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## ***THE DISCOURSE OF LITERATURE - BETWEEN IMPRESSION AND REFLECTION***

**Anca DOBRINESCU**

***Abstract:** The paper aims to survey the literary phenomenon from the end of the nineteenth century to the contemporary period, trying to demonstrate that both modernist and postmodernist, as well as contemporary fiction represent a form of knowledge, of self and other, either through impression, by plunging in depth, or through reflection, by mirroring, and thus help us reflect upon the condition of the individual as part of a cultural context.*

***Keywords:** impression, reflection, literary discourse.*

As a person having taught literature for several decades, I have been less concerned with finding an answer to “Literature where from?” than to “Literature where to?” It is the latter question that has prompted this paper, in which I shall attempt to survey the literary phenomenon from the end of the nineteenth century to the contemporary period starting from an assumption formulated at the beginning of the twentieth century by a modernist writer much interested in the fate and future of literature.

It is doubtful whether in the course of the centuries, though we have learnt much about making machines, we have learnt anything about making literature. We do not come to write better; all that we can be said to do is to keep moving, now a little in this direction, now in that, but with a circular tendency should the whole course of the track be viewed from a sufficiently lofty pinnacle.” (Woolf, 1984: 157)

I am particularly interested in seeing how modernist, postmodernist or contemporary literature constitute themselves into a form of knowledge, of self and other, either through impression, by plunging in depth, or through reflection, by mirroring, and thus help us reflect upon and understand the condition of the individual in a cultural context.

When studying literature, we are tempted to focus on literary texts by investigating the meaning creation techniques employed in their making. More often than not we tend to disregard the fact that all these techniques are part of more elaborate discursive strategies and that “[d]iscourse”, as opposed to text, is language in use. Its meaning exists and becomes relevant in context for the language users, who perceive it as purposeful, meaningful, and connected, in other words as coherent.” (Dobrinescu, 2001: 48) I thus claim that literature can still prove its indispensability as a cultural product if it is approached as a form of communication, as one of the most efficient and powerful types of discourse, whose specificity resides in the “fact that it takes place in a larger cultural system” (Dobrinescu, 2001: 43).

“Impression” represents a turning point in the history of Western culture. It first imposed itself as a concept in visual arts, when a group of young artists decided to reject the canon imposed by the French salon and initiated a form of art

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\* Petroleum-Gas University of Ploiesti, [adobrinescu@upg-ploiesti.ro](mailto:adobrinescu@upg-ploiesti.ro)

capable of revealing what had been previously invisible. Impression is central to that art that strives to become a form of knowledge, of access to the essential meaning of things, beyond the visible. “[E]rasing the line between superficial appearances and deep knowledge, the impression brings richer connections.” (Matz, 2004: 17)

Writers soon embraced impression as defining of the new aesthetics of modernism, which tried to “fuse the transcendent subjectivity of romanticism and the omniscient objectivity of realism toward a kind of Utopian compensation for modern alienation” (Matz, 2004: 13).

In the Preface to *The Nigger of the Narcissus*, Conrad offers one of the best accounts of how impression functions, although he does not name it specifically.

My task which I am trying to achieve is, by the power of the written word, to make you hear, make you feel - it is before all, to make you see. That, and no more, and it is everything. If I succeed, you shall find there according to your deserts: encouragement, consolation, fear, charm - all you demand - and, perhaps, also that glimpse of truth for which you have forgotten to ask. (Conrad)

What is interesting from the point of view of the one interested in seeing literature as discourse is that for Conrad impression connects the sensorial and the essential, while at the same time connecting the writer and the reader in the process of meaning creation.

For Henry James the novel is an impression, which also means subjectivity of view rendered in the most objective manner.

A novel is in its broadest definition a personal, direct impression of life; that, to begin with, constitutes its value, which is greater or less according to the intensity of the impression. But there will be no intensity at all, and therefore no value, unless there is freedom to feel and say. (James)

Impression is also central to Woolf’s approach to literature. It is through impression that the modernist novel breaks with the tradition of realism by foregrounding the inner self to the detriment of the external one. It is far more important how the self subjectively responds to the external stimuli, which gives our uniqueness, rather than what roles the self plays in a social environment.

Look within and life, it seems, is very far from being ‘like this.’ Examine for a moment an ordinary mind on an ordinary day. The mind receives a myriad impressions - trivial, fantastic, evanescent, or engraved with the sharpness of steel. From all sides they come, an incessant shower of innumerable atoms; and as they fall, as they shape themselves into the life of Monday or Tuesday, the accent falls differently from of old. (Woolf, 2004: 160)

The modernist paradigm is constructed starting from a number of questions which definitely account for the epistemological dimension of literature.

What is there to be known?; Who knows it?; How do they know it, and with what degree of certainty?; How is knowledge transmitted from one knower to another, and with what degree of reliability?; How does the object of knowledge change as it passes from knower to knower?; What are the limits of the knowable?” (McHale, 1987: 9)

Driven by the desire to reveal the innermost motions of the individual, the modernists probed deep into the realms of consciousness, seldom, if ever, explored before. They used literary discourse as a form of knowing the darkest recesses of the self, plunging as deep as the unconscious. With each experiment, the modernists got closer to the limits of the knowable, until they eventually reached the bottom line of meaningfulness. Incessant searchers for meaning, they eventually exhausted most possibilities of “making it new.” This was clearly expressed by Woolf in *The Waves*, some time before the advent of postmodernism. Woolf signals the exhaustion of the paradigms and the inability of the discourse of literature to refresh existing schemata. (Cook in Dobrinescu, 2001: 49-50)

My book, stuffed with phrases, has dropped to the floor. It lies under the table, to be swept up by the charwoman when she comes wearily at dawn looking for scraps of paper, old tram tickets, and here and there a note screwed into a ball and left with the litter to be swept up. What is the phrase for the moon? And the phrase for love? By what name do we call death? (Woolf, 1992: 226)

Consequently, the solution Woolf proposes has to do with what later on would be seen as a shift from the paradigmatic to the syntagmatic. (Hassan, 1982: 267-268)

I need a little language such as lovers use, words of one syllable such as children speak when they come into the room and find their mother sewing and pick up some scraps of bright wool, a feather, or a shred of chintz. I need a howl; a cry. When the storm crosses the marsh and sweeps over me where I lie in the ditch unregarded I need no words. Nothing neat. Nothing that comes down with all its feet on the floor. None of those resonances and lovely echoes that break and chime from nerve to nerve in our breasts, making wild music, false phrases. I have done with phrases. (Woolf, 1992: 226-227)

While sensing the dead end of modernism, Woolf seems to be offering a postmodernist solution to the crisis of meaning and thus go beyond the apocalyptic scenario of the death of the novel. It so happened, however, that “[f]or several decades after the end of the Second World War, the novel appeared to be dead. As a vehicle for literary experimentation [...], it had been taken to the limits by modernists like Joyce, Woolf and Beckett.” (Morrison, 2003: 3)

The questions modernist literary discourse had tried to offer answers to gave way to new ones that define the ontological dominant of postmodernist fiction.

Other typical postmodernist questions bear either on the ontology of the literary text itself or on the ontology of the world which it projects, for instance: What is a world?; What kinds of world are there, how are they constituted, and how do they differ?; What happens when different kinds of world are placed in confrontation, or when boundaries between worlds are violated?; What is the mode of existence of a text, and what is the mode of existence of the world (or worlds) it projects?; How is a projected world structured? (McHale, 1987: 10)

The literary text is then no longer conceived as a means of investigating the meaning of the world, be it seen as the sum total of external, visible aspects or as the subjective response to the visible, as a journey to the essence of things, as it used to be in modernism. With the death of the author heralded by Roland Barthes,

we start seeing the text as “a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash.” (Barthes 146)

The literary work starts functioning as a locus of reflection rather than impression. Without mentioning it explicitly, modernist T. S. Eliot, probably aware, like Woolf, of the epistemological impasse modernism had reached, referred in “Tradition and the Individual Talent” to the movement of meaning from depth to surface, and consequently, to the reflexive quality of the work. (see Haberer 60-61)

No poet, no artist of any art, has his complete meaning alone. His significance, his appreciation is the appreciation of his relation to the dead poets and artists. You cannot value him alone; you must set him, for contrast and comparison, among the dead. I mean this as a principle of aesthetic, not merely historical, criticism. (Eliot 215)

Julia Kristeva’s concept of intertextuality could be seen as being associated with T. S. Eliot’s system of tradition defined by the historical sense understood as both chronology and simultaneity. (see Haberer)

[T]he historical sense involves a perception, not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presence; the historical sense compels a man to write not only with his own generation in his bones, but with the feeling that the whole literature of Europe from Homer and within it the whole of the literature of his own country has a simultaneous existence and composes a simultaneous order. The historical sense, which is the sense of the timeless as well as of the temporal and of the timeless and of the temporal together, is what makes a writer traditional. (Eliot 215)

If impression had perfectly served the purpose of modernist fiction, reflection, interpreted as the quality of texts to refer to other texts offered fiction a way out of the impasse of meaninglessness. The shift from the paradigmatic to the syntagmatic followed Barthes’ death of the author as

[the writer’s] only power is to mix writings, to counter the ones with the others, in such a way as never to rest on any one of them. Did he wish to express himself, he ought at least to know that the inner “thing” he thinks to “translate” is itself a ready-formed dictionary, its words only explainable through other words, and so on indefinitely (Barthes 146).

The work of art stops being seen as a finished product, but rather as a process, the reader becoming involved in the process of meaning creation.

The order of the sign being radically different from that of the referent, the sign itself being split into signifier and signified, the very notion of meaning as something fixed and stable, even though it sometimes had to be deciphered, was lost and replaced by that of the sliding, shifting, floating signified. Meaning could no longer be viewed as a finished product, it was now caught in a process of production. (Haberer 56)

Impression was replaced by textual reflection alongside the disappearance of the centred structure. Despite the formal experiment of modernism, impression is indicative of the fact that the modernist creators continued to believe that there was a meaning underlying all things and it was in search of it that they created their work. The structural quality of the modernist work was given by the solidity of a centre seen as presence, in Derrida’s terms.

The history of metaphysics, like the history of the West, is the history of these metaphors and metonymies. Its matrix [...] is the determination of being as presence in all the senses of this word. It would be possible to show that all the names related to fundamentals, to principles, or to the centre have always designated the constant of a presence - eidos, arché, telos, energeia, ousia (essence, existence, substance, subject) aletheia, transcendentality, consciousness, or conscience, God, man, and so forth. (Derrida 2)

The scepticism about a pre-existing, transcendental meaning that the modernists first expressed was the result of decentring, the loss of the structurality of structure.

There was no centre, that the centre would not be thought in the form of a being-present, that the centre had no natural locus, that it was not a fixed locus but a function, a sort of non-locus in which an infinite number of sign-substitutions came into play. This moment was that in which language invaded the universal problematic; that in which, in the absence of a centre or origin, everything became discourse - provided we can agree on this word - that is to say, when everything became a system where the central signified, the original or transcendental signified, is never absolutely present outside a system of differences. The absence of the transcendental signified extends the domain and the interplay of signification ad infinitum." (Derrida 2)

And for the several decades in which postmodernism reached its heyday, the literary discourse was mainly constructed through interplay, by a necessary encounter and negotiation between producer and the receiver of the text in the process of meaning creation. Absolute, transcendental capitalized Meaning, be it called Man, Truth, or God, gives way to numberless provisional meanings individually created in a certain given context. Fiction becomes a playground. Meanings multiply endlessly, none valid and yet all true. The seriousness of the modernist impression is replaced by the playfulness of the postmodernist intertext.

We can however sense that this is a new dead end, a new stage of the literature of exhaustion. (Barth) And the question we are inclined to ask is literature where to?

Surprisingly or not, despite the much heralded death of the novel, we witness a rebirth of fiction over the past few decades, whose tenets however seem to differ both from those of modernism and those of the postmodernism of the sixties and seventies. Contemporary fiction is created against a new cultural background seriously affected by "the empire writes back" syndrome. (Ashcroft, Griffith, Tiffin) And it is precisely the ability to foreground the major cultural changes and explain the individual's position in the contemporary context that gives fiction its new energies.

What is necessarily true of all contemporary fiction, like all literature, is that it needs to be read as a product of the cultural conditions from which it emerges. The past half century has been a period of massive, multi-dimensional cultural change. Major shifts and dislocations have occurred to older notions of racial and sexual identity. The fabric of history, collective memory and social time within which, a century ago, fiction could comfortably locate itself, has been subject to profound interrogation and transformation. (Morrison 7)

Modernist works had been too little sensitive to the importance of cultural influences. And this was mainly because, although the modernists developed an explicit interest in the individual consciousness, their works were created in a

period in which the major assumption was that cultural spaces were homogeneous and monolithic. The other was seldom, if ever, allowed access and, if this occasionally happened, it was because of the sensationalism of their exotic nature. In search of the essential meaning of the real, the modernists tended to disregard difference and failed to reveal diversity, often indifferent to the individual as the place of convergence of various cultural influences. On the other hand, moving beyond the dead end of modernism, postmodernist writers were more inclined towards self-reflexivity and made the being of writing central to their endeavour, severing literature from the context in which it was created.

The linguistic experiment of both modernism and postmodernism, from impression to textual reflection, challenging as it was from an intellectual point of view, could have eventually jeopardized literature had it not been for the orientation of contemporary fiction towards the cultural context and the individual as a culturally defined entity. Created against a background of heterogeneity and hybridity “[c]ontemporary fictions are anything but homogeneous, [but they] are interesting precisely for their ability to locate themselves in the interstices – the spaces between national cultures, genders and histories.” (Morrison 7)

Contemporary novels foreground the other and the effort of writers, both mainstream and immigrant, is directed towards making marginal voices audible. “It was the departure from the high modernism [and postmodernism] of the 1950s and early 1960s that caused literature to broaden out in new directions.” (Mai 162)

Differently from both modernist and postmodernist writings, which presupposed themselves co-operation between the writer and the reader or between the producer of the text and the receiver, contemporary novels “are shaped as aesthetic fields of a complex interaction between the reader, the writer and the context” (Mai 161). They are also constructed through reflection, just that reflection has a new twofold acceptation, neither similar to the textual one at the core of the postmodernist enterprise of the sixties and seventies.

Reflection is now associated with knowing through mirroring, of self and other, in terms of race, ethnicity, gender, class or religion. Contemporary fiction also invites to reflection, this is pondering the world changes and the place and role of the in the new context, heterogeneous by cultural commingling, rather than unitary and homogeneous as it had been assumed to be in the heyday of modernism.

Literary discourse still has its aesthetic specificity stemming from language experiments and artistic reflection. But unlike the more closed literary discourses of high modernism the discourses of today’s foremost literature are marked by a concept of literature as an open interaction with the reader, the context, different art forms and the literary tradition. This literary interaction invites readers into a dialogue on both social and artistic values. (Mai 161)

By the way it has evolved over the past few decades we may see contemporary fiction as an efficient form of intercultural communication. Focusing on cultures “as a fluid, creative social force which binds different groupings and aspects of behaviour in different ways, both constructing and constructed by people in a piecemeal fashion to produce myriad combinations and configurations” (Holliday, Hyde and Kullman 3), novels enable a mutually beneficial reflection of the self and the other. At the same time, they allow diversity to become visible,

inviting the reader to reflect on the cultural encounter and the condition of the individual as the result of various intersecting cultural forces.

