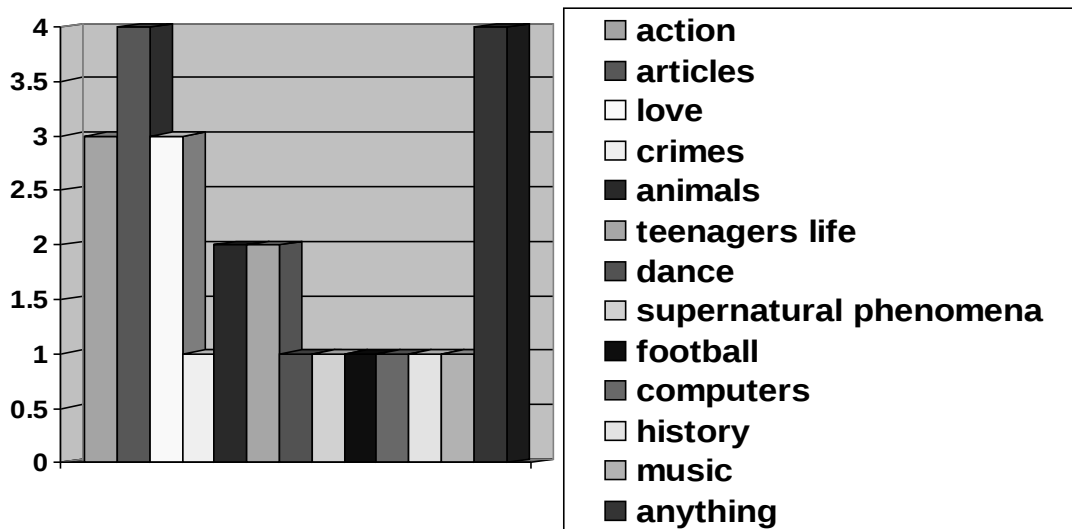
The 10th grade students said they would be interested in reading about personal relationships (love), crimes, animals, teenagers`life, dance, supernatural phenomena, football, computers, history, music and "any text with some action".

The students from the 12th grade admitted that they would like to read about topics connected to history, fashion, religion, sport, geography, science-fiction, youth life, famous personalities, love, newspaper or magazine articles.



2.

The purpose of the last question was to find out if students would be interested in reading texts from a campus novel. The term “campus novel” has been explained to them. The answer for a great majority of them is “yes”. Still there are some students who feel they are not interested by this kind of books, as they prefer adventure books. Very few said “not now” or “maybe”, if they are in the mood”.



3

As a conclusion most of the students feel they need and want to improve their reading skills in English. The texts from the textbooks are all about a great variety of topics, but students feel they need something else, something they choose, they get from their own resources or maybe they need the “real things”.

Campus novels can offer them texts they might find interesting and attractive. I have chosen funny texts from David Lodge’s trilogy: *Changing Places*, *Small World*, *Nice Work*, texts about love, human relationships from J. M. Coetzee’s *Disgrace* and Phillip Roth’s *The Human Stain* and for the 8th grade and of course for younger students texts from J. K. Rowling’s *Harry Potter*, which belongs to the so-called “school stories”. Having in mind what the students from the 10th grade said, it seems very interesting for them to watch films in English, with subtitles in English, so David Lodge’s documentaries and TV scripts, or fragments from his or J.K. Rowling’s interviews.

The next thing that I did was to choose some texts from J. M. Coetzee’s *Disgrace*, Phillip Roth’s *The Human Stain*, J. K. Rowling’s *Harry Potter* and fragments from the film *The Human Stain*, *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* and *Harry Potter and the Philosophical Stone*. The fragments from the films that I used from *Harry Potter*’s films were those presenting the main character at the beginning of the series and I also presented a poster with the actor Daniel Redclif

from the present. Students were asked to make a description of the character (according to his behaviour, physical appearance and family background). They could see the evolution of the character and his transformation.

Another time when I used the Smart Board was when the students had to comment on Phillip Roth's *The Human Stain*. Before seeing the text the students had to search for information about Philip Roth. This was done with the help of the Smart Board, as it was connected to the internet. After seeing pictures of the writer and of his novels on the Smart Board they could see the following reading extract from the novel.

## 1 Everyone knows

It was in the summer of 1998 that my neighbour Coleman Silk- who, before retiring two years earlier, had been a classics professor at nearby Athena College for some twenty-odd years as well as serving for sixteen more as the dean of faculty- confided to me that, at the age of seventy-one, he was having an affair with a thirty-four year-old cleaning woman who worked down at the college. Twice a week she also cleaned the rural post office, a small gray clapboard shack that looked as if it might have sheltered on Okie family from the winds of the Dust Bowl back in the 1930s and that, sitting alone and forlorn across from the gas station and the general store, flies its American flag at the junction of the two roads that mark the commercial center of this mountainside town.

Coleman had first seen the woman mopping the post office floor when he went around late one day, a few minutes before closing time, to get his mail- a thin, tall, angular woman with graying blond hair yanked back into a ponytail and the kind of severely sculptured features customarily associated with the church-ruled, hard-working goodwives who suffered through New England's harsh beginnings, stern colonial women locked up within the reigning morality and obedient to it. Her name was Faunia Farley, and whatever miseries she endured she kept concealed behind one of those inexpressive bone faces that hide nothing ...

The text was read and translated and we insisted on the writer's description of Faunia Farley. Then the poster was on the screen. Now the students comment on the differences between the way Nicole Kidman looked like and the way she was supposed to look like. As to Anthony Hopkins I asked the students to describe him. I also told them that he played the main character in the film. Next I played a sequence from the film, the one in which professor Coleman Silk called his students "spooks" and his meeting with the dean and the other professors of the university during which he was accused of racial discrimination.



So with the help of the Smart Board we could listen to native speakers of English, watch, read and talk about issues like political correctness, love, university life, racial discrimination, friendship and other interesting topics for any 21st century human being.

Coming back to the question “How smart can a Smart Board be in the teaching of reading?” the right answer is “very smart” or maybe “the smartest mean of teaching that can be used in the classroom”. I used on purpose the superlative of smart because a smart board may be used as a simple board, as students can write on it (and the smart board corrects the possible mistakes), as a computer, because it has whatever a computer has, and what’s more it can be used as a video projector, as you can play films on it.



# Teaching and Learning English: Development and Diversity Via Drama

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**Abstract:** *Wie die Literatur kann auch das Theater von dir, Leser oder Zuschauer experimentiert werden. Wenn du ein Theaterstück liest oder anschaust, wirst du ein Verwandter mit den Charakteren auf der Bühne sein; du kannst dich mit einigen von ihnen identifizieren und du kannst an ihren Anregungen teilnehmen; und warum nicht, man kann lernen/sich zu erziehen/nur an was sie machen anzuschauend. Der Schlüssel des Verstehens und des Spasses von einem Theaterstück ist jener Aspekt, dass man auf alle Details aufmerksam ist. Ich werde Ihnen die Grundelemente, die ein Theaterstück aufbauen, vorstellen; der Hintergrund; die Szene, die Sprache; die Charaktere; der Aufbau; die Ironie und wie diese Elemente in einem Theaterstück mitarbeiten. Das Theaterstück ist als ein einziges Element und ist wichtiger als die Summe dieser Grundelemente.*

**Key words:** *Drama, basic elements of drama, plays, playwright*

## 1. Introduction

*“We believe that understanding literature is a way of understanding yourself...”<sup>1</sup>*

Like all literature, DRAMA can be experienced directly by you, *the reader or the viewer*. When you read or see a play, you become acquainted with the characters on the stage; you can identify with some of them and share their emotions; become involved in their actions and struggles; and why not, learn about yourself through observing what happens to them and recognizing the human desires, problems, success and frustrations we, all, share.