The question “literature where to” is inevitably followed by “why read or study literature.” “Among the most compelling reasons is [that] the most valuable product of the literary system is not texts as such but the cultural models from which texts are constructed, and which they in turn help to maintain and circulate.” (McHale, 2011: 135)

Doubtless aware of the evolution of modernist and postmodernist art, McHale intimates that the future of literature is closely connected to it offering

privileged access to a culture’s models of reality, enabling reflection on culture’s world-making and world-maintaining functions. Literary study allows us to glimpse how a culture organizes itself and the non-human world around it, and this applies not only to historically or geographically distant cultures, whose models of reality might be alien to us, but also to our own contemporary culture, whose models might pass unnoticed, taken-for-granted, pitched below the threshold of our attention, without the salience or foregrounding that literature imparts to them. (McHale 135)

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## **LES MOTS/MAUX DE LA CORRUPTION. SENSATIONS ET PERCEPTIONS DU TERME CORRUPTION ET DE SES EUPHEMISMES: UNE APPROCHE CONTRASTIVE**

**Corina VELEANU\***

***Abstract:** The present paper is based on the contrastive analysis of press articles in French, English and Romanian, and targets euphemisms used in relation with the legal term "corruption". It aims to identify various perceptions and sensations triggered by the use of legal and non-legal euphemisms and, thus, observe the socio-linguistic evolution of a legal term in the specific context of the aftermath of the Panama files scandal.*

***Keywords:** euphemisms, jurilinguistics, comparison.*

### **Introduction**

Nous présentons une analyse contrastive réalisée sur un corpus constitué d'articles de presse français, anglais et roumains, avec l'attelage « Panama files ». Autour du terme juridique « corruption » ont été décelés des euphémismes juridiques et non-juridiques. Nous nous sommes posé la question de l'imaginaire qui est en train de se construire autour de ce concept juridique, tout en nous plaçant dans la continuation de notre travail sur les métaphores de la corruption, et en remarquant d'emblée la différence entre l'euphémisation en français et l'euphémisation en anglais: habitués aux euphémismes lexicaux anglais, leur absence est constatée au niveau strictement lexical dans les textes journalistiques français étudiés, alors que le roumain pratique un mélange des deux.

A travers les euphémismes, nous retrouvons une corruption « transfigurée » ou « revisitée ». Pour parler avec Jean-Paul Courtheoux, « Toute activité, même la plus flatteuse, peut donner lieu à euphémisme. » (Courtheoux, 2005 : 13) La corruption, en tant que phénomène social et concept juridique, n'est certes pas une activité flatteuse et se prête d'autant plus à l'euphémisation. Dans ce processus d'euphémisation les acteurs sont les parties directement concernées: les « producteurs » de la corruption, les « subissants » de la corruption (les citoyens vivant dans la cité) et les « régulateurs » de la corruption (les juristes, les policiers, etc.).

Les dictionnaires s'accordent à présenter l'euphémisme comme une édulcoration du langage et une figure d'atténuation : « figure de pensée par laquelle on adoucit ou atténue une idée dont l'expression directe aurait quelque chose de brutal, de déplaisant. » (TLF) ; « L'euphémisme est une figure de style – proche de l'atténuation – qui consiste, pour respecter des convenances ou des tabous, à substituer à un mot un terme (ou une périphrase) de sens apparemment opposé. » (Le Larousse); “a word or phrase used to avoid saying an unpleasant or offensive word”<sup>1</sup> ; „Cuvânt sau expresie care, în vorbire sau în scris, înlocuiește un cuvânt sau o expresie neplăcută, jignitoare, necuviincioasă sau obscen, respectând paralelismul de sens.” (DEX Online).

Pour parler avec Denis Jamet et Manuel Jobert,

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\* Université Lumière Lyon 2, CRTT – Centre de Recherche en Terminologie et Traduction, corina.veleanu@univ-lyon2.fr

<sup>1</sup> <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/fr/dictionnaire/anglais/euphemism>

« Fonctionnant sur la modalité du make-believe, l'euphémisme exige que le destinataire lui cède tout en lui résistant, c'est-à-dire qu'il demeure conscient de la modification de vision que celui-ci opère. Il arrive parfois que cette modification perceptuelle soit telle qu'elle finisse par remplacer notre conception antérieure de la réalité. Cela constitue la preuve indéniable de la portée sociologique de l'euphémisme et de son rôle de baromètre des préoccupations et des tendances sociales et politiques. » (Jamet et Jobert, 2010 : 11)

L'euphémisme et le juridique semblent mal s'accorder. La nature imprécise, faussée, apparemment cachotière et sournoisement révélatrice de l'euphémisme, violant les maximes conversationnelles, ne cadre pas avec la rigueur juridique. Et pourtant l'euphémisation est une pratique en plein essor dans le domaine juridique: *lay off* devient *counsel out*, même *de-hire*, *terminate*, *select out*, *separate*, *downsize*, *unassign*<sup>1</sup>, etc. En français, *renvoyer*, *licencier*, *congédier* deviennent *remercier se séparer de*, *démissionner* (qqn, familier), *dégraissier* (les effectifs, salariés dégraissés)<sup>2</sup>, *réduire* le personnel (réduction des effectifs)<sup>3</sup>; un *licenciement* est exprimé, selon les situations, comme *une offre de départ*, *une adaptation des ressources humaines*, *une restructuration*, *un redéploiement*, *un plan social* ou *une gestion des sureffectifs* (Cortheoux, 2005 :37).

L'euphémisme est employé à la place d'un mot de mauvais augure. Il est intéressant de s'attarder sur l'étymologie de l'euphémisme, provenant du grec *eu*, signifiant *bien*, et de *phême* (*phanai*), signifiant *parler*, *parole*. Alain Rey<sup>4</sup> nous apprend que cela « se rattache à une importante racine indoeuropéenne signifiant à la fois « dire » et « briller » ». Nous sommes plongés dans l'*illo tempore* et dans une perception mythologique du monde: la parole d'or, le verbe créateur, la Lumière étant la partie visible l'Amour divin pour les anciens, et l'on se souvient de la célèbre citation biblique : « Que la Lumière soit! Et la lumière fut. » (Genèse 1: 3). Le symbolisme de l'euphémisme contient, ainsi, le couple dichotomique du secret et de la révélation qui caractérise notre société transparente. Nous vivons une transparence équivoque dans une société où la nouvelle religion est, à part la lecture, non pas hégélienne du journal du matin, mais des derniers *tweets* sur *Tweeter*, photos sur *Instagram* et posts sur *Facebook*, la transparence, le vu. Le péché aujourd'hui tient toujours du domaine du secret, mais avec ceci de particulier qu'il réside dans le fait de ne pas montrer, de refuser la transparence, l'exhibitionnisme, le voyeurisme. Nous sommes soumis à un double mouvement: nous créons et subissons les euphémismes, qui participent de la création de nos perceptions du monde. Tout comme l'enfant qui demande sur FranceInfo (18/05/2016) pourquoi on aime tant les bébés panda qui ressemblent à des peluches, nous sommes soumis aux perceptions que le monde nous impose. Bien évidemment, ce sont les peluches qui ressemblent à des bébés panda, mais la peluche nous est tellement plus familière, qu'elle est devenue la représentation euphémique du vrai panda, et ainsi, notre perception est inversée, et nous tenons le faux pour le vrai. Le même processus est en train d'avoir lieu dans l'esprit collectif, pour ce qui est du terme *corruption*, qui est devenu lui-même un euphémisme.

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<sup>1</sup> cf. SEBAN, Claude, <http://www.atlf.org/euphemismes-de-saison-vocabulaire-du-licenciement/>

<sup>2</sup> On dégraisse des vêtements.

<sup>3</sup> SEBAN, *op.cit.* note 3.

<sup>4</sup> REY, Alain, *Dictionnaire historique de la langue française*, <https://books.google.fr/>

La *corruptio* met en scène une euphémisation de la mort, de la décomposition, de la destruction, de la séparation. Emprunté au latin classique *corrumpere* (< *rumpere* « rompre, briser » et *cum* intensif, cf. TLF), étymologiquement, la corruption nous emmène (*se-ducere*) dans un monde manichéen, le monde du faux et du vrai, de la création et de la destruction, de la confrontation et de la violence. La corruption est essentiellement et originellement violence sur le réel, altération du réel, car transformant le vrai en un non-vrai. La corruption est action, changement. En l'euphémisant, on tente de lui enlever de son intensité. Pour citer Gilbert Durand, « L'euphémisation, constitutive nous le verrons de l'imagination, est un procédé que tous les anthropologues ont remarqué et dont le cas extrême est l'antiphrase dans laquelle une représentation est affaiblie en s'affublant du nom ou de l'attribut de son contraire. » (Durand, 1992 : 128) L'euphémisme renvoie au schéma de la chute, établissant un pont entre le Régime Diurne et le Régime Nocturne de l'image<sup>1</sup>, dans une euphémisation du destin, de la mort, du mal. Les sens originels latins du nom commun féminin *corrupto*, ainsi que du verbe *corrumpere*, portent en eux l'actualité performative et perlocutionnaire de ces deux termes : séduire - *pathos*, passion, détruire- *ithos*, éthique, falsifier - *noumikos*, juridique. La *corruption* nous parle donc de la séduction, de la destruction et de la falsification, et nous sommes ainsi positionnés sur l'axe ambivalent Eros-Chronos-Thanatos dont parle G. Durand. L'euphémisation fait partie de notre psyché collective, en nous offrant une issue de l'approche manichéenne Bien/Mal, tout en nous rendant la sortie du Paradis moins pénible : « la tendance progressive à l'euphémisation des terreurs brutales et mortelles en simples craintes érotiques et charnelles. » (Durand, 1992 : 220). Notre imagination sert à euphémiser : « Lutter contre la pourriture, exorcisme de la mort et de la décomposition temporelle telle nous apparaît bien, dans son ensemble, la fonction euphémique de l'imagination. » (Durand, 1992 : 472). Mais c'est aussi la façon qu'a notre cerveau de transformer l'évènement négatif afin qu'il soit digérable et non léthal. Lorsque G. Durand parle de la « chute devenue descente » et qui « se transforme en plaisir », cela n'est pas sans rappeler la facette *seducere* du verbe *corrumpere*. Nous sommes dans l'archétype inversé du lieu lié: celui qui corrompt est corrompu; inversé, car ici il n'y a pas de transmutation de valeurs, mais bien une mise en abîme, un approfondissement du mal, on n'est pas dans le cas « A malin, malin et demi », mais bien dans un engouffrement. Ainsi, la corruption corrompt doublement, et son objet est double: son agent et son patient à la fois. *L'euphémisme fantastique apparaît comme* fondamental du phénomène humain :

« Une des convictions qui se dégage de notre enquête c'est qu'il faut réviser, lorsqu'il s'agit de compréhension anthropologique, nos définitions sectaires de la vérité. Là plus qu'ailleurs, il ne faut pas prendre notre désir particulariste d'objectivité civilisée pour la réalité du phénomène humain. En ce domaine les « mensonges vitaux » nous apparaissent plus vrais et valables que les vérités mortelles. Et plutôt que de généraliser abusivement des vérités et des méthodes qui ne sont strictement valables qu'au terme d'une rigoureuse psychanalyse objective inapplicable à un sujet pensant, et qui, une fois extrapolées, ne sont plus qu'inutiles et incertaines, mieux vaut essayer d'approcher par des méthodes adéquates ce fait insolite, objectivement absurde,

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<sup>1</sup> « Le Régime Nocturne de l'image sera constamment sous le signe de la conversion et de l'euphémisme. » (DURAND, 1992 : 224)

que manifeste l'*euphémisme fantastique* et qui apparaît comme fondamental du phénomène humain. » (DURAND, 1992 : 494)

### Euphémismes en anglais

Exemple 1<sup>1</sup>:

“offshore dealings”; “hide their money offshore”; “hidden offshore”, “the hiding places”; “real owners usually hide behind nominees”; “exploit secretive offshore tax regimes”; “avoided ever having to pay tax”; “The transfer of wealth”; “In a speech last year in Singapore, David Cameron said “the corrupt, criminals and money launderers” take advantage of anonymous company structures.”: Par glissement sémantique, *offshore* est devenu synonyme de corruption, fraude, absence de netteté ; même si “Using offshore structures is entirely legal”, l’image renvoyée est celle de quelque chose de caché, de louche. *Dealings*, par son aspect vague, devient louche également. L’euphémisation de l’évitement est retrouvée dans le passage, la transformation. S’oppose à cela l’emploi direct du terme *corruption*, de manière officielle, par un responsable, le premier ministre David Cameron.

Exemple 2

“leak”, “a central register that will reveal”, “UK companies will have to reveal<sup>2</sup>”: Au pôle opposé du « cacher » se trouve la métaphore de la révélation, liée au liquide, à l’eau qui lave et purifie. Nous remarquons également la métaphore du container<sup>3</sup> qui a une fuite et qui laisse s’échapper le contenu.

Exemple 3 :

“the beneficial owners of offshore companies”, “their “significant” owners”: Nous remarquons l’euphémisation orthographique, par des guillemets, mais aussi celle par des épithètes avec sèmes positifs.

Exemple 4:

“alleged wrongdoing”, “any misuse of its services”, “failings by intermediaries” : L’euphémisation par des termes juridiques est aussi pratiquée.

Exemple 5<sup>4</sup>:

“sweep away decades of offshore “tax secrecy”” ; “how to stop aggressive tax avoidance”: L’euphémisation par le nettoyage et la personnification de l’évitement. “hiding your money”, “hide away profits where governments could never find them”, “potential tax revenue hidden offshore”, “was stashed in tax havens”, “other secret jurisdictions where a client might park their money”, “elaborate system of concealment”: Autant de synonymes pour exprimer l’idée de cacher. “In tropical tax havens such as the British Virgin Islands a chill wind – or at least the threat of one – was blowing.”: La métaphore du vent du changement rappelle *Wind of Change*, célèbre chanson du groupe rock allemand The Scorpions, composée à l’occasion de la chute du Mur de Berlin et du communisme, et symbolisant aussi la chute des régimes corrompus.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.theguardian.com/news/2016/apr/03/what-you-need-to-know-about-the-panama-papers>

<sup>2</sup> Idem.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.politicalmetaphors.com/2013/06/13/leaks-and-other-metaphors-of-liquids/>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.theguardian.com/news/2016/apr/08/mossack-fonseca-law-firm-hide-money-panama-papers>

“The company’s leaked internal database gives some idea of the massive scale of these international operations, many of them perfectly legal. The 11.5m documents include shareholder registers, bank statements, emails from lawyers and accountants, passport scans and contracts. Much of it legal, if hidden.” : On est face au danger d’amalgamation, car, conformément à cette logique, si quelque chose est caché, alors cette chose est forcément illégale et corrompue. L’anonymat est louche et tout doit être connu: les syntagmes “an anonymous offshore company”, “total anonymity” sont teintés de connotations négatives. On vit dans une époque de transparence et de voyeurisme, d’exhibitionnisme. Ce qui n’est pas montré à tout le monde semble contraire à la nouvelle de loi de vie en société, où le paparizzisme et le selfie-isme, avec Facebook et Twitter, nous ont habitués à une vie publique intégrale, à une perpétuelle mise à nu. Alors, le privé, l’intime deviennent objets de méfiance, car incontrôlables, non maîtrisables par la foule. Les conséquences néfastes de cette chasse aux sorcières sont : “anxiety”, “victimhood”, “fear”, “persecution”, “mistrust”, “clients are scared”, “spooked customers”, “one panicked client “, “described their British client as paranoid”, “how “paranoid the Europeans are about secrecy”. Dans une société basée sur une heuristique de la peur (Hans Jonas<sup>1</sup>), il faut tout voir, cela étant le nouvel impératif catégorique : tout doit être visible et vu à tout moment par tout le monde afin que tout le monde se sente en sécurité.

### **Euphémismes en français :**

Exemple 1 :

« avoir rendu un autre service à ses amis politiques »<sup>2</sup> : La sphère personnelle est utilisée en opposition avec la sphère publique pour obtenir une antithèse euphémique.

Exemple 2 :

« Iskandar Safa signe un contrat de plusieurs centaines de millions de dollars avec les Emirats arabes unis, soutenu par les plus hautes sphères de l’Etat : Jacques Chirac, tout juste réélu, écrit en personne pour appuyer le projet... »<sup>3</sup> : L’emphase, les superlatifs, l’adverbe d’accentuation sont les instruments de l’euphémisation ici.