The greater our understanding, the more we can enjoy and respond to the play and come to understanding ourselves.

*The key to understanding and enjoying a play is to pay attention to details.*

Some people listen to music and hear only the melody. Some hear melody and lyrics. Some hear melody, lyrics, chord structure and technique. In addition, there are people who even know the names and backgrounds of the musicians, have seen them in concerts elsewhere, and have followed their professional development.

All these people look for pleasure from the music, but those who listen more carefully and hear the most details probably derive the greatest satisfaction from the work.

This principle holds true for drama.

You may read a play and simply understand the plot, or you may understand the plot and feel sympathy for the main character.

A good playwright has a reason for selecting each element he puts into his play, but he does not try to include every detail about a character or action or confrontation. He selects details that will help him achieve his purpose.

In a good play *nothing is accidental...* Therefore, *we, the reader or viewer*, have the right to ask why each detail is included.

There are only different interpretations, and YOUR interpretation of the play may be as valid as anyone else's.

The purpose of my “Gradul I” paper tries to be some help for those who read the plays independently, formulate opinions or conclusions about their reading, and then determine the validity of their conclusions according to the details the playwright has given you.

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<sup>1</sup> David, L Hay, J.F, Howell – *Contact with Drama*, Central Michigan University, 1974, p.1.

I also hope my students will come to enjoy plays, and from reading them, *THEY* will learn about themselves and their own life.

“Drama is the playwright’s medium for communicating his view of some aspect of the world...He does this artistically, including only what will help him convey his perceptions (.....), how skillfully and truthfully he presents that view(...)”<sup>2</sup> (2)

## 2. Commentary

Drama may vary in form and length. Not all plays are long. Many brief plays contain all the elements needed to produce a single dramatic effect.

As you read the play, remember that *reading drama* requires more effort than viewing it. We must be alert to what the author tells us, both in stage directions and in dialogue, in order to imagine how the action would appear on stage.

When we *see a play* on stage, we can respond immediately to what we see. But in reading a play *we function as our own directors*: we must interpret ambiguous or unknown words, we may create tone of voice, we determine emphasis and accent, we visualize the setting and the actors’ movements. The author provides the basic elements needed to initiate this process, but *WE* must add the refinements and subtleties. Isolating particular elements serves only to increase our awareness of them, thus being able to appreciate the complete play more fully.

We will present the basic elements of drama:

- Setting
- Staging
- Language
- Character
- Structure
- Irony

Let us see briefly how they function in a play.

Every play *takes place* at some time and in some place. We identify the place as a room or a close space, but the author can leave the time unspecified.

Maybe the playwright is suggesting that what occurs in the play cannot be delimited to a specific time and could happen at any time in history. The entire play may take place in one room containing only the bare, practical necessities of existence. Or maybe the inhabitants of that space are plain people who have a simple life on land and sea.

The land is dry and rugged; the sea provides fish and seaweed, but with its winds it supplies the danger of death by shipwreck and drowning.

In a sense the close space could represent man’s attempt to protect himself from an often dangerous environment.

*The stage* on which any play is presented is a kind of metaphor. Drama is a representation of some aspects of life – it is not life itself, but stands for something the author wishes to say about human existence. For a drama to be significant it must speak to each of us in some way: *it must be universal*.

Thus the room, or the close, protecting space, and the action that takes part in it represent a part of our lives – suffering, loss and death.

*The language* of the play and the speeches of its characters reinforce what is accomplished by the setting and staging.

The author may use dialects with their rural overtones, reflecting the simplicity of the characters. Or, maybe, there are characters whose dialogue resembles proverbs, emphasizing the plainness of the people and suggesting a kind of universality in what they say.

We learn about *characters* primarily from what they say, what they do and what other characters say about them.

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<sup>2</sup> David, L Hay, J.F, Howell – *Contact with Drama*, Central Michigan University, 1974, p.2.

Throughout our lives most of us continually meet, relate to, and leave other people. We have developed certain rituals for this complex process, such as our ways of meeting and learning about each other – exchanging names and information about background, occupations and interests.

Often, getting to know someone means how he or she relates to you, what you have in common, or how you differ.

There are always certain people whom we come to know more intimately than others, usually through common interests and shared experiences. We may feel sympathy or sorrow or love or happiness with these people and from these experiences we may learn not only about them but also about ourselves.

We all have conflicts of various kinds in our lives. Some are *minor*:

You want to sleep, but your roommates are having a party.

You plan to play golf, but it is raining.

You really want to study for a test, but everyone is going drinking.

Other conflicts are *major*:

You love her, but she doesn't want to be tied down to one person.

You want to learn a trade, but your parents insist you go to college.

You know you are better qualified for the job than she, but she is hired.

Conflicts are the basis of a drama.

If characters are the major focus of attention in a play, their actions are how we best come to know them.

The playwright puts his characters into a situation, gives them motives, supplies their goals, sets them in conflict, allows them to act and the conflict to develop, and eventually resolves the conflict in some way. The accumulation and combination of all these actions make up the plot of the play.

Although *irony* is a dominant element in the play, only a few types of irony are used. Dramatic irony generally occurs when the audience knows something important that another character does not know.

In general the process of dramatic irony is from ignorance to knowledge, from appearance to reality, from X to non - X.

We, the audience, follow the victim from ignorance through experience to knowledge, moving from what seems to be true to what actually is. We perceive what seems to represent one thing and learn that is something else.

In order to begin the process of enjoyment, we must first be able to identify irony in a play – which involves paying close attention to details.

When the author combines the elements we have briefly discussed, the playwright produces a unity that makes a dramatic statement about the condition of humanity.

The play is more than a single element and greater than the sum of all its elements.

The setting, stage properties, language, characterization, plot and irony serve to complete, extend, amplify, and integrate with one another to produce a whole.

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# Information Technology in English Language Teaching

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**Résumé:** *Durant les dernières décennies, les éducateurs ont envisagé une explosion en ce qui concerne la quantité d'informations disponibles par l'utilisation de l'Internet et d'autres technologies dans l'enseignement secondaire. L'impacte de l'application de ces nouvelles technologies dans la salle de classe est très motivant. Les leçons à l'aide des nouvelles technologies permettent aux professeurs de motiver leurs élèves à devenir des apprenants actifs, très connectés aux réalités. Les stratégies basées sur l'utilisation de l'ordinateur permettent aux élèves de développer une pensée supérieure et des habilités à solutionner les problèmes. Dans la salle de classe Powerpoint peut constituer un support visual actif dans tout type de classe de langue et il est utilisable à plusieurs niveaux. Il peut se constituer en tant que base pour toute une série de leçons ou comme une simple activité. Il peut être utilisé tout d'abord dans la présentation de la grammaire ou du lexique, dans le travail sur la prononciation et dans les cours centrés sur une seule habilité. Ensuite, il peut aider à diriger les leçons, le staging des activités et les distributions des instructions. Malgré ses avantages d'utilisation, il y a des possibles pièges qu'on doit surpasser: garder des enrégistréments, maintenir une balance, préserver la flexibilité et être au courant des nouvelles technologies.*

**Key words:** *information technology, Internet, computer-based strategies, PowerPoint slides.*

The Internet is reshaping all aspects of society. Many schools in both developed or developing countries are now wired for the Internet, making efforts to reform education in order to take better advantage of the information technology.

School students learn best when they are actively engaged with the content. When students participate in hands-on, inquiry-based learning, they develop lasting skills that often translate into higher levels of student achievement. Lessons that include technology applications provide teachers with ways to motivate students into becoming active, real-world learners. Participation in real life applications included in technology-rich teaching environments promotes students' abilities to draw analogies and analyze data. School teachers who implement technology into their content areas report encouraging results as stated by Hill A. David (*Visual Impact*, Canterbury, Pilgrims Longman, 1991, p. 29). As students are busy manipulating data and learning by doing, involvement in their own learning increases along with enthusiasm. Students are no longer passive recipients of knowledge; they become active participants in the learning process. The learning environment is positively affected by the use of technology-based instructional strategies.

This article is representative of my particular view of language learning and teaching: students learn a language better if their experience in it is as full of meaning and as rich in images as possible. Meaning and mental images, as I found in *The Recipe Book*, edited by Seth Lindstromberg (*The Recipe Book – Practical ideas for the Language Classroom*, Canterbury, Pilgrims Longman, 1992, pp.14-16) come only when connection is made with learners' own world of experience, and the greater this connection is, the better the learning. Hence the emphasis in this paper is on drawing on the experiences of teachers and learners themselves, rather than on the concerns and dialogues of some invented characters in an ordinary textbook.

Moreover, using information technology in teaching English would raise the students' level of interest and participation, providing them with a realistic need for communicating and attempting to bridge the gap between the carefully controlled classroom language and the complex unpredictable language, learners are confronted with, outside the classroom.

## **1. The use of PowerPoint Slides in English Language Teaching**

Computers are now recognized as playing an important role in learning and are a familiar part of the educational and working environment. Delivering language lessons with the support of PowerPoint can greatly enhance the teaching and learning experience. With patience, a little preparation time and some thoughtful consideration in the lesson planning process, teachers will find that using PowerPoint is easy, and it can quickly become a regular part of the repertoire of resources at their disposal.

PowerPoint is a computer programme used for the visual delivery of presentations. It has proved to be extremely successful in the business world and can be easily adapted for use in language teaching, bringing a new and exciting dimension to the classroom. In a nutshell, it is an extremely versatile program for preparing and organizing slides into a slide show, similar to those delivered via a traditional slide projector. Slides are created on a computer by adding objects such as texts, images and links to the audio and Internet web pages to a slide background. They are then arranged into a sequence and projected from the computer onto a screen in the classroom by way of a digital projector.

Animation effects can be programmed for each object placed on the screen, be it a single word, a piece of text, phonemic script or a picture. The way in which objects appear, move and disappear is determined during the writing of the slides, but can be edited and modified later. Objects can be programmed to play audio and video files or to open an Internet page.

Control of both the animation of objects on the slides and the slide sequence is governed by the presenter, using either the computer's mouse, or via keys on the keyboard. It is possible to move forward or backward through the sequence as well.

PowerPoint, as stated by Emery H. ("Slide Show", English Teaching Professional, issue 43, p.66, Retrieved August 20 from the World Wide Web: [www.etprofessional.com](http://www.etprofessional.com) 2006), can be an effective visual support in any type of language lesson and is useful on many different levels. It can serve as the basis for a series of lessons, a single lesson or as one stage or activity within the lesson. It can be used in a primary role in the presentation of grammar and lexis, in work on pronunciation, and in guiding lessons with a skill focus. In a secondary role, it can help manage the signposting of lessons, the staging of activities and the delivery of instructions.

### **1.1. The Advantages of Using Slides for the Teacher**

One of the greatest advantages of using the program in the language-teaching context is that delivering pre-prepared slides can save a considerable part of valuable class time. The teacher is then able to dedicate more lesson time to attending to the needs of the students. This works in two ways.

Firstly, because teachers can prepare slides before the lesson, classroom time that would usually be spent writing and drawing on the board is saved. Being able to place items instantly upon a screen, and therefore reduce the time spent on writing on the board with one's back to the class allows more freedom to interact, monitor interaction and assist the students more closely. Using slides for language delivery also means that the board becomes less cluttered, giving the teacher more free space to dedicate to those language issues raised during class which go beyond the limits of the lesson itself.

Secondly, giving written instructions for activities on slides can assist the teacher's oral delivery and help balance teacher's talking time in class. It can also add a degree of clarity, both for the teacher and the learners, to more complicated procedures. Furthermore, it can be useful for directing the learners' attention towards a medium of instruction other than the teacher.

The process of preparing the language content of slides gives the teacher much tighter control over what the learners see and for how long. Carefully selected language can appear instantaneously, or in sequence, and remains visible for as long as necessary. The nature and timing of any analysis is at the discretion of the teacher, and language may be withdrawn with equal speed and control. In selecting the language and designing slides, the teacher has valuable time in lesson

preparation to consider what will be presented and when, leading to a more refined and effective delivery.

Furthermore, the teacher's errors, which naturally occur, particularly in unforeseen situations, are thoroughly checked before a lesson begins, bringing authority to the lesson and helping the teacher to avoid some of those more uncomfortable moments.

The personalization of language lessons that can be achieved with PowerPoint can contribute to class formation in a positive way. Simple details, from adding an appropriate image as a slide background to greeting the students by name on an opening slide, are effective. The teacher has a wider freedom to focus on and tailor to the specific language needs of the students, and working with PowerPoint can enhance the class dynamic and environment.

In an organizational sense, once you have become familiar with operating the program and the technology required for slide shows, and as you begin to build PowerPoint into your lessons, the amount of materials necessary in the classroom is reduced. While not suggesting that there is less of a place in a learning environment for books, dictionaries, pen and paper, it can be a pleasant change to find yourself not getting so lost in the unusual quantities of photocopies, hand-outs, cut-ups and notes. Once you are familiar with adding audio and video links to slides, PowerPoint can also ease the management of cassettes, CDs and videos. In providing a universal structure to the lesson proceedings, working through a PowerPoint slide show with the students can serve as a clear guide for both the teacher and the learners.

While it is easy to write PowerPoint lessons, there is, of course, a degree of time involved in getting acquainted with the basic functions. It is important to allow a period in which to familiarise with the workings of the program and to practice it. As with all information technology, confidence can only come through use. They said, with a little patience, it is relatively easy to get started and to write a simple sequence of slides into the broader lesson structure. As you develop a working knowledge of the program, and an understanding of the more detailed functions and tools, the PowerPoint can fulfil a number of lesson roles, both primary and secondary.

Once the presentations have been written, tried and tested, they can act as a template for future lessons, and can be used again and again. The teacher's task is then made easier in that any editing and adjusting of presentations to suit different classes is a simpler process, requiring less preparation time.

PowerPoint is an extremely flexible program, and can be used to deliver many types of language activity. There is an almost infinite number of ways the program can be manipulated to suit an activity and as you become more comfortable, techniques will be developed.