« accusé d’avoir utilisé ses comptes bancaires pour verser des rétrocommissions prélevées sur la rançon qui aurait servi à libérer les otages français » : L’euphémisation est néologique dans cet exemple, avec l’emploi du nom *rétrocommissions*.

Exemple 3 :

« afficher un bilan propre tout en continuant à profiter du système offshore »<sup>4</sup> : L’utilisation de l’antithèse continue, et le verbe *afficher* est positionné en

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<sup>1</sup> JONAS, Hans, *Le principe responsabilité*, Les Editions du Cerf, Paris, 1990.

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.lemonde.fr/panama-papiers/article/2016/05/12/panama-papiers-les-affaires-offshore-d-iskandar-safa-le-propretaire-de-valeurs-actuelles\\_4918462\\_4890278.html#3gi05KgeX8Cc7oWm.99](http://www.lemonde.fr/panama-papiers/article/2016/05/12/panama-papiers-les-affaires-offshore-d-iskandar-safa-le-propretaire-de-valeurs-actuelles_4918462_4890278.html#3gi05KgeX8Cc7oWm.99)

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.lemonde.fr/panama-papiers/article/2016/05/12/panama-papiers-les-affaires-offshore-d-iskandar-safa-le-propretaire-de-valeurs-actuelles\\_4918462\\_4890278.html#3gi05KgeX8Cc7oWm.99](http://www.lemonde.fr/panama-papiers/article/2016/05/12/panama-papiers-les-affaires-offshore-d-iskandar-safa-le-propretaire-de-valeurs-actuelles_4918462_4890278.html#3gi05KgeX8Cc7oWm.99)

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.lemonde.fr/evasion-fiscale/article/2016/05/11/panama-papiers-comment-credit-agricole-et-bnp-poursuivent-leurs-activites-offshore\\_4917424\\_4862750.html#6EQ0twBY2icOgfgl.99](http://www.lemonde.fr/evasion-fiscale/article/2016/05/11/panama-papiers-comment-credit-agricole-et-bnp-poursuivent-leurs-activites-offshore_4917424_4862750.html#6EQ0twBY2icOgfgl.99)

opposition avec l'adjectif *offshore*, l'adjectif *propre* en contraste avec le verbe *profiter*.

« Le bonneteau continue », « Un petit tour de passe-passe » : Le jeu de hasard ou celui du magicien sont autant de manières d'euphémiser des actes de corruption.

Il est intéressant de remarquer que le terme *offshore* a donné lieu à une traduction en français dans les années 80s, à savoir l'adjectif *extraterritorial*, dans le domaine de la finance qualifiant « les activités bancaires et financières domiciliées dans les places étrangères »<sup>1</sup>, mais que personne n'utilise aujourd'hui, préférant à la neutralité de l'équivalent français le terme anglais avec ses connotations négatives, exotiques et ô combien plus sensationnelles.

« le monde opaque de la finance offshore et des paradis fiscaux. »: L'opacité est synonyme de secret, contraire de la transparence et de la lumière. Mais le paradis est secret, par excellence! Alors le rapprochement entre paradis et argent nous apparaît paradoxal et antinomique, dans cette ère de la confusion et de l'incertitude.

Exemple 4<sup>2</sup> :

« ouvrir discrètement leur compte bancaire derrière le paravent d'une structure offshore » : En français on observe la présence de phrases entières comme euphémismes remplaçant le terme *corruption*, avec une préférence pour la suggestion et le non dit qui se retrouvent dans les titres mêmes des articles : « « Panama papers » : les non-dits de la Société générale sur son activité offshore »<sup>3</sup>. Quelques fois un adverbe (*discrètement*) ou des signes de ponctuation (...) jouent le rôle d'euphémismes.

« garder derrière ces écrans offshore l'usage de leur compte bancaire » : La métaphore de l'écran suit celle du paravent.

Exemple 5 :

Il existe également des termes juridiques qui sont employés à des fins euphémiques : « complicité de fraude fiscale, voire de blanchiment d'argent », « à éluder l'impôt ou à blanchir de l'argent »<sup>4</sup>.

« Sur le millier de sociétés offshore créées avec Mossack Fonseca, dont 415 encore actives en 2012, M. Oudéa n'admet qu'« un nombre limité de sociétés offshore structurées avant 2012 » et « 66 » résiduelles. Toutes légales et transparentes. Quelques sénateurs dubitatifs ont tenté la critique. En réponse, M. Oudéa a suggéré de s'adresser aux services fiscaux... »<sup>5</sup> : L'euphémisme est syntaxique en français. L'agencement des phrases mène le destinataire à tirer les conclusions implicites par les journalistes. L'accent est mis sur l'intentionnalité du locuteur et, donc, sur la performativité du discours.

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<sup>1</sup> Journal officiel du 22/09/2000. Note : Dans le domaine du pétrole, les équivalents français utilisés sont « en mer » ou « hauturier ». Équivalent étranger : off-shore (en), offshore (en). Source : Arrêté du 18 février 1987.

<sup>2</sup> op. cit. note 14

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.lemonde.fr/panama-papers/article/2016/05/11/panama-papers-le-patron-de-la-societe-generale-frederic-oudea-a-l-epreuve-des-faits\\_4917214\\_4890278.html#H5CwIb5RY2GSvQlx.99](http://www.lemonde.fr/panama-papers/article/2016/05/11/panama-papers-le-patron-de-la-societe-generale-frederic-oudea-a-l-epreuve-des-faits_4917214_4890278.html#H5CwIb5RY2GSvQlx.99)

<sup>4</sup> Op.cit. note 17

<sup>5</sup> Op.cit. note 18

Exemple 6<sup>1</sup> :

« Ce n'est pas au siège parisien de la banque que s'organise ce business offshore, mais dans ses filiales en Suisse, au Luxembourg, aux Bahamas. Des territoires où jusqu'à présent, le secret bancaire a prévalu. » : La syntaxe inversée entraîne l'implication.

« Si le flux de création de sociétés semble s'être fortement ralenti depuis 2012, et si des structures ont été fermées, une centaine des entités ouvertes par la Société générale chez Mossack restent actives. D'autres ont été transférées à d'autres gestionnaires. Et poursuivent leurs activités ailleurs. » : La dernière proposition, coupée de sa phrase-mère, « met la puce à l'oreille » du destinataire, pour ainsi dire. L'accent est sur la reprise, sur le renversement de situation, sur une antithèse, afin de surprendre le lecteur et par cette surprise même, l'emmener ailleurs, sur une onde de choc émotionnel, vers le territoire de la suspicion.

« La banque continue de traîner les pieds et se retranche derrière le secret bancaire luxembourgeois » La lenteur est ici synonyme de corruption, dans une société de l'immédiat.

#### **Euphémismes en roumain:**

On remarque d'emblée le fait que l'expression *Dosarele Panama* est moins utilisée dans la presse roumaine que le syntagme anglais *Panama Papers*. Le terme *offshore* est très souvent employé dans ses deux fonctions adjectivale et nominale : „conturi offshore”, „ un offshore”<sup>2</sup>. Nous retrouvons également les métaphores de l'abri, de la cachette: „ i-au pus la ad post averile în paradisuri fiscale”<sup>3</sup>, „î i proteja averea”, „se ascunde în spatele legii”, ainsi que la métaphore du jeu de dupes: „explica iile unui afacerist român care p c lea fiscal ”<sup>4</sup>. L'ironie est aussi présente dans le processus d'euphémisation : „celebrit ile din lumea politic ce se îndeletnicesc<sup>5</sup> cu evaziunea fiscal ”<sup>6</sup>, dans cet exemple les sèmes contradictoires [+travail honnête] et [+illégalité] se côtoyant pour un effet surprise. Nous avons également remarqué l'extension de sens d'une expression mathématique: „un român a intrat în ecua ie”<sup>7</sup>. Parmi les métaphores les plus présentes, il y a la transparence („ rile netransparente”<sup>8</sup>), le jeu („cei mai buni juc tori sunt aceia care tiu toate regulile jocului i care fac aceste reguli”), le piège („economia subteran este o capcan social ”), le tremblement de terre<sup>9</sup> („Scandalul 'Dosarele Panama' a provocat un adev rat cutremur pe plan mondial”), le dévoilement („nume care vor fi dezv luite”<sup>10</sup>). On a remarqué aussi une métaphore arachnide („pânza de p ianjen esut ”<sup>11</sup>), ainsi qu'une métaphore automobile empruntée à

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.lemonde.fr/panama-papers/article/2016/04/05/panama-papers-la-societe-generale-une-banque-au-c-ur-de-l-evasion-fiscale\\_4895978\\_4890278.html#SxvbxmbE9ZGxzT7.99](http://www.lemonde.fr/panama-papers/article/2016/04/05/panama-papers-la-societe-generale-une-banque-au-c-ur-de-l-evasion-fiscale_4895978_4890278.html#SxvbxmbE9ZGxzT7.99)

<sup>2</sup> [www.prosport.ro](http://www.prosport.ro)

<sup>3</sup> [www.digi24.ro](http://www.digi24.ro)

<sup>4</sup> [www.stiripesurse.ro](http://www.stiripesurse.ro)

<sup>5</sup> travaillent dans le domaine de (notre traduction).

<sup>6</sup> [www.gandul.info](http://www.gandul.info)

<sup>7</sup> [www.ziaruldeiasi.ro](http://www.ziaruldeiasi.ro)

<sup>8</sup> [www.sfin.ro](http://www.sfin.ro)

<sup>9</sup> [www.ziarulevenimentul.ro](http://www.ziarulevenimentul.ro)

<sup>10</sup> [www.wall-street.ro](http://www.wall-street.ro)

<sup>11</sup> [www.ziarulevenimentul.ro](http://www.ziarulevenimentul.ro)

l'anglais („conturile offshore parcheaz peste 18, 5 trilioane de dolari”<sup>1</sup>). La métaphore de la confrontation symbolisée par l'expression *prendre les taureau par les cornes* et parfaitement traduisible et employée en roumain sous la forme *a lua taurul de coarne* se retrouve sous une forme altérée et assez incompréhensible („s trântesc taurul evaziunii fiscale de coarne”<sup>2</sup>) par l'amalgamation avec une autre expression roumaine symbolisant la confrontation, *a se lua la trânt* (lutter à deux, à mains nues). Le conditionnel présent est aussi euphémisant : „i-ar fi ascuns banii”<sup>3</sup>, ainsi que l'hyperbole („Mega scandalul de corup ie Panama Papers”) sur le modèle d'origine américaine très employé en roumain „mega mall” pour nommer un grand centre commercial.

### Conclusions

Dans les articles en anglais on remarque la prédominance des euphémismes lexicaux, ainsi qu'un haut degré de métaphorisation autour de deux axes sémantiques principales et opposées, *cache*, *abriter*, d'un côté et *dévoiler*, *révéler*, de l'autre. Egalement à noter est l'importance des concepts de la transparence et du nettoyage, de la purification. En français on se rend compte, petit à petit, que l'euphémisme est plutôt syntaxique et implicite, dans une approche insidieuse, performative et perlocutoire, hautement intentionnalisée. Au niveau sémantique, on reste dans le domaine de l'antithèse transparence/secret. En roumain, on retrouve des euphémismes tant au niveau lexical que phraséologique, ainsi que la même dichotomie cacher/montre, et aussi la métaphore du jeu et de la duperie. L'ironie y a sa place, ainsi que de nombreux emprunts à l'anglais.

Pour parler avec Jean-Paul Courtheoux, « Le camouflage du réel constitue une voie très recherchée de l'euphémisme » (Courtheoux, 2005 : 106) menant souvent à un effet pervers qui « réside dans les pertes de sens et la dispersion du langage » et « si l'euphémisme enjolive [...] il obscurcit bien souvent la clarté des termes et peut diminuer aussi l'efficacité de la communication. [...] C'est en quelque sorte, en analyse économique, une baisse de productivité, et en analyse culturelle, une baisse de sécurité du langage. » (Courtheoux, 2005 : 111). Mais l'euphémisme n'a pas que des aspects négatifs, et il représente aussi « une réaction à une certaine violence de la société moderne ; et par delà, une révolte contre le vrai, un refus réel dans leur brutalité ou, tout au moins, une préférence pour le poétique ». (Courtheoux, 2005 :119) Cette révolte, comme tout soulèvement, court souvent le risque d'une récupération politique, et la socio-euphémie « est affaire non seulement de comportements sociaux spontanés mais aussi de stratégies politiques délibérées » (Courtheoux, 2005 :122), les expressions euphémiques ainsi créées posant souvent des difficultés de lecture et gênant la compréhension, comme le montre Marc Bonhomme dans son article « La réception de l'euphémisme : entre réussite et échec interactif » (Bonhomme, 2012 : 82). Dans une démarche de déni, l'euphémisme caractérise une énonciation qui n'est pas fondamentalement mensongère, car le récepteur est, dans une certaine mesure, conscient du « truquage référentiel », selon l'expression employé par Anna Jaubert dans son article « Un précieux moins-disant » (Jaubert, in Bonhomme, 2012 : 94).

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1 [www.b1.ro](http://www.b1.ro)

2 Op.cit. note 31

3 Op. cit. note 31



L'euphémisme est, par excellence, dépendant, du terme de départ, qu'il re-présente (dans le sens théâtral aussi de ce verbe: mise en scène), et du contexte socio-langagier dans lequel il existe. Né sous contrainte et répondant à des besoins, il est soumis à l'ambivalence: il peut servir à masquer mais tout aussi bien à révéler, à replacer un terme sous les projecteurs, à travers un emploi ironique. Il peut être opaque pour un non-initié ou pour celui qui ne connaît pas le terme original (i.e. *rétrocommission*), ou bien montrer avec encore plus de force langagière car perlocutionnaire, le terme en question. L'euphémisme remplace, atténue, interprète, traduit de manière intra-linguale, mettant dans une lumière différente, plus recevable, moins violente, la réalité en question. Etant redevable du contexte socio-linguistique, il est né et existe grâce à ce contexte, répondant aux besoins du moment d'un groupe.

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## **EQUIVALENCE AND COMPOSITIONALITY IN A FACE/MAKE, DO IDIOMS**

**Diana ANI ESCU\***

**Abstract:** *The aim of this paper is to examine a number of idioms formed around the verbs A FACE/MAKE, DO, such as: a face din  n ar arm sar – make a mountain out of a molehill. We try to show and explain the differences and similarities found between the two languages: English and Romanian. Thus, idiomaticity will be interpreted in terms of selection or cultural background in both languages. We focus on observing whether there is equivalence in translation between the two languages or not and whether the differences in the choice of another culturally or historically determined element come from collocation. Moreover, we argue that idioms are indeed compositional as they form at the level of a particular XP and they show regular syntactic patterns of formation and their non-compositionality may be given by cultural or historical references.*

**Keywords:** *idioms, equivalence, compositionality.*

### **1. Previous Analysis of the corpus**

#### **1.1. Introduction**

This research is part of a more extended study exploring the syntax and semantics of the verbs *face/make/ do* (Aniescu, 2016 to appear). One property that we have investigated is their potential for idiom formation. It is known that these verbs function not only as lexical, but also as light verbs, which means that they have little descriptive content and are apt to occur in an extremely diverse number of lexical combinations, some of which have become idiomatic.

In agreement with *Bruening (2010)*, we consider that the central lexical semantic property of idioms, from which other important properties derive, is collocation (i.e. lexical selection). Among the derived properties we mention that idioms must be listed as phraseological units in the lexicon (Jackendoff, 1997) and they must be learned by heart.

On the other hand, the syntax of idiomatic constructions is regular. Since collocations themselves are mostly analyzable and since the syntax of idioms is regular, idioms are mostly compositional.