## **1.2. The Advantages for the Learner**

PowerPoint brings enormous visual support to language learning. Having the stimulation of projected colour slides bearing animated images, video, audio and text brings a different dimension to learning and can be a fun, exciting and refreshing alternative to paper based activities. People are motivated by variety and being exposed to a different medium of instruction, particularly one that is closely tailored and personalized to the class can be an extremely effective stimulant. Learners benefit from the closer support of the teacher which is afforded in lessons using PowerPoint.

In complementing the teacher's oral exchanges with the class and supporting the delivery of activities and instructions, PowerPoint serves as a constant visual reference to the reception of spoken language. This written parallel can serve to reinforce understanding and reduce confusion, lubricating the transition from one stage of a lesson to the next. Receiving instructional language and Meta language in written form is a valuable learning aid for all students, particularly those who have a more visual learning style. It is easy to overlook, but this important type of language is most often delivered in oral form by the teacher, its written form often neglected. For the learner, awareness of the staging and procedure is heightened through this clear and authoritative presentation of language.

### **1.3. Limitations and Drawbacks of Using Power Point Slides in ELT**

Along with the many advantages of PowerPoint, there are some possible pitfalls that may need to be overcome: keeping records, keeping a balance, keeping flexibility and keeping on top of the technology. Lessons in which PowerPoint plays a significant role mean there is less of a need for paper-based language. It is often assumed, by both teachers and learners alike, that having printed material is not only a permanent reference to what has been learnt, but also a vital part of learning itself. However, as we know, language learning has a lot to do with the process of engaging with language and negotiating communication, and a lot of communicative activity negates the need for paper copies beyond instructions, procedures and language prompts, all of which can be displayed on screen. That said, students, and teachers, can feel less secure in that they have nothing to “hold on to” in a purely screen based lesson and fear walking into or away from a lesson with no written record of the learning, which books and handouts can provide. You may well find students taking notes at a furious pace during PowerPoint sessions. While this is understandable, it can detract heavily from the task as students fail to commit themselves fully to the activity.

One way to avoid this is to let the students know that this isn't necessary, and to provide printed copies of the more important slides at the end of the session.

### **1.4. Keeping a Balance**

One major consideration in preparing PowerPoint sessions is to try to achieve a balance between the effective presence of a visual medium and an over-reliance on technology. There is a maximum amount of time that students can spend looking at a projection screen before interest, motivation and physical comfort wane. A digital projector will create noise as its cooling fan operates and this, in turn, produces heat. The size of the classroom, the number of students, and the amount of ventilation all need to be considered when using PowerPoint for more extended sessions.

As with so many aspects of language teaching, there is a lot to be said for simplicity and economy, and there needs to be a degree of brevity in slide text. Overcomplicated slides can be visually demanding and there is a limit to the amount of text that can be placed on a slide and remain attractive and easy to read.

Furthermore, too many slides can provide too rigid a lesson structure, and give the students less exposure to the teacher's natural spoken language. Although it is difficult to pinpoint accurately, an awareness of how much a lesson can be delivered on screen comes through use.

### **1.5. Keeping flexibility**

In preparing our language lessons, we give time to the setting of aims and objectives, and our lessons are structured to achieve these aims. However, we are naturally used to operating in a flexible way. Time needs to be given to dealing with issues as they arise, and flexible time management is important in achieving effective learning. In being aware of and sensitive to the dynamic of the class, the teacher is ready to adapt a lesson in progress in order to maintain the engagement of the learners. Working with pre-prepared slides in PowerPoint means that this flexibility is limited. The order of slides is pre-determined, and while it is possible to skip forward and backward through a presentation, the slide show is relatively fixed. Making changes to the layout of textual context of a slide or slides during a presentation is an awkward process made worse by having an attentive audience, and as such, slide preparation requires careful thought. Preparation needs to be thorough, allowing time to run through the slides to check for anomalies.

### **1.6. Keeping on Top of the Technology**

Although time spent preparing paper-based materials may be kept to a minimum when using PowerPoint, you need sufficient time before a lesson to set up the equipment. During a lesson it is quite uncomfortable to find that the order of your animation sequence doesn't work, you have missed an important item of language, or there are language mistakes on the slides. Furthermore, as with all information technology, there is always the possibility that things won't go according to the plan. A computer may crash, internet or network connections may fail, storage devices containing

your lesson, such as CDs and memory sticks may fail to operate or may be incompatible with the computer system you are using.

It is important to allow adequate time to test your classroom set-up to avoid the frustration that can ensue when technical problems arise, and equally important to be patient and flexible when they do. Familiarize yourself with the technology before the lesson, and have some troubleshooting solutions to hand in case of malfunction. If all else fails, it is sensible to have alternatives in place for these occasions.

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## Le jeu dans l'apprentissage d'une langue étrangère

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**Abstract:** *Besides the pleasure provided by ludic activities, games used in the foreign language classes allow including the necessity of communicating in an efficient manner. When students learn French in a non-French environment, teachers often meet with some difficulty in motivating them, as they do not need that language in everyday life. Under the circumstances, using games as teaching/learning techniques, the foreign language becomes a place where students can learn while having fun. Meanwhile games do stimulate all their intellectual faculties, such as memory, attention, presence of mind, imagination, creativity and so on.*

*Games can be included in the foreign language class both as elements of a lesson (language games, communication games) and as links between chapters or even as holiday homework, as they are always very efficient in didactic terms.*

**Mots-clés:** *langue, communication, enseigner, apprendre, objectifs, motivation, jeu didactique*

Apprendre une langue étrangère obligatoire dans un milieu institutionnel, loin des communautés parlant cette langue, suscite d'énormes difficultés de motivation. L'imagination et la pensée des élèves ont souvent besoin d'un support qui tient plutôt de l'affectif pour se mobiliser. Voilà pourquoi, l'adoption d'une approche ludique dans l'apprentissage des langues permet de créer un contexte favorable à cet apprentissage, peut motiver le public captif à s'investir dans ce long processus qu'il va entreprendre. À travers les jeux les apprenants peuvent découvrir de nouvelles possibilités d'expression, d'action et d'interaction, la langue peut devenir un terrain qui permet de jouer, de s'amuser et d'entraîner, en même temps, toutes les facultés intellectuelles des élèves: mémoire, attention, présence d'esprit, associations d'idées, imagination etc. Pour le professeur, ces activités sont autant de prétextes de faire vivre la langue, afin d'y impliquer les enfants comme ils l'ont été dans l'apprentissage de leur langue maternelle. Depuis plusieurs années les activités ludiques ont été introduites dans la classe de langue et il ne nous reste qu'à reconnaître leur utilité. Nous nous arrêtons ici sur les dimensions pédagogiques du jeu et son rôle dans l'enseignement/apprentissage des langues.

Quelques délimitations conceptuelles s'avèrent nécessaires car souvent il est assez difficile de définir le jeu. Les dictionnaires en donnent parfois des définitions circulaires: le jeu c'est le fait de jouer et jouer c'est avoir une activité de jeu. Dans la littérature pédagogique on emploie les termes "divertissement" et "jeu" dans le processus didactique. Ces termes sont parfois traités comme synonymiques, d'autres fois ils sont différenciés. On voit dans le divertissement une activité spontanée et volontaire qui n'a d'autres buts que la satisfaction. En assurant la satisfaction des besoins et des intérêts individuels de l'apprenant, il facilite son entrée dans la vie sociale, la connaissance de la réalité et son adaptation aux nécessités propres.

Conformément à la définition trouvée dans *Dictionnaire de didactique du français langue étrangère et seconde*, le jeu est "une activité d'apprentissage dite ludique et guidée par des règles de jeu et pratiquée pour le plaisir qu'elle procure. Elle permet une communication entre apprenants (collecte des informations, problèmes à résoudre, compétition, créativité, prise de décisions etc.). Orientée vers un objectif d'apprentissage, elle permet aux apprenants d'utiliser de façon collaborative et créative l'ensemble de leurs ressources verbales et communicatives". (Cuq J.P. (dir.), 2003:60).

Les interprétations psychologiques du jeu sont données par le *Dictionnaire de pédagogie*: „apprentissage sociaux pour les enfants, imitations des adultes dans des conduites qui leur assurent une appropriation des objets et des gestes qu'ils observent autour d'eux, et, sans doute, compensations pédagogiques par renversement des rôles entre adultes et enfants ; familiarisation avec les matériaux et les objets manipulés, démontés, voire détruits, besoin d'extérioriser une vitalité puissante, plaisir de la répétition, de l'étourdissement dans les jeux d'extérieur, apprentissage de conduites sociales où la vivacité, la présence d'esprit, l'astuce sont utiles et prisées" (Arénilla *et al.* 1996:161):

Ainsi, la différence entre les notions de "divertissement didactique" (action qui s'appuie sur un modèle) et "jeu" (action qui s'appuie sur des règles) est peu visible. Certains spécialistes considèrent que les jeux se distinguent des actions de divertissement par la victoire ou par l'échec par lesquels ils finissent. La mise du jeu est différente: elle peut représenter une valeur matérielle, (le gage gagné), symbolique (les points obtenus) ou idéale (l'appréciation obtenue).

La conceptualisation faite par Nicole de Grandmont, spécialiste de l'application pédagogique du jeu, a retenu notre attention. Selon cet auteur, „pour que le jeu remplisse sa fonction pédagogique [...] il faut que le pédagogue soit informé des trois niveaux d'intervention pédagogique du jeu: 1. niveau ludique [...]. 2. niveau éducatif [...]. 3. niveau pédagogique [...]" (Grandmont, 1997:106). Nous aurions affaire, par la suite, à trois types de jeux: le jeu ludique, le jeu éducatif et le jeu pédagogique. Selon le même auteur, le jeu ludique est toute situation de jeu qui est „imbue de joie et de plaisir" (*id.*: 47) mais aussi „moyen d'exploration et de découverte des connaissances" (*id.*: 106). Quant au jeu éducatif, il n'est pas intrinsèquement différent du jeu ludique, "si ce n'est qu'il se réalise avec un objet, un jouet, soutenant l'action" (*id.*: 66) mais il présente d'autres caractéristiques: en premier lieu il constituerait "le premier pas vers la structure" (*id.*), c'est-à-dire vers l'apprentissage de la règle et il permettrait de contrôler les acquis, d'évaluer les appris et d'observer le comportement des élèves (*id.*) ;deuxièmement, il favoriserait l'acquisition de nouvelles connaissances (*id.*) ; ensuite, le jeu éducatif "devrait être distrayant" et "sans contraintes perceptibles" par le joueur, car la fonction première de ce type de jeu serait de "créer un climat de plaisir" (*id.*: 64). D'autre part, N. de Grandmont souligne les limites du jeu éducatif. Selon elle, afin de ne pas tomber dans des "jeux d'exercice" qui seraient vite synonymes de lassitude (*id.*: 67) ou de redondance, il serait souhaitable d'avoir des objets multi-usage et de changer de jeu éducatif dès que son fonctionnement aura été saisi par l'apprenant. En citant, par exemple, le cas du jeu *Loto-maison* où l'élève doit reconstituer les différentes pièces de l'habitation, cet auteur remarque que "lorsque l'élève connaîtra bien chaque pièce d'une maison, il y a fort à parier que ce jeu perdra de son intérêt" (*id.*: 65). Par le terme de jeu pédagogique N. de Grandmont désigne tout support qui permettrait de "tester les apprentissages" (*id.*:70) mais elle prend aussi en compte le fait que le jeu pédagogique se confond très souvent avec le jeu éducatif.

Les jeux en tant que méthodes d'enseignement forment un ensemble de démarches raisonnées et suivies, utilisées pour atteindre le but instructif-éducatif d'une leçon, d'un groupe de leçons. Le ludique, par sa mobilité, peut offrir à chaque enseignant la possibilité de prendre en main sa pratique, de l'enrichir, de la transformer. Parmi les objectifs pédagogiques visés par les activités ludiques nous rappelons:

- les objectifs linguistiques fonctionnels (donner un conseil, décrire une personne, exprimer ses sentiments etc.);
- les objectifs linguistiques grammaticaux et lexicaux;
- les objectifs linguistiques stylistiques (savoir comment créer un effet d'ironie, d'humour etc.);
- les objectifs sociolinguistiques (manier les registres de langue);
- les objectifs socioculturels (connaître le mode de vie et la culture d'un autre pays);
- les objectifs socio-affectifs;
- les objectifs d'apprentissage (apprendre à apprendre).

Par les jeux didactiques on comprend les jeux de même que les activités de divertissement utilisées dans le processus d'enseignement/apprentissage (le processus formatif). Si l'on tentait d'établir une place du jeu didactique parmi les méthodes et les procédés utilisés dans

l'enseignement d'une langue étrangère, on pourrait le classer dans le groupe des méthodes de problématisation. Le but des jeux est, par conséquent, l'appropriation du processus cognitif de connaissance directe, basée sur l'expérience propre. Le jeu sollicite une pensée de type problématique, le "joueur" devant "produire" de manière autonome les connaissances nécessaires pour le jeu et non pas utiliser celles obtenues par l'intermédiaire du professeur ou du manuel. Le jeu didactique joint aussi bien des éléments de divertissement que des éléments d'apprentissage. L'apprentissage n'est pas un but du jeu, mais son résultat. Le but général est commun pour tous les jeux et consiste dans l'obtention du succès et de la satisfaction. Les objectifs partiels sont différents pour chaque jeu.

Pour trouver la place des activités ludiques dans les différentes phases du déroulement d'une unité d'apprentissage, François Weiss (2002: 8) propose un schéma méthodologique composé de 6 sections:

1. Sensibilisation, prise de contact, mise en train, rappel de l'étape précédente, définition de l'objectif de l'unité ou de la séquence;
2. Apprentissage des moyens linguistiques et sociolinguistiques pour accomplir la tâche et les objectifs fixés;
  - a) Présentation, explication, compréhension des éléments nouveaux (vocabulaire, structures, éléments constitutionnels et culturels), vérification de la compréhension;
  - b) Réflexion, analyse, conceptualisation des points grammaticaux nouveaux;
3. Exercices d'application, de réemploi et de fixation des éléments nouveaux, exercices structuraux, de substitution, de transformation, de complétion (production guidée);
4. Exercices de transfert, d'exploitation, de personnalisation (production ouverte);
5. Résolution de problèmes nouveaux: utilisation spontanée du vocabulaire et des structures présentées au cours d'activités communicatives, de jeux, de sketches, de jeux de rôles et improvisations, d'exercices de créativité (production libre);
6. Évaluation: bilan pour vérifier que les objectifs ont été atteints et auto-évaluation.