*Bruening (2010)* formulates the theory of idiom formation, starting from the following principle and constraint:

1) *The Principle of Idiomatic Interpretation*

“X and Y may be interpreted idiomatically only if X selects Y.”

(2) *Constraint on Idiomatic Interpretation*

“If X selects a lexical category Y, and X and Y are interpreted idiomatically, all of the selected arguments of Y must be interpreted as part of the idiom that includes X and Y.” (Bruening, 2010: 532)

Therefore, as argued by *Bruening*, all idioms are formed via lexical selection.

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\* University of Bucharest, [Diana\\_anitescu@yahoo.com](mailto:Diana_anitescu@yahoo.com)

Since we are interested in how the status of an argument can affect its ability to give rise to idioms, s-selection plays an important role too because it is known that a predicate selects its arguments and their adjuncts based on their meaning as well and idioms are perfect examples of selecting certain arguments to achieve the exact intended meaning. Thus, they select only heads, leaving freedom in the case of adjuncts.

For example, *Bruening (2010)* shows that the nominal group is selected and not adjectives, possessors or determiners, since they can vary within an idiom:

- (3) a. pull *some discreet* strings
- b. pull *a few* strings
- c. pull *yet more* strings (*Bruening, op. cit.: 533*)

This can also be seen in the case of face/make/do idioms, as shown in the example below:

- (4) a. make *some* jokes
- b. Make *a few* jokes
- c. Make a *good/bad* joke

Furthermore, he makes a distinction between continuous and discontinuous idioms, formulating classes of idioms such as:

- (5) Verb NP to NP  
give it to NP – where the verb and the theme NP form the idiom, this being an example of a continuous idiom (*ibidem: 542*)

- (6) Verb NP to NP  
throw NP to the wolves – where “the idiom is discontinuous, with the verb and prepositional phrase having an idiomatic interpretation, excluding the theme NP.” (*ibidem: 544*)

In the next subsection we present our previous analysis of the corpus, focusing on syntactic and semantic properties of idioms formed around the verb *a face*, particularly on the status of arguments and their ability to give rise to idiomatic interpretations.

## **1.2. The Analysis**

### **1.2.1. The corpus**

In Ani escu, 2016 (to appear) we have investigated the syntactic and semantic properties of idioms based on the verbs *a face/make, do* in configurations with two internal arguments (ditransitives).

We have chosen the verb *a face* which is a transitive verb with an argument structure that includes only an Agent and a Theme and, as we have noticed, sometimes another internal argument, a Dative Goal, may be added.

The corpus included 256 Romanian idioms, taken from various Romanian dictionaries, such as: *Dic ionarul Limbii Române (DLR), 2010; Dobrescu, A. 2008. Dic ionar de Expresii Idiomatice Române ti.* Therefore, the analysis was made at the dictionary level and not with respect to a specific context.

The problem that we investigated was whether the two internal arguments (i.e. the obligatory Theme and the added Goal) have the same potential for giving rise to idioms or not and whether the theta structure plays an important role in idiom formation.

### 1.2.2. Predictions

Starting from *Pylkkänen's (2008)* distinction between *core* and *non-core* arguments (i.e. any other arguments than those which the verb needs minimally to combine with), we expected idioms to be more frequent based on the argument structure than when they are based on non-core arguments possibly added, where the argument is optional.

Therefore, our main prediction was that core arguments should be more productive and that the verb *face* more often will have the structure V- Theme, rather than V - Theme – Goal, since the Theme argument is the core one and the Goal argument the non-core, optional one. (ANI ESCU, *op. cit.* to appear).

### 1.2.3. Results of the quantitative analysis

The results of our quantitative analysis were in line with our predictions. As we can see from the table below, there is a large class of monotransitive idioms (7). This follows from the fact that *a face* is basically monotransitive and has an argument structure that includes only two obligatory arguments: the external argument (agent) and one internal argument which is marked as a Theme.

- (7) a face boroboa e/comedii/ A face naveta  
“to make mistakes”/ “to make shuttle”  
“to misbehave”/ “to commute”  
a face spume  
“to make foam”  
“to rant and rave” (*ibidem*)

When discussing ditransitive constructions, we noticed that a Dative Goal may be added to the a-structure of the verb *a face* and, in most of these cases, this non-core argument is not interpreted idiomatically (8).

- (8) a face scandal cuiva/A face cuiva coastele pânțete/  
“to make scandal someone-Dat.”/ “to make someone-Dat. the ribs venter”  
“to fight with someone”/ “to beat someone to a pulp”  
a face o favoare cuiva  
“to do a favour someone-Dat.”  
“to do a favour to someone” (*ibidem*)

Moreover, as we can see in the table below, we have found 93 such cases. Therefore, they form a numerous class, even though they are not as many as the monotransitive ones. Expectedly, we have also found cases where both the Theme and the added Goal are part of the idiom, but they are fewer than the other two classes. In fact, we have found only 3 such instances so far (9), proving yet again that core arguments are more productive than non-core arguments.

(9) a face umbr p mântului/ a face cuib la barza chioar /a face un serviciu comunit ii

“To make shadow to the Earth”/ “To make a nest to the blind stork”/ “do a service to the community”

“To eat the bread of idleness”/ “To do something in vain”/ “do a service to the community”

Expectedly, we have found no cases where the Theme is not interpreted idiomatically, since it is a core, obligatory argument of the transitive verb *a face*.

We summarize our findings in the following table:

Idioms around the verb <i>a face</i>	
Total number	<b>256</b>
Monotransitive Idioms “a face popas” “to make stop-over” “to stop over”	<b>160</b>
V-Theme; Goal free “a face vânt cuiva” “to make wind someone – Dat.” “to push someone”	<b>93</b>
V-Goal; Theme free	<b>0</b>
V-Theme-Goal “a face umbr p mântului” “to make shadow to the Earth” “To eat the bread of idleness”	<b>3</b>

(10) Quantitative Analysis *a face* idioms (Ani escu, *op.cit.* to appear)

#### 1.2.4. Conclusions of the Analysis

We have concluded that, as core arguments are more productive, theta structure plays an important role in idiom formation. Our analysis shows that idiom formation observes the rules of syntax and selection: in this case, the grammar of ditransitive structures and the status of the argument. Therefore, idioms are compositional.

Since compositionality should encourage translatability, we expect these idioms to be formally translatable up to a point. In the following section we will try to argue in favour of this prediction.

## 2. Equivalence in Translation

### 2.1. Introduction

In the first section of this paper we summarized our previous analysis of *a face* idioms, an analysis that shows that they are syntactically compositional and as we believe that compositionality should encourage translatability, we were interested in how these idioms can be translated into English. Furthermore, we looked at both ditransitive idioms and other types of *a face* idioms, as we will show below.

## 2.2. Nida (1964): Formal equivalence vs Dynamic equivalence

One important distinction regarding equivalence in translation was made by Nida (1964). He distinguished between formal equivalence and dynamic equivalence.

In his words, formal equivalence “focuses attention on the message itself, in both form and content” (Bassnett, 2002: 34). It is also called “‘gloss translation’, which aims to allow the reader to understand as much of the SL context as possible” (*ibidem*).

On the other hand, dynamic or functional equivalence implies the fact that “the relationship between receiver and message should aim at being the same as that between the original receivers and the source language message” (*ibidem*).

In other words, what Nida (1964) argues is that formal equivalence aims at maintaining the form and content, while dynamic equivalence focuses on the message and overall effect on the reader.

In what follows we address both formal and functional or dynamic equivalence with respect to *a face/make, do* idioms, trying to show that we can establish certain correspondences between the two languages: English and Romanian.

### 2.2.1. Formal equivalence and A FACE/MAKE, DO idioms

As stated before, we expect these idioms to be formally translatable up to a point. We believe that we should not aim at a word-for-word translation, but at the same number of constituents. Some differences may appear, of course, but at the level of adjuncts.

(11) make a mountain out of a molehill - a face din ân ar arm sar  
“make from mosquito horse”

make a deal with the devil - a face pact cu diavolul

make smb a scapegoat - a face pe cineva ap isp itor

do the dirty work - a face (toat ) treaba murdar

do a service to the community - a face un serviciu comunit ii

(examples taken from: Trofin A. Dic ionar Englez-Român de expresii idiomatice i locu iuni, 1996 and Hulban, H. Dic ionar Englez-Român de expresii idiomatice i locu iuni, 2007)

With respect to the Romanian ditransitive idioms that we discussed earlier, we noticed that they can be translated into English with ditransitive idioms as well, thus being instances of formal equivalence, since the number and nature of the constituents is preserved. Here are some examples:

(12) a face dreptate cuiva – do somebody justice  
a face pagub cuiva – do somebody mischief  
a face un mare serviciu cuiva – do somebody a good turn  
a face o defavoare cuiva – do someone an ill office

(*ibidem*)

We also looked at other examples of *a face/make, do* idioms. Some of these examples are instances of a regular correspondence, including the possessive

Dative in Romanian, which is rendered in English with the help of the possessive adjective. We consider these examples to belong to formal equivalence as well:

- (13) make one's flesh creep - a i se face pielea de gain  
make one's hair curl - a i se ridica p rul in cap  
make one's mouth water - a-i lasa gura ap

(*ibidem*)

### 2.2.2. Functional Equivalence and A FACE/MAKE, DO Idioms

As mentioned above, functional equivalence focuses on the overall meaning expressed by the idiom and on its effect on the reader. Therefore, the words used in the target language are “thought-for-thought or sense-for-sense correspondents of the source language idiom” (Stefan, 2014: 135). Here are some examples:

- (14) make a narrow escape = a scapa ca prin urechile acului  
make a brush = a sp la putina  
make it snappy! = Da-i b taie!  
a face anticamer = to cool one's heels  
a face o boacan = to put one's foot in it

(*ibidem*)

A real difficulty is the fact that idioms are often non-literal and not necessarily based on the same referential mechanisms. Therefore, even in the case of formal equivalence some other metaphors may be employed and the idioms may not be translated using the same lexemes and this can lead to a problem in translation.

Furthermore, idiom formation is diachronic, therefore some of the meaning may be lost and they become opaque. Also, cultural references may contribute to the opacity of an idiom.

Such cases can also be regarded as instances of cultural equivalence, since changes have been made to the source language idiom in order to make them appeal to the reader. “Cultural equivalence means adapting the source text to the specific situation of the target audience, this is why some translation studies theorists call this strategy adaptation.” (Stefan, *op. cit.*:138)

Let's discuss the following example:

- (15) make mincemeat out of someone – a face pilaf/pftie pe cineva

Although a few centuries back *mincemeat* was an *entrée made of chopped meat, now it is mostly made up of fruit, spices and rum and used as pie filling*. In Romanian, the words used may be *pilaf* or *pftie*, or even in some geographical areas *mamaliga*, again traditional dishes for Romanians. They both mean the same thing: “beat someone to a pulp/ destroy someone”, but different words are used in order to appeal to the traditional values of the speakers of the two languages.

### 2.2.3. Conclusions

To sum up, we have shown that idioms are syntactically regular, thus compositional and that theta structure plays an important role in idiom formation.

We believe that compositionality encourages translatability and, in the case of *a face/make, do* idioms equivalence may be both formal and functional. Instances of formal equivalence are idioms with the same number of constituents in both SL and TL, the ditransitive Romanian idioms which can be translated into English as ditransitive idioms as well, and idioms which employ the possessive Dative in Romanian and the possessive adjective in English.

Cultural references play an important part in the translation of an idiom, since they need to appeal to the reader's cultural values. This is the reason why different words or lexemes are used in different languages to express the same concepts.

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## **TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETATION – KEY ASPECTS OF THE DIPLOMATIC COMMUNICATION**

**Sanda-Marina B DULESCU\***  
**Flavian PALADE\*\***

***Abstract:** The present article is intended to analyse the history of English language use in diplomacy, the several meanings of the term “diplomatic language” and the way in which the quality of translation and interpretation during official meetings can influence the diplomatic and international relations established between various countries.*

***Keywords:** Diplomatic English Language, translation, interpretation, diplomatic relations, international communication*

### **Introduction**

To begin with, it must be stated the significance of diplomatic language. According to Merriam Webster Dictionary, language is defined as “*the system of words or signs that people use in order to express thoughts and feelings to each other*”, while diplomacy represents “*the work of maintaining good relations between the governments of different countries*”.<sup>1</sup>

In Sir Ernest Satow’s opinion expressed in his work called “*Guide to Diplomatic Practice*”, diplomacy consists in “*the application of intelligence and tact to the conduct of official relations between the governments of independent states and between governments and international institutions*”. (Satow, 1932:1)

Another definition was given to diplomacy by Henry Kissinger who describes it as “*the art of relating states to each other by agreement rather than by the exercise of force, by the representation of a ground of action which reconciles particular aspirations with a general consensus...; diplomacy depends upon persuasion and not imposition*”. (Kissinger, 1957:326) This way he emphasizes the fact that international actors should make all the efforts to reach an agreement through peaceful means not by military operations.

Although the roles of professional diplomats have significantly changed in the last decades by gaining a greater influence in the government system and by using more modern operative methods, the fundamental purposes of diplomacy remained the same. This idea is supported by Sir Harold Nicolson who argues that “*Diplomacy is neither the invention nor the pastime of some particular political system, but is an essential element in any reasonable relation between man and man and between nation and nation*”. (Nicolson, 1977:4)

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\*University of Pitești, [sbadules@gmail.com](mailto:sbadules@gmail.com)

\*\*University of Pitești, [flavian.palade@yahoo.com](mailto:flavian.palade@yahoo.com)

<sup>1</sup> In order to have a better understanding of the meaning of “*diplomatic language*”, the authors consider it is worth analysing the concept from a linguistic point of view. In accordance with a theory that pertains to Ferdinand de Saussure and which appears in a book published in 2003 under the title “*On the double essence of language*”, the elements of language function simultaneously as distinctive sounds and as meaningful sounds or signs, this representing the doubleness of the language. The Swiss linguist argues that a linguistic form cannot exist without a meaning and a linguistic meaning cannot exist without a form. (In Joseph, 2012)

Ambassador Stanko Nick notes that the term “*diplomatic language*” can be interpreted in several ways. First of all, it refers to the common language used by the parties involved in an actual interstate negotiation process. Secondly, it refers to the lexicon of specialized words and of other technical terms employed by diplomats during their bilateral or multilateral meetings. The third meaning consists in a polite vocabulary, manner or tone of expression used by a person to deal with other people (Nick, 2001).

### **Diplomatic English Language Concept**

Based on the previously mentioned theory, it is important to underline that diplomacy is mainly built on language and on the capacity of identifying and deciphering the hidden message or nuance of a certain expression or argument presented. In her work called “*Le discours diplomatique*”, Constance Villar proposes a semiotic approach around four axes of the diplomatic language: honesty vs duplicity, sincere words vs lies, truth vs falseness and transparency vs secret. Starting from these axes and in conformity with the discourse analysis studies it can be asserted that language used in diplomacy is a common language, not a technical one. Diplomacy is characterised by a regular vocabulary used in every day speech to which a particular code is associated. This code is specific to interstate relations and to individuals in charge of representing their countries’ interests in international negotiations (Villar, 2006).

Diplomatic language is considered to be a version of the political language which deals with the same categories such as rhetoric, persuasion, manipulation and attention paid to the signifier and to the signified. It is defined by two dimensions. The first one is represented by the paradox of having a formal language which is necessary to contain ambiguities. Ambiguity is a rarely noted point in the diplomatic language that deserves to be emphasized. There are semantic ambiguity (several meanings of the same statement) and strategic ambiguity that concerns the relation between utterance, speaker and addressee. For the analysis of communicative acts of diplomacy, the notion of ambiguity is essential as it allows to decipher the roles and behaviour of the actors. This type of language and its characteristics are used for internal communication between diplomats. The opacity of these words’ meaning associated with the classic image of diplomacy lead the public to disregard this language because it does not prove to be sufficiently transparent. The second dimension is the political one which addresses to citizens and media who want to have access to information, this giving an external character to diplomatic language. (Arifon, 2010)

### **Diplomatic language and international communication**

With regard to “*diplomatic language*” seen as a common language used for diplomatic purposes, throughout the history there have been numerous attempts of imposing an unique language in international communication. This role was played in ancient times by Acadian, literary Chinese, later by mediaeval Greek, Latin, Arabic and yet later by Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch and French. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, English gained more importance on the international scene and it finally became the most widely used diplomatic language (Nick, 2001).