Nous nous arrêtons en ce qui suit sur les jeux et les divertissements linguistiques qui font partie de la catégorie des jeux didactiques utilisés dans l'enseignement des langues. Ces jeux nécessitent l'utilisation de la langue étrangère dans le but d'atteindre un objectif. Ils ressemblent aux jeux thématiques ou peuvent contenir des éléments de jeux de motricité ou de construction et représentent un excellent moyen d'application et de systématisation des connaissances de langue étrangère et de stimulation de l'expression orale. La liberté qu'ils semblent donner aux élèves consiste à employer, dans des situations nouvelles, des mécanismes de pensée, des structures de langage précédemment appris. Mais, puisque la langue est utilisée dans des "situations", on doit concevoir le déroulement des jeux dans des situations véridiques, naturelles, tirées de la vie réelle, dans un climat de tolérance et respect mutuel. Les jeux linguistiques ont bien des avantages et nous nous contentons d'en citer quelques-uns:

- la stimulation du désir d'apprentissage;
- la création des sentiments de réussite;
- le dépassement du sentiment de fatigue;
- la concentration de l'attention;
- l'accroissement de l'intérêt pour le travail lexical;
- l'automatisation de certaines structures lexicales;
- le développement de l'expression reproductive et reproductive-productive sur la base de nouvelles motivations;
- le dépassement des inhibitions psychiques et linguistico-motrices;
- l'obtention de meilleurs résultats même chez les élèves plus faibles.

Les jeux linguistiques sont de deux types:

- des jeux qui ont comme but la familiarisation avec le système de la langue;
- des jeux qui ont comme objectif le développement des habitudes de communication.

L'objectif des jeux dont le but est la familiarisation avec le système linguistique se traduit par la formation des habitudes d'identifier et de construire des énoncés corrects du point de vue de la forme. La correction peut concerner la syntaxe, l'orthographe, la phonétique etc. Pendant l'activité, les élèves obtiennent des points pour la forme correcte ou ils les perdent pour celle qui est erronée. Ces jeux peuvent avoir la forme des exercices traditionnels, par exemple des tableaux lacunaires de substitution et de transformation. Ce qui les caractérise c'est l'atmosphère psychologique (l'absence de la menace) et surtout le désir de vaincre, de "réussir". Ces jeux ont d'habitude lieu sous la surveillance du professeur parce qu'on a en vue la nécessité d'une appréciation immédiate de la correction de chaque attitude.

Les jeux qui ont comme but le développement des habitudes communicatives mettent moins l'accent sur la correction que surtout sur l'efficacité de la communication. Les joueurs doivent être capables de faire des échanges d'informations verbales (orales ou écrites). Ils sont motivés par l'existence, dans les règles, d'une certaine lacune informationnelle qu'ils ne peuvent écarter que par la communication avec d'autres participants au jeu. La sphère de la communication est souvent limitée à un certain domaine de connaissances. Le professeur peut attirer préalablement l'attention en ce qui concerne certaines structures qui seront ensuite reprises dans la communication. Le langage utilisé dans ces jeux est plus varié et plus libre. Le succès désiré est le résultat de la compréhension et non pas la correction de la langue employée. Le professeur peut avoir un rôle d'observateur et de consultant.

En rapport avec le degré d'imitation de la réalité, les jeux linguistiques sont:

- a) des jeux sans simulation;
- b) des jeux de simulation.

Les jeux linguistiques aident les apprenants à réaliser tous les principes fondamentaux de l'enseignement:

- on réalise les principes de communication parce que les jeux exigent l'usage de la langue dans sa fonction communicative naturelle et demandent aux élèves d'utiliser les moyens de communication verbaux et non-verbaux;
- on parle du principe de cognition parce que les jeux sont destinés à transmettre et à remettre des informations précises;
- les jeux aident à réaliser les principes de situation parce qu'ils aident à montrer des situations réelles différentes et, surtout, grâce à leur convention, ils détruisent la situation artificielle en rendant les exercices plus faciles pour les élèves;
- les jeux réalisent les principes de problématisation parce qu'ils possèdent des éléments de créativité;
- les jeux aident à réaliser le principe d'individualisation par rapport à leur diversité et à leur niveau de difficulté.

a) Le jeu sans simulation peut être n'importe quel thème donné à l'élève à condition que le thème lui produise de la satisfaction. Un tel thème se réalise en collectif ou en groupe et consiste dans l'utilisation pratique de l'expérience intellectuelle et émotionnelle acquises antérieurement. Un jeu non-simulé représente la résolution des charades, des mots croisés, des rébus, l'interprétation de chansons. Ces jeux peuvent inclure un contenu lié au matériel didactique dont on dispose.

b) Le jeu simulé est un modèle situationnel formalisé, dont la structure est donnée par les règles qui définissent tous les rapports qui interviennent entre les participants au jeu. L'obligation essentielle des joueurs est la stricte considération des règles. Le schéma général du jeu simulé est créé par des facteurs comme: la structure des actions effectuées par les joueurs ou déterminées par le hasard, une possible absence de l'information, une fonction de la récompense. Les jeux simulés combinent les caractéristiques des jeux proprement-dits avec les caractéristiques de la simulation. Ce sont des jeux dans lesquels les actions réalisées par les participants rappellent les actes que les gens réalisent en diverses situations de la vie quotidienne, en saisissant une large sphère d'habitudes et de connaissances. Dans le cas de l'assimilation d'une langue étrangère, les connaissances et les habitudes concernent, avant tout, la langue respective et la culture générale.

Selon Teresa Siek-Piszokub (1997: 19-21), les jeux de simulation se différencient d'après le degré de structuration des règles en:

- a) jeux à structure mobile;
- b) le remue-méninges (brainstorming);
- c) le jeu situationnel;
- d) le jeu biographique;
- e) la dramatisation.

Les jeux structurés ont des objectifs clairement exprimés sous la forme d'un modèle. Tous les jeux à planches appartiennent à cette catégorie (par exemple le jeu *Le chemin à obstacles*). Le devoir de l'élève est de franchir la ligne d'arrivée, mais pour cela il doit résoudre une série de problèmes, franchir une série d'obstacles qui l'empêchent d'atteindre le but. Ces jeux peuvent être représentés par toutes sortes de dramatisations ou par des exercices qui exigent de remplir une fiche dans les situations où, dans le groupe, chacun des joueurs a d'autres informations et leur tâche est la collecte de toutes les données. (*L'île mystérieuse, Quel est le texte ?*)

a) Dans les jeux à structure mobile, ce sont les joueurs qui établissent le caractère du jeu simulé. Ce genre de jeu suscite l'initiative et la participation active des joueurs.

b) Le remue-méninges (ou brainstorming) demande à trouver les procédés pour franchir une difficulté. Ces jeux connaissent deux étapes. Dans la première étape, les participants formulent des propositions pour résoudre le problème; leur tâche est de présenter un nombre très grand de solutions dans un délai très court. C'est l'étape créatrice du jeu, car on peut inventer et proposer des solutions non conventionnelles et même absurdes. Les joueurs sont appréciés d'après le nombre de propositions faites. Dans la deuxième étape c'est la sélection des meilleures solutions qui interviennent. Les jeux de ce type peuvent être attrayants pour le développement des habiletés de communication parce qu'ils sollicitent l'utilisation de plusieurs habitudes: la familiarisation avec le problème par l'audition et la lecture, la formulation des hypothèses par le langage, l'audition et l'écriture, l'évaluation des hypothèses par l'écriture, le langage, l'audition.

c) Le jeu situationnel permet une analyse approfondie du thème. Les participants font connaissance avec une situation qui exige la prise d'une décision, ils l'analysent avec attention pour adopter ensuite la meilleure solution. Pour finir le jeu, les participants doivent apprécier la situation, formuler des propositions, les argumenter, compléter les propositions formulées par les autres, proposer d'autres solutions, prendre une décision finale (par exemple *Alibi* ou *Sur une île déserte*).

d) Dans le jeu biographique, les joueurs doivent s'assumer une personnalité réelle ou fictive. Ce genre de jeu peut prendre la forme d'une interview réalisée par un groupe d'élèves avec quelqu'un qui représente une personnalité. On peut imaginer aussi une rencontre de quelques personnalités qui présentent leur point de vue sur un certain problème, par exemple l'infacteur et la victime. C'est un type de jeu attrayant du point de vue des habiletés de communication orale. Le créateur d'un tel personnage doit savoir l'assumer, exprimer ses opinions et ses sentiments, exprimer les raisons de son comportement. Ceux qui questionnent doivent manifester de l'esprit d'investigation, trouver des moments intéressants dans la biographie du personnage, apprécier exactement le statut de celui-ci (par exemple *Le club des malfaiteurs*).

e) La dramatisation est l'un des jeux didactiques les plus populaires. On crée une situation dans laquelle sont impliqués quelques personnages. Les participants ont des rôles attribués et un but bien établi de leur action. Ils décident eux-mêmes de quelle manière atteindre leur but. Chaque joueur connaît la tâche qui lui revient, avec qui il entre en contact, mais il ne sait pas quelle sera la réaction de l'autre personne.

En ce qui concerne les techniques de simulation, les élèves sont les acteurs qui jouent et la classe devient la scène où sont présentés les jeux de rôle, les exercices de dramatisation, les sketches, les saynètes et les mimes. Ce qui les différencie des jeux linguistiques, c'est le manque de rivalité et une plus grande exigence des connaissances linguistiques.

D'après François Weiss (2002:65), il existe trois sortes de techniques de simulation:

- les jeux de rôle;
- les exercices de simulation;

- les sketches, les saynètes et les mimes.

Il propose même une démarche appelée "des petits pas" allant du plus simple vers le plus complexe ce qui signifie aller progressivement de l'expression guidée, par les mimes, la dramatisation, les sketches, aux réactions spontanées par l'improvisation dans le jeu de rôle.

Les mimes sont de courtes scènes inventées et jouées par des élèves, comme par exemple "chez le coiffeur", "chez le dentiste", "un repas au restaurant" etc. Ils ne développent pas l'attitude créative mais les qualités artistiques, cognitives et motivantes. Quant aux sketches et aux saynètes, après avoir fixé le choix d'une scène, les élèves préparent le scénario, écrivent des dialogues courts, répartissent les rôles et, dès qu'ils sont prêts, présentent leurs sketches à leurs camarades. Au contraire des sketches, les mimes peuvent être présentés sans être préparés en avance. Le professeur peut donner quelques suggestions, il n'est qu'un observateur.

Le jeu de rôles se caractérise par la spontanéité (il n'est préparé ni oralement ni par écrit) et par sa complexité (partant de situations problématiques ou conflictuelles qui obligent à discuter, à raisonner, à se défendre, à chercher à convaincre, à négocier, il mobilise différentes compétences: linguistiques, sociolinguistiques, discursives et stratégiques).

Les jeux peuvent donner l'occasion à des interactions différenciées entre le professeur et les élèves d'une part et les élèves qui participent au jeu respectif d'autre part.

Pendant le jeu on crée des situations pendant lesquelles les élèves se trouvent en diverses organisations de rapports réciproques qui permettent la réalisation du but du jeu. On distingue ainsi trois groupes:

1. des jeux dans lesquels les participants rivalisent chacun avec soi-même;
2. des jeux dans lesquels la réalisation du but est possible seulement comme résultat de la collaboration;
3. des jeux dans lesquels, pour atteindre le but, on a besoin d'un compromis.

La rivalité dans les jeux peut se dérouler conformément aux variantes:

- l'un contre tous;
- chacun avec chacun;
- un groupe contre un autre groupe.

Le but de ce type de jeu est la résolution plus rapide d'un problème (par exemple: former une proposition en conformité avec le schéma, la règle donné(e); résoudre un carré de mots croisés etc.), l'obtention d'un nombre plus grand de points, l'empêchement de l'élimination du jeu, l'obtention du rôle de meneur de jeu. Pendant ces jeux, les élèves utilisent diverses stratégies: ils communiquent les uns avec les autres, posent des questions, suivent le déroulement de l'action, tirent des conclusions concernant leur propre comportement linguistique et celui des autres participants. Ils sont motivés par le désir de gagner, par le souci provoqué par le problème à résoudre. Ces jeux ont comme but l'expression correcte sous l'aspect de la forme.

La collaboration dans les jeux peut se dérouler de plusieurs façons: le travail en paires (*L'indication de l'itinéraire*), avec un petit groupe (*Quel est ce texte ?*), avec un groupe, ensuite avec l'autre (*Comment est le monstre de Loch-Ness ?*).

Le but de ces jeux est de compléter quelque chose (un dessin, un diagramme), l'interprétation d'une situation ou d'un dessin, la mise en ordre des fragments d'une histoire ou d'une conversation en désordre, trouver un partenaire ou un objet caché, la résolution d'une devinette ou d'un secret.

Comme stratégies appliquées on peut rencontrer: la négociation, l'échange d'informations, le comportement conformément aux instructions, la déduction, la prédiction, l'évaluation. Les élèves sont motivés dans ces actions par l'absence d'une information complexe.

Il y a une variante intermédiaire entre ces deux types d'interactions où les élèves collaborent avec certains participants et rivalisent avec les autres; par exemple, ils collaborent avec un partenaire contre toute la classe (*Alibi*) ou ils sont organisés en groupes qui rivalisent entre eux (*Créons des mots !*).

Dans les jeux qui ont comme but l'obtention d'un compromis (*Sur une île déserte*), les participants à une certaine situation ont des raisons différentes pour arriver à des positions

communes. En interaction peut entrer un joueur contre d'autres joueurs, ensuite on crée des groupes qui ont réussi à arriver à un compromis. Les groupes peuvent agir contre les joueurs solitaires ou contre les groupes qui ne sont pas d'accord avec leur solution.

La position du professeur peut changer en fonction du type de jeu. Il peut être leader et conduire le jeu en s'adressant à tour de rôle à tous les élèves ou aux représentants des équipes; il peut confier la direction du jeu à un bon élève et occuper le rôle d'observateur ou d'arbitre dans une situation difficile. D'autres fois le rôle du professeur est de stimuler les élèves pour une participation bénévole (*20 questions*). Il y a des jeux qui n'imposent pas la participation directe du professeur. Celui-ci observe l'activité des joueurs, devenant ainsi arbitre et consultant. Le professeur contrôle la discipline, mais il peut s'intégrer dans le jeu comme participant. (*Le débat ; Quel est le texte ?*).