Owing to the increasing implication of more and more countries in international affairs and to their will of using their own languages in diplomatic documents and correspondence, international organisations have recognised the various languages of member states as official or working languages for their proceedings (Kurbalija& Slavik, 2001).

For example, in the European Union there are 24 official languages that enjoy equal status and make the European institutions more accessible and transparent by giving the citizens the possibility to read legislation affecting them in the language of their own country. Community law also entitles its member states' citizens to follow debates, ask questions and receive replies in their mother tongue. Thus, it should be clearly mentioned that multilingualism represents the reflection of the cultural and linguistic diversity of the European Union. ([www.europarl.europa.eu](http://www.europarl.europa.eu))

Taking into consideration the first meaning of the concept of diplomatic language, the main difficulty diplomats have to cope with in their interaction is represented by finding a common tongue. This issue has been a topic of interest for a long time, but no ideal solution to overcome this problem has been found. One option could be that one of the participants speak the language of the other. The most important drawbacks that appear in this case are that one of the sides has a clear advantage over the other and it is not suitable to be applied in multilateral diplomacy. A second solution is that both diplomats use a third, neutral language. The most significant problem that may arise is that neither side has an excellent linguistic command of that tongue which is likely to lead to serious misunderstandings. In addition to the previously discussed formulas, another method to be often applied in international practice for negotiations during official encounters involves using interpreters because politicians and statesmen do not necessarily have to know foreign languages. This method implies the following disadvantages: it requires a bigger financial effort and the translation may prove to be not very accurate because the topic of the negotiation could be a very particular subject which exceeds the expertise of the interpreter. The final possibility to solve the problem of communication between diplomats consists in using an international artificial language such as Esperanto which would significantly reduce the costs of translation and interpretation and also the time spent with these processes making the conversation more fluent (Nick, 2001).

A topic that needs a particular attention is the way in which an experienced and skillful diplomat who speaks several foreign languages chooses to use a certain language in a specific context. The logical answer is that he should use the language he can master best. Judging by the professional point of view, this decision is not always the most adequate. Sometimes, it is preferable to use a language that he speaks not at a very high level having as a purpose to avoid the mother tongue of the interlocutor or to avoid an unpleasant political connotation. With respect to the language used in written international communication and documents of major interest, the choice is clearly stipulated in most of the cases in bilateral agreements and is based on the principle of sovereign equality of states. There are several ways of implementing this principle in the linguistic field: the first one implies that each side writes its official correspondence in its own language, the second method consists in writing in the national language of the other side which is opposite from practice. A third formula would be that in each

country the correspondence is written in the local language and the last possibility is that a third, neutral language is agreed by both parts to be used (*ibidem*).

Some diplomats use certain tactics in order to gain the appreciation of their partners in conversation. They make gestures of benevolence or signs of special respect either for their interlocutors or for their countries. Upon their arrival to a foreign country, many speakers greet their hosts in the local language aiming to create a warm atmosphere and express their gratitude for the hospitality shown to them. When there are multiple diplomatic delegations involved in a negotiation or participating to an important reunion, communication becomes even more difficult to be ensured because it requires more human resources which consequently means more time spent for making possible the interpretation, supplementary costs and an impersonal way of interaction between the diplomats. In their attempt of solving this issue, many international organisations resort to using only a small number of languages calling them official or working tongues. (*ibidem*)

As regards the second meaning of diplomatic language that consists in the vocabulary used by a diplomat to convey a certain message in a subtler and more elegant manner, it is important to focus on analysing the substance of the message transmitted in every oral or written diplomatic communication. Any diplomat has to carefully choose the terms he uses in international meetings. Over the last centuries has been developed a well-balanced and moderate vocabulary which has as a goal to impose a refined control in the meaning of words both when the diplomats want to express their agreement with the interlocutor's opinions, but without giving the impression that they are too enthusiastic or when they disagree with them, but doing this without offending the partner of conversation. (Nick, 2001)

Generally, all phrases and expressions used by diplomats either in a dialogue or in a written document are scrutinised by their interlocutors who are interested in finding any possible hidden message that may exist, for instance in an official letter or communiqué sent by a foreign embassy. It is assumed that diplomats who are in charge of expressing the official viewpoint of their country on a certain topic possess enough knowledge of a language in order to transmit correctly what they intend to. An insulting formulation or an undesired confusion or any other obvious mistake made by a diplomat cannot be explained by invoking the insufficient knowledge of a language, the misinterpretation due to a improper translation or a momentary bad mood of the speaker. In writing, the words used have to be more carefully chosen because there is no possibility of correcting a certain statement if the reaction of the other part is negative. (*ibidem*)

Among the most valuable competences that a professional diplomat should possess are the caution and the self-control. For a diplomat it is compulsory to avoid offending his interlocutor and not to give too many details about his opinions and arguments concerning a certain subject. If he fails to maintain a reserved attitude, the success of the negotiation can be jeopardized. Besides this, it is recommended to avoid showing his weaknesses which can be divided into two categories: nonmastered technical knowledge and the will of keeping a high level of prestige and symbolic power (Arifon, 2010).

In diplomatic communication, there are cases in which it is better for the speaker to use short, simple sentences if he has to use a language he does not have a great command of. On the other hand, if the speaker does not want to state

clearly his opinion on a certain subject, he resorts to using more complicated sentences, digressions and introducing new topics (Nick, 2001).

Another frequently used technique in international meetings is uncertainty in communication that derives from differences which appear between various cultural systems and values. According to Constance Villar, "*La stratégie de communication ambiguë permet en effet de maintenir le doute chez l'interlocuteur. Certes, la communication est parfois rendue plus claire en cas de réaction favorable, mais bien souvent elle est laissée en l'état pour maintenir l'autre dans le doute*". (Villar, 2006:175)

Diplomatic language is characterised by a sort of understatement and by a much stronger connotation of some words in comparison to their significance in common speech. An illustrative example in this regard would be represented by the invitation addressed by the minister of foreign affairs to the ambassador of a neighbouring country late in the afternoon to his office in order to express the "*concern of his government over reporting in the ambassador's country's press which is not in harmony with the existing friendly relations between the two countries*". In other words, this message can be interpreted as a warning sent by the minister with respect to the presumed denigratory press campaign commanded by the neighbouring country's government against his country and that he will not tolerate any more this kind of behaviour. The summons of the ambassador after the usual working schedule shows that local authorities consider this to be an urgent problem and beyond the normal framework of bilateral relations. In addition to aspects already discussed, in case the minister says "*he is afraid that the continuation of such practices might reflect negatively on relations between the two countries*", it means that the relations have been previously affected in a very serious proportion by other actions and that the signing of a bilateral cooperation agreement or an already arranged official visit are likely to be postponed. (Nick, 2001:45)

Formal language has also a diplomatic usefulness. In the following lines, we will give some examples of words that are used to neutralize or soften the things they describe. Thus, when a diplomat expresses his surprise regarding a certain issue, it means that he does not agree with that state of facts and he wants to assert his discontent. If he uses the verb "*to denounce*", things surely go wrong, while if he "*condemns*", the situation is considered to be extremely serious. An elegant way of expressing a refusal to his interlocutor's request is by using the formulation "*I apologise for not being able to respond favorably to your demand*". The following statement "*the negotiations were conducted openly and must be pursued*" indicates that no final decision was made and for not affecting the relationship between the parts involved, they decided to continue the negotiation. (Arifon, 2010:73 )

Diplomacy plays an important role not only in interstate relations, but also in the business environment or in other types of social interaction. According to Bénédicte Lapeyre, professor of international and diplomatic relations at the College of Europe and author of the book "*Être plus diplomate*", diplomacy is based on knowledge and on the capacity of listening to the others. She continues by saying that: "*Elle nécessite une vraie empathie. Mais il ne s'agit pas seulement de se mettre à la place de l'autre. Il faut comprendre comment il fonctionne*". (Lapeyre, 2008:22)

A relevant example that is meant to support the above stated idea involves attending your twenty year high school reunion and there you meet one of your former colleagues whom you have not seen for many years and who in the meantime has become an important politician and is now candidating for the position of senator. At a certain moment one of the teachers asks each of you to recount a funny event happened during high school years. You consider that narrating the incident when you and your colleague skipped classes pretending to be ill in order to attend a football match, but you were noticed by your Maths teacher on the television broadcast would not bother him at all and under no circumstances this would represent a reason for making him feel embarrassed. But this is not necessarily his case. Therefore, the question is not what would you think if you were in his place, but what he will really think about a certain issue. "*Etre diplomate, c'est donc avoir le souci de savoir comment l'autre va réagir à nos paroles*", concludes Lapeyre. (Lapeyre, 2008:23)

Working in a corporation implies many interpersonal exchanges: between the manager and his employees, between colleagues, between clients and their providers, between the managing director and the shareholders. All these people have to be extremely careful when expressing their opinions because words can be interpreted. Criticism is part of the professional life either it is addressed to a superior or to a colleague. Before criticising someone, it is advisable to ask ourselves what is the utility of that criticism and if it can somehow improve the situation. If criticism is needed, then a softened vocabulary containing expressions such as "*I am sorry*" or "*I regret that you have not done that thing*" are preferable. In addition to this, if you have to make a critical remark to your superior it is wise to put it in the form of a piece of advice: "*Your solution is tempting, but I am afraid it means to take too many risks for our department*". This formulation is clearly more adequate than saying "*Implementing your solution would be a mistake*". ([www.journaldunet.com](http://www.journaldunet.com))

In the following paragraphs, I will put an emphasis on the role of translation and interpretation in modern diplomacy by underlining the possible negative effects that a poor quality of the 2 processes can cause at international level. Besides this, a particular attention will be paid to the description of the types of conference interpretation, to the preparation and techniques required in order to ensure a high quality work of interpretation.

Even though the professions of translator and interpreter are considered to be very similar, in fact the differences between them prove to be significantly important. While a translator works on his own for many hours dealing with a text about a very specific topic that is not attractive for the public and which presents several vocabulary peculiarities, the interpreter's work is much more dynamic because he has to relate to a speaker whose discourse can be unpredictable and he also interacts with the people who listen simultaneously to him and to the orator.

According to the professional translator Roger Chriss, translators have to combine skills from various domains like linguistics and literature, they also have to possess a good general knowledge in order to be able to detect subtleties and nuances in the languages they use, to look for several unknown terms and colloquialisms and to keep updated to the latest developments in their languages. The job of translator also implies the capacity of handling the social and cultural differences that exist between the languages he masters and his proficiency is demonstrated by the way in which he manages to transmit a certain message using

the most adequate diplomatic terms and without recurring to censorship. (www.huntrans124.com/chriss.pdf)

Interpreters are expected to have a good ability to adapt to different topics and what enables them to do this is the education they received and their skill of making connections between the basic and more detailed information they have about the subjects they deal with. The confidence that delegates have in the interpreters is essential for the success of an international reunion. People participating in diplomatic conferences tend to be perfectionists and they set overly critical evaluations for the performance of the interpreters, so in several occasions in order to avoid additional tensions between their countries they choose to speak in a language they do not know perfectly rather than resorting to an interpreter. This is the reason why in this kind of situations there are required experienced and tactful interpreters who know how to manage moments of crisis. In addition to these traits, they should focus more on reading local and foreign newspapers, watching news broadcasts that keep them informed with the latest world political, social and cultural events. (Cremona& Mallia, 2001)

For each of the two main methods of interpretation (simultaneous and consecutive) are needed other competences. In consecutive interpretation, the capacity to synthesize is the dominant one because in the beginning the interpreter has to listen to the orator and then he has to render the most important points of the speech. Simultaneous interpretation involves more adrenaline, spontaneity, intense concentration, faster reflexes, but at the same time a good self-control. There are several styles of simultaneous interpretation. Some interpreters consider that it is preferable to relate just the essential parts of what has been said without entering too much into details, others choose a totally different approach which consists in reformulating the entire speech while another category of interpreters strive to translate the words of the speaker as faithfully as possible attempting to respect the style, the tone and even to express the gestures by means of the voice. (Cremona& Mallia, 2001)

A relevant aspect that deserves to be taken into consideration by interpreters concerns the key words that are present in almost any speech held at an international conference. Among these key terms we should mention *globalisation, treaty, agreement, labour force, gross domestic product*. In addition to these key words, in diplomatic discussions there are always mentioned acronyms of international organizations such as *NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation), IMF (International Monetary Fund), UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation), WHO (World Health Organisation)*, so for interpreters is mandatory to know at least the meaning of the most important ones. If the interpreters fail to identify these elements in a speech, it is very likely that they render incomplete or incorrect ideas from the orator's allocution. The key words vary from one field to another or even from one topic to another so it results to be pretty difficult for an interpreter to master this wide range of terms. In order to be well prepared for handling the subjects he has to confront with during the conference, the interpreter must do a very intense work of documentation by gathering backup material namely transcripts of the speeches that are going to be given during the conference. These will prove to be very helpful in anticipating the general atmosphere of the reunion and will prevent him from having any kind of surprises concerning the vocabulary, general attitudes or certain tensions that may arise between delegates. (*ibidem*)

It is also recommended for an interpreter to possess a good knowledge of history and geography because the key terms often used in conferences evolve in the same rhythm as the world political and social events. Consequently, terms like *Iron Curtain*, *Cold War*, *Velvet Revolution* that were extremely popular after the Second World War have practically disappeared from the international scene allowing other terms such as *monetary union*, *free trade zone*, *emergent economies* to come into prominence. Interpreters who are aware of the historical and social connotations of the key words they use have an important advantage because it is easier for them to avoid possible errors. (*ibidem*)

Non-native speakers usually pose problems to the interpreters due to the sentence structure they use. Sentence construction is not the same in all languages, for instance, in English and French adjectives are placed before nouns while in German the verb is placed at the end of the sentence. Switching from one language to another, many orators do not manage to maintain a single trend of thought which determines incoherence in their discourse. A person who has experience in public speaking knows how to hold a speech as to take into consideration the presence of the interpreters. It is also important to mention that a good cooperation between the interpreters and the delegates would be strongly recommended. The characteristics of a written speech are significantly different namely the rhythm is much higher and the pauses between the ideas expressed are shorter due to the fact that the orator does not have to think about what he is going to say. Besides this, the vocabulary and the sentence structure are more formal and bureaucratic. All these features make the job of the interpreter harder and it results difficult for him to provide an accurate interpretation. (Cremona& Mallia, 2001)

Throughout the time, there were made some interpreting mistakes that actually have or might have changed the course of the history. One of the most relevant examples of this kind dates back to 2006. During the visit of the Iranian president Mahmoud Admadinejad in Israel, the interpreter claimed that the head of state said "*Israel should be wiped off the map*". Later it was revealed that Ahmadinejad actually said "*the regime occupying Jerusalem must vanish from the page of time*" which gives the assertion a significantly different meaning. Moreover, a similar incident took place in 1976 when the president of the United States Jimmy Carter was giving a speech in front of a Polish-speaking audience. He began his allocution by saying "*I left the United States this morning*" which was rendered by the interpreter "*When I abandoned the United States*" (<https://rpstranslations.wordpress.com>)

The protagonist of another famous mistake of interpretation was the president of the Soviet Union, Nikita Hruscirov who, according to the interpreter's rendition, said referring to the United States and to the countries from Western Europe "*We will bury you*". In fact his words were "*We will outlast you*", but at that time this commentary increased the tension existing between the two world powers. (*ibidem*)

### **Open conclusions**

In conclusion of this article, the authors would like to highlight once more the major role played by a good language use in diplomacy. The ability to master several foreign languages in terms of both grammar rules and vocabulary represents an immense advantage for any diplomat because it gives him more



options of approaching certain delicate and controversial subjects and it also enables him to lead the conversation in the direction he wants.