Dans le processus d'apprentissage, les jeux didactiques connaissent plusieurs fonctions:

- une fonction organisatrice;
- une fonction motivationnelle;
- une fonction didactique;
- une fonction cognitive;
- une fonction éducative.

La fonction organisatrice des jeux est essentielle car ils permettent une meilleure planification du temps de l'élève et du professeur. Pendant le jeu tous les élèves sont actifs. Les jeux rendent possibles des interactions différenciées, dans lesquelles les élèves concourent avec eux-mêmes, collaborent dans le cadre d'un groupe ou avec un autre groupe ou bien ils travaillent en paires. Cela leur permet de s'assumer la responsabilité de leurs propres actes. Le travail en groupe est une activité extrêmement importante pour les enfants timides qui, d'habitude, sont moins actifs dans le cas de l'apprentissage frontal.

Une autre fonction importante des jeux dans la classe de langue étrangère est la fonction motivationnelle. Pour que la tâche imposée et obligatoire soit réalisée sans le sentiment de contrainte, il est nécessaire que l'on trouve des sujets qui puissent susciter l'intérêt des élèves et qui apportent quelque chose de nouveau car on sait que la réalisation des devoirs pédagogiques dérive rarement des besoins personnels des élèves et le plus souvent elle a une motivation externe (par exemple les notes).

Les psychologues soulignent que le succès est l'un des facteurs qui forment, maintiennent et stimulent la motivation. L'élève s'engage avec plaisir dans un travail s'il a le sentiment de sa propre valeur, or les jeux facilitent l'obtention du succès. Les élèves faibles peuvent parfois avoir le sentiment de satisfaction grâce au hasard. En participant aux jeux collectifs, ils peuvent être contents par la simple appartenance à l'équipe victorieuse. Quand il s'agit de jeux, l'insuccès est moins douloureux et n'influence pas négativement la motivation car la responsabilité pour l'échec appartient à tous les joueurs.

La fonction didactique des jeux linguistiques est aussi très importante. Par la participation de tous les élèves, les jeux permettent la formation des diverses habiletés: intellectuelles, tactiles, mnémotechniques etc.

Les jeux peuvent avoir aussi une fonction cognitive pour le professeur de même que pour l'élève. Pour le professeur, l'objet de la connaissance est l'élève, sa personnalité, ses aptitudes, ses réalisations et ses lacunes. Quand l'attention du professeur est dirigée vers les aspects qui tiennent de son activité: objectifs, méthodes, la personnalité et les résultats des élèves, il devient un acteur. Quand il se concentre sur le processus et les mécanismes psychologiques: raisons, sentiments et attitude des élèves, le professeur devient un observateur. En ce qui concerne la perspective cognitive de l'acteur, les informations accumulées et systématisées par le professeur se rapportent surtout aux tâches réalisées et aux difficultés du processus didactique et éducatif. À travers la perspective d'observateur, le professeur peut diversifier les schémas cognitifs. Pendant les jeux, le professeur peut observer le comportement individuel des élèves: leur tempérament, les sources et la dynamique de la motivation, le besoin de succès, la manière de penser, la disposition de s'assumer le risque et les états conflictuels, le caractère extraverti ou introverti des élèves. Les jeux deviennent

ainsi un instrument qui contribue à l'exactitude et à l'honnêteté des opinions que le professeur aura sur chaque élève. À son tour, par le jeu, l'élève apprend divers procédés de résoudre les problèmes, il enrichit ses connaissances de langue et de culture françaises.

Les jeux didactiques peuvent former des normes de conduite qui permettent au professeur de réaliser, avec beaucoup d'efficacité, la fonction éducative. Il s'agit d'une stratégie qui facilite la formation chez les élèves d'un propre système de valeurs. La participation au jeu suppose des connaissances, des habiletés et des habitudes d'entrer en contact avec d'autres participants, l'apprentissage de travailler en groupe, en équipe et forme ainsi des normes de conduite. La situation problématique que le jeu crée stimule les élèves à chercher des solutions diverses, formant ainsi chez les élèves une attitude active envers les tâches qu'on leur donne. Tenant compte du facteur émotionnel que la situation ludique implique, pendant l'interaction peuvent se manifester divers types de comportements aussi bien positifs: collégialité, loyauté, respect des règles du jeu, réconciliation avec l'échec, que négatifs: la tromperie, la ridiculisation de l'équipe vaincue. Ce fait offre au professeur l'occasion de prendre attitude à l'égard de la situation existante.

Quant aux domaines applicables aux jeux, les spécialistes intéressés aux jeux didactiques en ont trouvé un grand "terrain" d'applicabilité. En grandes lignes, les domaines sont les mêmes: le vocabulaire, la grammaire, l'orthographe, la phonétique. La différence est que les uns ont une classification plus restreinte, tandis que les autres en ont une plus vaste.

1. Teresa Siek-Piskozub (1997: 55) parle de:

- jeux lexicaux;
- jeux syntaxiques;
- jeux pour le développement des habiletés communicatives.

2. François Weiss (2002:5) multiplie les domaines en exemplifiant par:

- exercices d'échauffement;
- situations de communication;
- lettres et mots;
- poser des questions;
- mimes, dramatisations, jeux de rôle;
- créativité;
- pour se détendre;
- activités autour de l'écrit;
- la France et les Français.

3. On rencontre une présentation plus élargie chez Patrice Julien (1998:6) qui dissocie les domaines de la manière suivante:

- vocabulaire (les mots);
- prononciation (les sons);
- l'orthographe (les lettres);
- l'expression vocale (la voix);
- l'expression corporelle (le corps);
- les arts plastiques (la main);
- une chanson qu'on apprend (la chanson);
- une rime qui sert à jouer (la comptine);
- la culture générale (le monde).

On a exemplifié quelques approches du jeu, mais la liste pourrait continuer en rappelant seulement les auteurs: Françoise Cormon, Christine Tagliante, Nicole Decuré, Marcel Giry, Henri Boyer, Michèle Butzbach, Michèle Pendanx etc.

Ce qui est important ce n'est pas l'inventaire fait par chacun des auteurs, mais la variété des exercices proposés et les idées que le professeur peut y trouver pour rendre son enseignement plus dynamique, plus interactif, plus impliquant donc plus motivant pour ses apprenants. Il a la possibilité de choisir le jeu qu'il considère approprié pour le niveau de la classe et pour le problème ou le thème envisagés, de combiner les jeux.



Proposer des jeux dans l'apprentissage des langues c'est important et bien raisonnable mais à condition qu'ils soient le résultat d'une réflexion préalable. Cela veut dire qu'il ne faut pas faire du jeu une activité improvisée, une activité „bouche-trous” (Weiss, 2002: 9) mais de lui accorder une place centrale en classe et dans l'apprentissage. Cuq et Gruca (2003: 417) remarquent à leur tour que „les activités ludiques ne sont plus considérées comme un simple gadget qui clôt une fin de semestre: la pédagogie des jeux n'est plus à faire et tous s'accordent à en reconnaître les enjeux pédagogiques.”

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