As it has been demonstrated in the body of the article, the term “diplomatic language” has multiple meanings and it results to be of great importance to make the distinction between them. However, diplomatic language is generally referred to as the specific set of words used by country representatives to express their views in international meetings and in the correspondence exchanged between embassies. An excellent understanding and command of these terms added to a good linguistic knowledge are the underlying requirements for a high-level diplomat who is in charge of negotiating international treaties.

Finally, the authors consider it is worth mentioning that the jobs of translator and interpreter are extremely demanding and although they are not in the spotlight, the people occupying these positions should be regarded with more consideration and appreciation because in many occasions they managed to contribute significantly to the success of the diplomatic reunions to which they took part. In times of crisis, translation and interpretation are regarded to be as important as the speeches themselves given by the world political leaders.

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**CONTRASTIVE APPROACH  
ON VERBAL IDIOMS OF COMPARISON  
IN ENGLISH AND ROMANIAN**

**Dan Mihai BARBULESCU\***  
**Ioana Mariela BARBULESCU\***

***Abstract:** As a sequel to a previous study on idioms of comparison functioning as adjectives in English and Romanian, this paper continues the contrastive analysis of comparing idioms functioning as verbs in English and Romanian, with a focus on structure, semantic fusion and translation issues.*

***Keywords:** phraseological units, verbal idioms of comparison, phraseology.*

This paper represents a continuation and an extension of the research made by the authors in the vast field of phraseology<sup>1</sup>. For this reason, we will not insist upon theoretical and practical considerations of this study; suffice it to say that scholars always find themselves facing a linguistic area which is permanently exciting and has a generous and substantial starting point for the issue. Neither will we emphasize again on the large variety of definitions and concepts operated in phraseology; such a variety permanently arouses disputes between scholars, as each one insists on the personal point of view regarding both form and content of the terminology in the field.

Nevertheless it is worth highlighting that an atomist approach of such a complex and controversial topic is, as a matter of fact, impossible because, if in morphology or syntax a quasi-mathematical taxonomy may be set up, well, phraseology represents the field where you can easily prove that natural languages are *not* mathematical systems and *cannot* be subject to rules displayed in mathematical figures.

Sailing over such a huge linguistic area we decided to limit this study to verbal phraseological units and to approach this time only units expressing a comparison.

As a result of the survey of two idiom dictionaries for each language, two general dictionaries for each language and of two bilingual idiom dictionaries, the collected expressions numbers 104 units for the English language and 144 for the Romanian language. We will hereinafter call these units *verbal idioms of comparison*.

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\* The University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine, Bucharest, Romania. [barbulescu.tnx@gmail.com](mailto:barbulescu.tnx@gmail.com)

\* The University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine, Bucharest, Romania. [barbulescu.tnx@gmail.com](mailto:barbulescu.tnx@gmail.com)

<sup>1</sup> Dan Mihai Barbulescu, Ioana Mariela Barbulescu, *Contrastive approach on idioms of comparison functioning as adjectives in English and Romanian / O abordare contrastiv a frazeologismelor adjectivale-comparative în limbile română și engleză* in LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE, European Landmarks on Identity, the 12th International Conference of the Faculty of Letters, Pitești, Romania, June 12-14, 2015.

The first thing worth specifying is the definition of the term itself: *verbal idioms of comparison* are considered such phraseological units with a unitary and fixed character, where the verb is used with its literally meaning<sup>1</sup> and the second part of the comparison (the noun phrase) with a figurative one, and which express potential actions that may be compared with:

- persons: *feel like Daniel in the lions' den; a o nimeri ca Ieremia cu oi tea-n gard*
- animals: *feel like a fighting cock; a mânca precum porcii*
- imaginary beings: *write like an angel; a fugi ca dracul de t mâie*
- disabled persons: *a se în elege ca mutul i orbul prin gaura cheii*
- ethnic representatives: *to talk like a Dutch uncle; a spune drept ca neamțul; a mânca de parcă se bat turcii la gura lui*
- various objects: *to sink like a stone; a vedea ca prin ciur*
- diseases: *to avoid like a plague / a pest; a se feri ca de cium*
- fruits, vegetables or other plants: *drop like a hot potato; a ap rea ca ciupercile dup ploaie*
- natural phenomena: *to look as black as thunder; a zbura ca vântul*
- parts of the body: *know someone or something like the back of one's hand/ the palm of one's hand; a da/a arunca (pe cineva) ca pe o m sea stricat*
- geographical names: *a o întoarce ca la Ploie ti etc.*

The features of such objects, beings or phenomena represents a reference system in the comparative structure of the phraseological units and they intensify the meaning of the verb.

As already known, the phraseologisms in general and the ones analyzed in this study in particular are the result of typical circumstances imagined both by English and Romanian speakers starting from an analogy with the surrounding reality or events (the cultural, social and natural environment) in which the community lives.

These units present (partially or totally) the same morphological categories as the verb and have the same syntactical functions.

### **Structure and component elements of verbal idioms of comparison**

Having analyzed the phraseological units from the view point of the constituent words, we conclude that such units have rather various structures:

#### Similar in both languages:

1. verb (phrasal verb) + like (ca) + noun (zero article in English): *to avoid like poison, avoid like the plague, blow like a grampus, breed like rabbits, feel like a million, go like clockwork, spring like mushrooms, drop like flies; a fuma ca un arpe, a înjura ca un birjar, a mânca ca porcul, a râde ca prostul, a pl ti ca popa, a tremura ca varga, a c dea ca mu tele*
2. verb (phrasal verb) + like (ca) + noun + preposition + noun: *get on like a house on fire, go like a lamb to slaughter, sit like a bump on a log, cut/go*

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<sup>1</sup> Sometimes the verb may be used with a figurative meaning and consequently the degree of idiomacity of such expression is higher: *turn out like a bad penny; a da ca câinele prin b ț.*

*through (smth.) like a knife through butter, go round like a horse in a mill; a tr i ca frunza pe ap , a tr i ca g ina la moar , a tr i ca pe tele în ap , a trece ca gâsca prin ap , a fugi ca dracul de t mâie, a r s ri ca ciupercile dup ploaie.*

3. verb (phrasal verb) + like (ca) + noun + preposition + noun + adjective: *be like a bird in a gilded cage; a sta ca vi elul la poarta nou*
4. verb (phrasal verb) + like (cât) + noun + noun in G.: *go down as mother's milk, look like a dog's dinner, go through like a dose of salts, fight like Kilkenny cats; a tr i cât zidul Goliei*
5. verb + as (ca) + preposition + noun: *tread as on eggs; a sta ca pe ghimpi, a sta ca pe m r cini, a fugi ca din pu c , a c lca ca pe ou*
6. verb + like (cât) + sentences: *look like a cat who swallowed the canary, look like smth the cat's brought/ dragged in, suit smth as saddle suits a sow; a fugi cât îl in picioarele*

Only in English:

1. verb (phrasal verb) + like + adjective + noun: *to sell like hot cakes, blush like black/blue dog, drop like a hot potato, feel like a fighting cock, feel like a box of birds, go like greased lightning, hang/hold on like grim death, stagger like a drunken man, stick out like a sore thumb*
2. verb + like + noun + conjunction + noun: *live like husband and wife, agree like cats and dogs*
3. verb + (smb)+ as + noun + preposition + possessive adjective + noun: *treat smb. as the mud beneath one's feet*
4. verb + like + noun + possessive adjective + noun in G.: *know (someone or smth.) like the back (palm) of one's hand*
5. verb + prep. like + noun in G. + noun + preposition + noun: *look like death's head on a mopstick*
6. verb + like + (proper) noun + preposition like + noun in G. + noun: *feel like Daniel in the lion's den*

Only in Romanian:

1. verb + ca + preposition + noun + preposition + noun: *a striga ca din gura de arpe*
2. verb + ca + preposition + noun + noun in G.: *a sc pa ca din gura lupului, a tr i ca în pânțele mamei, a tr i ca în sânul lui Avram, a mânca ca în targul lui Cremene*
3. verb + ca + preposition + noun + adjective: *a fugi ca de pop tuns*
4. verb + ca + noun + preposition + noun + noun in G.: *a fi ca lutul în mana olarului*
5. verb + reflexive pronoun in A. + ca + noun: *a se bate ca orbii/chiorii, a se usca ca scândura, a se îngâmfa ca un p un*
6. verb + reflexive pronoun in A.+ ca + preposition + noun + adjective: *a se întinde ca o poman ig neasc , a se vinde ca pâinea cald*
7. verb + reflexive pronoun in A.+ ca + preposition + noun: *a se aduna ca la mort, a se feri ca de foc*
8. verb + reflexive pronoun in A.+ ca (precum) + noun + preposition + noun: *a se îneca ca iganul la mal, a se vârî ca musca-n lapte, a se îneca ca în mâzul de iap , a se uita ca mâ a-n calendar, a se potrivi ca nuca în*

*perete, a se dedulci ca (precum) calul la t rã e, a se în elege precum câinele (ca oarecele) cu pisica*

9. verb + reflexive pronoun in D. + noun + ca + noun: *a-i merge gura ca o meli*
10. verb + negation nu + reflexive pronoun in D. + nici + cât + adjective + preposition + noun: *a nu-i p sa nici cât negru sub unghie*
11. verb + pronoun „o” + ca + noun + preposition + noun: *a o nimeri ca nuca în perete*
12. verb + ca + proper noun + preposition + noun + preposition + noun: *a da ca Ieremia cu oi tea-n gard*
13. verb + cât + numeral: *a munci cât apte, a mânca cât patru.*

### Semantic fusion and translation

As we consider that idioms are an important element in the acquisition of proficiency in a foreign language, it is compulsory to analyze the level of equivalence and the rendering of verbal idioms of comparison in Romanian or in English.

From this point of view, we remark as follows:

Similar situations and experiences in a similar environment have led speakers to give rise to similar phraseological units in both languages: *drop/ sink/ fall like a stone = a se duce la fund ca un bolovan/ pietroi, drop like flies = a c dea ca mu tele, agree like cats and dogs = a se avea precum câinele cu pisica, eat like a bird = a mânca ca o p s ric .*

Consequently, such fully equivalent phrases are easily understood and remembered by learners.

Another category is represented by phraseological units in which the latter term of comparison refers to different animals, objects, various persons, and yet, the meaning of the expression is similar in both languages: *eat like a horse = a mânca ca omizile, live like a fighting cock = a tr i ca un nabab, work like a bear/ nigger/ slave = a munci ca un bou / cal/ hamal, live like pig in clover = a tr i ca g ina la moar .*

Transparency in such cases is very high and, consequently, the meaning may be easily figured out even if the imagery does not correspond in the two languages.

The third category is represented by phraseological units that are specific for each language and consequently opaque for those who learn either English or Romanian. There are situations in which the comparison refers to an event or a circumstance familiar to the native speakers only: *grin like a Cheshire cat<sup>1</sup>, come on like gangbusters<sup>2</sup>; a mânca ca în târgul lui Cremene<sup>3</sup>.*

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<sup>1</sup> According to Linda and Roger Flavell, (pp 68-69), “the actual phrase is first found towards the end of the eighteenth century, a hundred years before Lewis Carroll’s powerful image ensured its popularity”.

<sup>2</sup> *Gangbusters* was a radio program in the US about police who went after criminals with much energy and success.

<sup>3</sup> This is a phrase used to figuratively evoke a fabulous place, a sort of a Romanian *Far West* land, where no rule is observed. <http://ziarullumina.ro/satul-lui-cremene-50537.html>

## Morphological and syntactical categories of verbal idioms of comparison

### In English:

**Voices:** It is well known that the passive voice in English has a stronger representation in comparison with the Romanian language. This is due to the fact that, in Romanian, only transitive verbs (i.e. verbs requiring a direct object) can be used in passive voice. And yet, scarcely is the passive voice used for the analyzed phraseological units (*to be built like a brick outhouse*)

**Moods:** We may consider that the infinitive mood belongs implicitly to the academic environment; consequently there might be no mistake in stating that almost all phraseological units are used in the infinitive mood (both in English and in Romanian). Neither appropriate though. And this – because language usage draws our attention and notifies that in colloquial speech (which is the occurrence zone preferred by phraseologisms), such units are almost *never* used in an infinitive form.

- Indicative: most cases
- Conditional: *If he told me, I **would dropped the idea like a hot potato.***
- Subjunctive: *If you **dropped the idea like a hot potato,** you would get fired.*
- Imperative: (restricted, of course, by the semantic level): ***Run like the wind!*** But more often with negation: Don't ***strut like a turkey-cock!***
- Infinitive (see comment above)
- Gerund: ***Watching him like a hawk,*** Mother could know everything about the little boy.
- Past Participle: as this mood is directly related to the voices – we found no examples.

**Tenses:** Proportionally, English phraseological units are much more used in all tenses than the Romanian ones.

**Aspect:** This verbal category representing the opposition *simple-continuous* does not exist in Romanian. In English, it represents one more rule of restriction as to the semantic level of the phraseological unit:

Past: He ***was talking to me like a Dutch uncle.***

Present: Just look at that dog, ***coming back again like a bad halfpenny/ penny/ shilling.***

Future: He ***will be sleeping like a log*** after this supper.

**Person and Number** are hardly represented in English, therefore such features can be scarcely traced in phraseological units, too.

### In Romanian:

As for the Romanian language, we conclude as follows:

**Voices:** Active voice (most cases);

- In some cases – the reflexive voice (dynamic: *a se învăța ca un titirez* or reciprocal: *a se în elege / iubi precum câinele i pisica*)
- Passive voice – extremely rare (*a fi învățat ca mâna la lapte*; nevertheless, although it seems a passive form, the unit is currently used in reflexive voice: *s-a învățat ca mâna la lapte* and not: *a fost învățat ca mâna la lapte*.)

**Moods:** But for the above mentioned statement referring to the infinitive mood in English, phraseological units can be used in Romanian as follows:

- Indicative: most cases
- Conjunctive: Present conjunctive: *S mearg treaba ca pe roate i om vedea ce-om face mai departe.* Perfect conjunctive: *Ce era s fac ? S fi stat ca pe ghimpi, de fraier, când to i chefuiam dincolo?*
- Conditional-Optative: *Dac ar pl ti bine, to i cer etorii s-ar strânge ca mu tele la miere, iar ho îi ar r s ri ca ciupercile dup ploaie.*
- Imperative: (in most cases, with negation): *Ia, nu mai sta tu acolo ca un ap logodit i nu mai tot trage n deidea ca ursul de coad; mai bine du-te i ine-te i tu de el ca mânzul de iap / ca scaiul de oaie; poate i-o da ceva de lucru.*
- Infinitive (see comment above)
- Gerund: *Tr ind ca un bimba / tr ind ca în sânul lui Avram nu avea tiin de necazurile celorlal i.*  
*Îi r spuse repezit, uitând ca p mântul ce îi promisese cu o sear înainte.*  
*i unde nu-l vezi pe Ionu , fugind cât îl in picioarele...*
- Participle: *Toat lumea asta, adunat ca la mort / adunat ca la urs venea în fuga mare.*  
*Deschise ochii i îl v zu înfins ca o poman ig neasc , drept în mijlocul camerei...*
- Supine: (rare cases) *...Iar poli aiul, fericit c g sise pe cineva de b tut ca la fasole, îi c ra acum pumni i palme...*

**Tenses:** Generally speaking, due to their meaning, the phraseological units may be mainly used in a certain tense form.

In Romanian, in most cases we can trace imperfect forms (a past tense which shows a past and unfinished action with reference to a continuing or repeated action, with the meaning corresponding to the English “was/were working” or “used to work”, as opposed to perfect tense (preterite forms – *worked*) which refers to completed actions before the moment of speaking. In the Romanian language this tense is frequently present in narrative texts and phraseological units may be used in such tense forms – especially the ones that can be met also in the narrative present tense (also called *historical present tense* – the tense that uses present forms to express past actions in an epic context).

Others (*a r s ri*, *a ie i*, *a se ivi ca din din p mânt /din iarb verde*, *a tr i cât zidul Goliei*) are generally used in preterite forms.

Many of the phraseological units may also have future tense forms – in case their meaning allow it; still, there are situations where future tense is not accepted – for instance: *a sc pa ca din gur de tun*, where the phrase shows clearly a result that cannot be projected on the future axis.

An interesting case is the phraseologism *a pica ca din cer*, which, used in the future tense form, modifies also the voice: *ai picat ca din cer în mijlocul lor* (preterite, active voice); *vei fi picat ca din cer în mijlocul lor* (future, passive voice)

The unit *Voia dumitale ca la Banul Ghica* (= at will) represents a rare case of a phraseologism that can be used only in the present tense form, although it suggests a future intention.



**Person:** verbal forms of person are almost completely represented in Romanian – in comparison with English. With the exception of such units which, due to their meaning cannot accept other persons ( *a se vinde ca pâinea cald* – only III-rd person singular or plural), or: *Voia d-tale ca la Banul Ghica* – the imperative form accepts only II-rd person singular or plural, or: *a se aduna ca la urs / ca la mort* – only III-rd persons), all other units can be used in all person forms.

**Number:** it is the most restricted category, limited by the meaning: *au r s rit ca ciupercile dup ploaie/a se r spândi ca puii de potârniche* – such phrases cannot be used in singular.

Syntactically such units are in most cases verbal predicates.

### Semantical criteria classification

Should we take into account the semantic criterion – i.e. the meaning of the verbal idioms of comparison under study in English and in Romanian – we can notice that the units may express (as any verb does) an action or a state. The difference is that the action expressed by the verb is performed by the subject either very well, or totally inadequately.

Thus, when someone *works as a beaver* that means that he/she works hard. When people are *dropping like flies* that means large numbers of persons dying or becoming ill or injured within a short period of time. The following actions or states are expressed by the phraseological units:

- Every day actions and behaviour: *cut through smth like a (hot) knife through butter, drink like a fish, swim like a fish, give as good as you get; a mânca cât șapte, a fuma ca un șarpe, a se îneca ca țiganul la mal*
- Emotions and feelings: *feel like a fish out of water; a i se face cuiva pielea ca de g in , a iubi (p zi, îngrijii) pe cineva ca ochii din cap, a se uita la cineva ca la soare*
- Anger, annoyance: *come down like a ton of bricks, to be like a red flag to a bull; a se face negru ca p mântul*
- Anxiety, fear: *to shake like a leaf; a tremura ca varga*
- Arguments, disagreements, disputes, violence: *fight like cat and dog; a se bate ca chiorii*
- Beauty, appearance: *look like a million dollars; a se înfoia ca un p un, a tr i ca un bimba*
- Efficiency and diligence: *work like a charm /beaver / horse/ slave; a munci ca un bou/ salahor, a munci cât apte*
- Happiness, sadness: *grin like a Cheshire cat, feel like a box of birds; a-i sta cuiva ca un ghimpe la (sau în) inim , a plânge ca o mireas*
- Health and physical condition: *look like death warmed up, drop like flies, feel like fighting cock; a fi (a se usca) ca scândura*
- Social, personal, working relationships: *get on like a house on fire, drop like a hot potato; a da afar (pe cineva) ca pe o m sea stricat .*

There are units which are used ironically or derogatorily – as the latter element of the comparison aims right at the reversed quality as to the reality (both in English and in Romanian): *to blush like a black dog, go over like a lead ballon; a fi cunoscut ca un cal breaz.*

In conclusion, after having analyzed 104 units for the English language and 144 for the Romanian language – all mentioned in dictionaries – we registered 6 common structural patterns and the most productive ones are: verb (phrasal verb) + like (ca) + noun (zero article in English) and verb (phrasal verb) + like (ca) + noun + preposition + noun. English language numbers 6 specific structural patterns while Romanian has 13 patterns.

Most idioms in question belong to the group of motivated transparent or semi-fixed (partially fused) phraseologisms, but examples of unmotivated, totally fused ones can also be found. This feature of the phraseological units plays an important role in learning a foreign language as well as in correctly translating them from one language into the other.

The third important conclusion is that these verbal idioms have (partially or totally) the same morphological categories and the same syntactical functions as the verb.

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## **THE PARATAXIS AND HYPOTAXIS SYSTEM IN THE SHORT STORY “MANHATTAN DAYS” BY HERMIONE LEE**

**M d lina CERBAN\***

***Abstract:** The parataxis system refers to groups and phrases that are linked paratactically, namely they are given an equal status within complex sentences. Any members of the complex structures can serve the same function as the whole complex. Groups and phrases can be linked paratactically by apposition and by coordination. Appositions signal the semantic relations of elaboration while coordination expresses extending. Structures denoting enhancing are less common because their meanings are too specific to be expressed as a relationship between smaller units than clauses. The hypotaxis system gives unequal status, a structure functions as the dominant element and with the others functioning as dependents. In general, the dominant element has the same function as the whole complex, but this is not the case for the dependent elements. In this paper we discuss only the hypotaxis system realized with the help of nominal groups and adverbial groups which are most used in our text. The first part of the article makes a short presentation of this system, and the second part analysis the parataxis and the hypotaxis system in the contemporary short story “Manhattan Days” written by the British writer Hermione Lee.*

***Keywords:** logico-semantic relations, parataxis, hypotaxis, expansion, projection.*

### **I. The System of Taxis within Systemic Functional Framework**

When we analyse a clause complex we take into consideration the ideational metafunction of language and the ways in which a clause can combine with further clauses in order to form a clause complex. In this paper we are not going to discuss the parts of a clause, but ranking clauses within systemic functional framework. In systemic functional grammar the main clause is called “primary clause” to which we can add a theoretically unlimited number of other “secondary” clauses. The most important difference between traditional approach and the systemic functional approach is that in the former case the combined clauses form a grammatical unit named “sentence”, while in the latter case they do not form a new grammatical unit. Halliday considers that “the sentence is the highest unit of punctuation on the graphological rank scale and has evolved in the writing system to represent the clause complex as the most extensive domain of grammatical structure” (Halliday&Matthiessen: 2004, p.371).

According to systemic functional linguistics, clauses within complexes are interrelated grammatically in two systems, taxis and logico-semantic. Taxis is concerned with the interdependency relations between grammatical units forming a complex or between groups forming a group complex or between clauses forming a clause complex. Logico-semantic system is represented by two types of relationships: *expansion* which includes the meanings realized by conjunctions and *projection* which includes direct and indirect speech and thought.

When analysing the clause complexes relationships in a text the first step is to identify the boundaries between these clause complexes. In written cases there is no problem in identifying the boundaries due to the fact that they are signalled orthographically by full stops, in the case of sentences, commas or semi-colons

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\* University of Craiova, [mcerban15@gmail.com](mailto:mcerban15@gmail.com)

between clauses. The second step is to determine whether a particular logico-semantic relationship (expansion or projection) holds between two clauses forming a complex or is a cohesive relationship between two clauses complexes. In this paper we will concentrate on the analysis of the system of taxis, pointing out that the hypotactic relations are, by far, more used than paratactic relations.

## II. Analysis of the system of taxis in *Manhattan Days* by Hermione Lee

The second part of this paper is concerned of the structure of taxis in a short story written by Hermione Lee, namely *Manhattan Days*. We consider useful to give some details about the author and her work. Hermione Lee is a British writer, member of the British Academy and Royal Society of Literature and currently professor at New College of Oxford. This short story describes her experiences in New York during a fellowship at the Cullman Centre for Scholars and Writers at the New York Public Library in order to write a biography about Edith Wharton. She comments with humour her encounter with a taxi driver, her visit to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, to Ground Zero, Central Park West for the inauguration of the Gates. From the beginning to the end of this short story the author emphasizes the differences between the American and the British people regarding political ideas, culture and so on.

In the following section we focus on identifying and analysing the types of relationships that are established between clauses in clause complexes throughout the short story.

In terms of types of causes, the author doesn't use too many uses simple structures. They are used especially for setting-up the action for each experience the author describes in this short story:

- e.g. *I am here for ten months, away from home, family and academic job, on a fellowship at the New York Public Library.*  
*The bright, light apartment is on the 14<sup>th</sup> floor.*  
*There's always a lot of noise at concerts and the theatre.*  
*The gap between the Republicans at the convention and most New Yorkers seem gigantic.*

From the total number of clause complexes this short story contains there are not too many complexes made up of only two clauses as illustrated by the following examples:

- e.g. *I am very glad // that I didn't accept the offer of a much larger apartment on Roosevelt Island.*  
*When you leave New York, // you go to America.*  
*I take a deep breath // and draw my lucky number, 13, a room with a view on to the lions standing guard outside the library and the Fifth Avenue.*

The three-clause complexes become more numerous in the last part of the story, their number is higher than the proportion of the two-clause complexes:

- e.g. *But it's no use// - while we treat American politics as tragedy,// in America British politics play as comedy.*  
*Some have finished their books, // some are going back to university duties, some are staying on in the city.*

As we continue analysing the remaining clause complexes, a constant feature of the story shapes through: the higher the number of clauses in a clause complex, the more numerous the instances are to be found. Thus, there are a lot of instances of four-clause complexes:

e.g. *His jokes go down extremely well: "I knew // I was in trouble [with my English] // when Arnold Schwarzenegger corrected me".*  
*Loudly she warns him: // "You are like // that poem by Emily Dickinson! // Because I had no time for Love, // Love had no time for me!"*

Throughout the story clauses that are related mostly by hypotactic relationships, parataxis being less present. However, the most present type of clauses are the embedded one, and we can notice that the predominance of such types of relations helps to build up complicated structures. The style of this story is characterized by different structures and high variation.

In terms of means of linking, paratactic relations are signalled in most cases by conjunctions. The most frequently used are the conjunctions "**and**" and "**but**":

e.g. *I walk towards it across Brooklyn Bridge[...], // **and** tears jump to my eyes with the sensational beauty of it.*  
*I can't do much in my station in life, // **but** this makes me want to commit myself to a life in politics.*

Referring to punctuation used to signal paratactic relationships, commas and semi-colon are very rarely used.

The last part of our paper exemplifies the logico-semantic relations expressed by means of parataxis or hypotaxis. As we stated above, hypotaxis is more frequent. According to Halliday and Mathiensen (2004:377), there are two types of relationships which function in very different ways: expansion and projection.

### 1. Expansion

The three types of *expansion* identified in systemic functional linguistics are employed in the story:

a) In **elaboration** one clause expands another clause by restating in other words, clarifying it, specifying details, adding comments or examples. Such a clause does not add any essentially new element to the message, but gives supplementary information about what is already stated. In this story the author uses paratactic elaboration especially to describe the city, to express her feelings towards it.

e.g. *In the morning, New York seems half empty; // on the steps of the library there*  
1 =2  
*were people crying.*

On the other hand, hypotactic elaboration is represented by a relatively great number of non-defining relative clauses in the story which add extra information to an element in the message; most often such clauses are introduced by **who** and **which**:

e.g. *How could your leader, // who is clearly intelligent, // support our leader, // who is*

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*so dangerously stupid?*

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*... Charles and Camilla's marriage, an event // which leaves me cold*

A special characteristic of this text is represented by the fact that hypotactic elaboration is mostly expressed by non-finite clauses:

e.g. *I can hear the Friday evening string quartet // playing in the gallery above the main entrance hall*

*the convention of seven hundred Santas // running to have their photograph // taken on the library steps outside my window; the man // yelling into his phone*

b) An **enhancing** clause expands another by qualifying it with some circumstantial feature of time, place, cause, concession, condition, etc. Again both parataxis and hypotaxis are to be found, although the latter seem to be favoured:

e.g. *and groups of wooden chairs and herbs for everyone's use, // where I will spend a*

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*... great deal of time, // reading and drinking wine late into the evening*

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*If the war is going according to plan, // someone needs to rethink the plan.*

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c) **Extension** is used so that a clause expands another by extending beyond it; it provides new information, gives an exception to it or offers an alternative. Examples of both paratactic and hypotactic extensions can be found throughout the text:

e.g. - paratactic:

*I never really 'get' the ballet, // but this is the place to learn about it.*

- hypotactic

e.g. *I arrive on 1 September 2004, // while the Republican conference is going on far downtown.*

## II. Projection

The relationship of projection is clearly different from that of expansion. The main difference is that projection is always an essential part of the meaning of the projected clauses that it is projected. At the same time, as we stated before, expansion does not change the sentence meaning radically.

The two options available for **projection** - locutions and ideas - may be exemplified with instances from the text; they are not very numerous, but there is an obvious preponderance of projecting locutions over ideas. Paratactic projection is more used throughout the story since almost all the author's opinions and other characters' opinions are quoted:

e.g. *... and she blessed me: // 'May the rest of your day be so lucky.'*

*Philip says sadly: // 'I miss the bells.'*

*The quietest and the most observant of all the fellows, a Spaniard and Russian speaking novelist, says to my wryly in my last week: // "Time is running".*

Hypotactic projection (indirect speech) is used to render the content or only the idea of what was said. This type of projection is less employed by the author as paratactic projection is dominant throughout the story.

a) **Locutions** are the representation of the content of a verbal clause – what is said. Most of the examples are paratactic, with only few instances of hypotactic exemplification:

e.g. *Philip says // that he used to call those old men 'the generals'.  
I keep being told // that this year they are extreme*

b) **Ideas** on the other hand refer to the representation of the content of a mental clause - what is thought; the projecting clause represents a process of cognition rather than a verbal one. There are no examples of paratactic ideas while instances of hypotactic ideas may be found in the following passages:

e.g. *Ellen [...] thinks // that once they mattered to people;*

### **Conclusions**

Drawing upon the data analysed, the main features of the short-story *Manhattan Days* by Hermione Lee in terms of relationships between clauses regard aspects as the numerous clauses are complex, which are sentences consisting of three or four clauses. They are more numerous than clause complexes made up of one or two clauses. Longer clause complexes have more exemplifications following the rule that the greater the number of clauses in a clause complex, the bigger the number of occurrences in the story.

In terms of the tactic relationships established between clauses within clause complexes, the author seems to favour hypotaxis, since hypotactic relations outnumber consistently paratactic relations. Paratactic relations are signalled most often by the system of conjunctions, **and** and **but** being the most frequently used.

Regarding hypotactic relations, they are usually placed before the dominant clauses due to the fact that the author wants to emphasize the circumstances in which the action is carried out. Although most of the clauses in this hypotactic relation are finite, there are numerous non-finite clauses, gerundial and infinitive clauses being most often employed.

The logico-semantic relations of expansion (elaboration, extension and enhancement) and projection (locutions and ideas) are expressed through both paratactic and hypotactic relations throughout the story. Elaboration seems to be realized mostly by hypotactic relations in terms of numerous non-defining relative clauses introduced by **which** or **who**. In relation to extension, there is no preference for paratactic and hypotactic extensions, whereas hypotactic enhancement is slightly more used. Although not a constant feature, such clauses sometimes interrupt the dominant clause.

In the case of the logico-semantic relations of projection there is a noticeable preference for projecting locutions over ideas. Most of the locutions are projected in paratactic relations, while hypotactic relations cannot very frequently found in the text. On the other hand, the projection of the ideas cannot be noticed

in constructions containing paratactic projection. Regarding hypotactic projected ideas, they can be noted in the text.

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## **HORSE IMAGES IN ENGLISH PHRASEOLOGY – STATUS AND IDENTITY**

**Silvia CIORNEI\***

***Abstract:** Phraseology studies all word combinations having structural stability such as idioms, phrasal verbs, compounds, proverbs, sayings and other phraseological units. English phraseology is a complicated and vast mixture of fixed word-units of different types and styles. In structure and pattern, a part of them can be easily detected in other languages while some of them reflect a peculiar cultural background. Animal images appear in all types conveying a meaning which define nation's customs, traditions and prejudices, experiences and recollections from history and folktales. Mostly based on metaphors, picturesque and colourful they stand as real markers of linguistic and race identity as in the case of the horse-related phraseological combinations.*

***Keywords:** phraseology, animal imagery, horse, metaphor, identity.*

Phraseology studies all word combinations having structural stability such as idioms, phrasal verbs, compounds, proverbs, sayings and other phraseological units. Phraseology is a kind of picture gallery in which are collected vivid and amusing sketches of the nation's customs, traditions and prejudices, recollections of its past history, fragments of folk songs and fairy-tales.

There is a close relationship between animals and people's lives. On the one hand, animals are the main source of food and clothing for humans; on the other hand, the different kinds of animals are associated by people with certain cultural images and patterns. That is why animal imagery in phraseology can clearly reflect the characteristics of a national culture.

Liao (2000) has defined that there are three bases to make animal vocabularies to cause cultural meanings. First, derive from animal's appearances, physical structure, mentality, behaviour. Second, come from cultural content such as fables, legends, religions, physical geography, and customs. Third, be created by association, that is to say, animals are associated with another things which relate to potential cultural psychology.

The widely known investigations of Elizabeth Piirainen (.....) suggested that the so-called "widespread" idioms with a similar lexical structure and figurative core meaning are well-developed in many European languages and hardly shared by minority languages, though a small number of idioms exist both in standard languages and in the lesser-used ones.

English phraseology is a complicated and vast mixture of fixed word-units of different types and styles. In structure and pattern, a part of them can be easily detected in other languages while some of them reflect a specific cultural background. Animal images appear in all types conveying a meaning which define nation's customs, traditions and prejudices, experiences and recollections from history and folktales. Mostly based on metaphors, picturesque and colourful they stand as real markers of linguistic and race identity. One can find animal images which are common to other languages: cat and dog, cattle, pig, horse and roosters among domestic ones and bear, wolf, fox and lion from the wild but also peculiar

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\* University of Pitesti, [silviaciornei@yahoo.com](mailto:silviaciornei@yahoo.com)

images and figures in this picture gallery: dark horses, white elephants, bulls in china shops and green-eyed monsters, bees in bonnets, bald coots, poor church mice and sheep's eyes.

Almost all cultures hold the horse in great esteem because it embodies power, freedom, endurance, nobility and elegance. In Great Britain the horse has been a tillable force, a warrior, a journey and a discovery companion to man. From the white horses, the ancients carved figures of giant horses into the chalk hills of southern England, to the early image of Queen Boudica in a chariot drawn by chargers, to Middle Ages farmers who were not only using pack horses, farm horses and cart horses, but were also breeding horses for saddling and driving, to Shakespeare's famous quotation "a horse, a horse, my kingdom for a horse" (Richard the Third, act 5, scene 4, 7-10), to James Watt who based his famous measurement of power on the workhorse of the day – horsepower and to the Royal Horse Guards nowadays, the horse's contribution to Britain's rich history and culture is significant.

The horse may also have been responsible for influencing Britain's history when in October 1066, William the Duke of Normandy put his army, including 3,000 horses, onto 700 small sailing ships and headed across the channel to England. The English and Norman armies met near Hastings where William's army was victorious largely due to his cavalry assisted by archers. The Tapestry of Bayeux, describes the events and the importance of the horse is recorded by the fact that there are a total of 190 horses depicted on the tapestry itself.

"Ever since the first mounted man acquired extra stature and speed (....), the horse has distinguished the ruler from the ruled. The man on horseback was the symbol of dominance and of no other class in the world was the horse so intrinsic a part of the English aristocracy (...).In 1895 the horse was still as inseparable from, and ubiquitous in, upper class life as the servant, though considerably more cherished. He provided locomotion, occupation and conversation; inspired love, bravery, poetry and physical prowess. He was the essential element in racing, the sport of kings, as in cavalry, the elite of war." (Tuchman, Barbara, 1998, p.50)

Accordingly, in English, the horse is frequently used in proverbs, sayings, idioms and in other expressions. Thus, it has had a prominent role in English culture and consequently there is a particularly large number of horse-related phraseological units, idioms, proverbs, compounds and other combinations.

Such proverbs such as: Don't put the cart before the horse, never look a gift-horse in the mouth are common to many cultures while others express British national customs, social reality, thinking mode and values:

You can ride a horse to the water but you cannot make him drink (Heywood, 1546); Don't swap horses in mid-stream: to make new plans or choose a new leader in an activity that has already begun; If wishes were horses, beggars would ride; It's too late to shut the stable-door when the horse is stolen A nod is as good as a wink to a blind horse- used to indicate that the speaker needs no direct statement to understand the situation; When two ride on a horse, one must sit behind; One man may steal a horse, while another may not look over the hedge ( old proverb given by Heywood in 1546); Wild horses wouldn't drag somebody-nothing would make a person give or reveal an information, do something; Stout horses and willing minds make short journeys in "She Stoops To Conquer" by Richard Sheridan.

In the perspective of linguistics, most animal images used in idioms have figurative meaning. Idioms linked to animals usually contain metaphors. Animals denote and connote supposed qualities. These qualities are applied to people and human situations. (Moon, R., 1998, p.196).

To this respect many idioms containing the word horse have metaphorical meaning: to break a horse(in) : to discipline it; (straight) from the horse's mouth : get information from the person who knows it; to hold one's horses: to be patient, to wait, to hesitate; to frog a horse: to waste time and energy on something useless; to be on one's high horses: to insist on being treated with respect, to be arrogant; get off one's high horse: to begin to be humble and agreeable; a horse of another colour: quite a different matter; a dark horse: a person whose abilities are undisclosed or concealed until revealed to the best advantage; back the wrong horse: support the loser in a contest; to bet on the wrong horse; to flog or beat a dead horse: trying to revive interest in a worn-out topic; to horse around: to play around (in a rough way); horses for courses: each person or thing being employed for the purpose for which he is most suited; a stalking-horse: an excuse; a willing horse is a good-natured and helpful person that everyone takes advantage of him or a person who works well and without complaint ( Ridout and Witting, 1969, p.126) who also record a proverb Never spur a willing horse: with the meaning don't urge him to work harder and faster for he may then do less, or not be quite so willing; charley horse : a cramp, stiffness or spasm in a muscle- most often used for a muscle in the upper leg, particularly if caused by over-exertion - back in the 19th century, lame race-horses were called "Charley." Around the same time, old horses were used to drag the infield dirt at baseball stadiums. Whenever a ballplayer cramped up, they were compared to the grounds crew of limping equines - Charley horses; to sit a horse well/badly: to be a good/bad rider; wind the horses: to stop in order to rest the horses; every man with his hobby-horse: a subject about a man speaks of or complained very often; horse and foot: the cavalry and infantry hence all one's forces; hack: originally a term designating a horse hired out for short day rides, now commonly used to designate a taxi, which is also hired for short rides; getting a leg up: originally meant to assist someone in mounting, today it implies helping someone start a project; one-horse town: a small village of no consequence; she is getting a bit long in the tooth: horses get long in the tooth as they age; war horse: a person with a lot of experience in a field, especially a soldier or politician who has served for a long time, something (such as a work of art or musical composition) that has become very familiar because it has been played, shown, or seen many times, a large horse used in war; good old horse refers to something solid and loyal.

As in many other European cultures, a Trojan horse is something dangerous which is hidden inside something which appears safe or beneficial. The origin of the expression dates back to war between Greece and Troy in the mid-13th century BC, when the Greeks built a large wooden horse and left it outside the gates of Troy as an offering. The Greeks had hidden soldiers within the wooden horse, so when the Trojans brought the gift horse into their city, the soldiers came out at nightfall and opened the gates for the Greek army, allowing them to capture the city of Troy. A modern use of the expression is Trojan horse virus, which is a computer software virus which is hidden inside of useful software packages.

Horse latitudes are subtropical latitudes between 30 and 38 degrees both north and south, an area which receives little precipitation and has variable winds mixed with calm. A likely explanation is that the term is derived from the "dead

horse" ritual of seamen. In this practice, the seaman paraded a straw-stuffed effigy of a horse around the deck before throwing it overboard. Seamen were paid partly in advance before a long voyage, and they frequently spent their pay all at once, resulting in a period of time without income. If they got advances from the ship's paymaster, they would incur debt. This period was called the "dead horse" time, and it usually lasted a month or two. The seaman's ceremony was to celebrate having worked off the "dead horse" debt. As west-bound shipping from Europe usually reached the subtropics at about the time the "dead horse" was worked off, the latitude became associated with the ceremony. (Kemp, Peter, *The Oxford Companion to Ships and the Sea*, London, Oxford University Press, 1976. pp. 233, 299)

An alternative theory, of sufficient popularity to serve as an example of folk etymology, is that the term horse latitudes originates from when the Spanish transported horses by ship to their colonies in the West Indies and Americas. Ships often became becalmed in mid-ocean in this latitude, thus severely prolonging the voyage; the resulting water shortages made it impossible for the crew to keep the horses alive, and they would throw the dead or dying animals overboard.

Numerous compounds have been built around the word horse - horse-box: closed vehicle for carrying horses, horse-tail, horsewhip, horsehair, horse-riding, horse-racing, horsemanship: art of riding, horseflesh: horses when they are described as something that people buy, train or sell for racing, horse-breaker, horse-dealer, on horseback, horsemeat, horse-radish: a plant, horse-chestnut: a large tree, vaulting horse, horse-power: to measure car engines(hp), horseshoe.

Horseshoes are believed to be a protection against witches and evil. They were nailed to the house doors with the two ends uppermost so that the luck did not flee. The story goes that Admiral Horatio Nelson had one nailed to the mast of Victory. One legend says that the Devil one day asked Saint Dunstan who was noted for his skill as a farrier, to shoe his single hoof. Dunstan knowing who his customer was tied him tightly to the wall and put the devil to such pain that he finally agreed to be released on condition that he would never enter a place where he saw a horseshoe displayed. (*The Wordsworth Dictionary of Phrase and Fable*, 1993, p.549).

Combinations may have a poetical connotation- iron-horse: steam-engine or a pejorative one: a horse-milliner is one who makes up and supplies decorations for horses hence a horse-soldier is one who is not fit for the battlefield while the term; horse-marines is humorous and denotes an apparent absurdity.

As it has been shown, horses are also frequent constituents of various schemes of possession and ownership: for instance, the relationship between a master and his animal, buying and selling, stealing and swapping animals, the price and value of animals, the troubles accompanying the possession of animals (No horse, no problems).

Horse is often used with intensive effect: to eat like a horse: to eat a lot of food, work like a horse -- to work very hard, as strong as a horse, healthy as a horse

As the term has been associated with strength, largeness, or with something coarse, unrefined, a series of compounds suggest metaphorically such qualities - horse-fly: a large insect, horse-play: rough noisy fun or play, horse-laugh: loud, coarse laugh, horse-leech: person who eats a lot, horse-trading-hard, shrewd bargaining.

This lack of refinement is apparent in the way that language was formed. Any plant that resembled another but was large and coarser would be known as horse-plant name of choice: horse-daisy (country name for the Ox-eye Daisy), horse-

radish (a large root resembling a radish but with a fiery taste), horse-gentian (Feverwort), horse-nettle (Nightshade); similarly, with reference to their physical appearance a human with long head has a horse face.

Horse-sense seems to go against the usual pattern since it denotes suggest ordinary wisdom, common sense, practical thinking. In fact, this expression means an unsophisticated, country type of sense by adding horse to sense.

Given the social importance of the horse in the English culture, saying about horses are numerous either produced by known people or by unknown ones. They underline the pleasure and emotions of riding and man's long connection to it. The horse is seen as the embodiment of beauty, freedom, power, wisdom, friendship: No hour of life is wasted that is spent in the saddle. ~Winston Churchill; A horse is the projection of peoples' dreams about themselves - strong, powerful, beautiful - and it has the capability of giving us escape from our mundane existence. ~Pam Brown; in riding a horse we borrow freedom. ~Helen Thomson, A canter is a cure for every evil. ~Benjamin Disraeli; wherever man has left his footprint in the long ascent from barbarism to civilization we will find the hoof print of the horse beside it. ~John Moore; to ride a horse is to ride the sky. ~Author Unknown; if you want a stable friendship, get a horse. ~Author Unknown; A horse is poetry in motion. ~Author Unknown; Life is like a wild horse. You ride it or it rides you. ~Author Unknown.

There are also numerous humorous sayings in which the second term of comparison is the horse: Boyfriends come and go, but horses are forever; Equestrian activity teaches young ladies to cope with large, friendly, but dumb creatures – the ideal training for marriage; Love is paying a £500 vet bill for a horse worth £50; When you fall of your horse, usually what's most hurt is your pride. If horse riding was easy, it would be called football; if you haven't fallen off a horse...then you haven't been riding long enough. Feeling down? Saddle up; I never fall off./ I just/Dismount with style, paraphrases to famous quotations : May the horse be with you! ; And on the seventh day ... God went riding!; and even play upon words based on homophones: Seven days without a horse makes one weak; Whinnying is everything.

Britain has been a hugely important centre for thoroughbred racehorse breeding. All modern thoroughbred racehorses can be traced back to the late 17th/early 18th centuries and the General Stud Book first published by James Weatherby records details of every horse in the breed.

Horse racing is the second largest spectator sport in Great Britain and one of the longest established, with a history dating back many centuries part of British identity for hundreds of years.

The sport has taken place in the country since Roman times and many of the sport's traditions and rules originated there. The Jockey Club, established in 1750, codified the Rules of Racing. Britain is also home to some of the world's iconic racecourses including Newmarket, Ascot and Cheltenham. One of the most famous flat horse races in the world is the Epsom Derby while Royal Ascot is Britain's most valuable race meeting, attracting many of the world's finest racehorses to compete for more than £6.58million in prize money.

As a result, a lot of horse-racing terms entered spoken language: chomping at the bit : a horse chomps at the bit when he is eager to run, hence a person who is enthusiastic; in his stride: a racing term meaning a person is doing well; keeping a tight rein: maintaining tight control; left at the gate: a racing term implying that the person was left in confusion or fear at the beginning of a project;

off to a good start: also a racing term meaning a project has begun well; spitting the bit out : quitting when tired and the job isn't done; colours refers to jockey's silk colours or to show your true character, just like in the song True colours sung by Cyndi Lauper.

The mare has its own idioms though less numerous than its companion: by shanks mare: by foot; money will make the mare go: if you have the money you can do everything as inspired by an old song: "Will you lend me your mare to go for a mile? / No, she is lame leaping over a stile. / But if you will her me to spare./You shall have money for your mare./Oh ho! Say you so? /money will make the mare go." ;to win the mare or lose the galter: all or nothing; to look upon the mare's nest: an illusory discovery ; the grey mare is the better horse: about a wife who rules the house and bosses her husband while a stallion refers to a male who uses his masculinity.

In connection to these we may mention phrases and sayings having horse-related core words: spurs, saddle or cavalry. Consequently, to gain/win one's spurs: to gain the rank of knighthood, hence to win recognition of one's efforts, to show one's courage ( for the first time also used by Shakespeare, "Let the boy win his spurs", a popular saying of Edward III of his son The Black Prince, at the Battle of Crecy); on the spur of the moment : without stopping to take thought; spur money: a small fine formerly imposed to those who entered church wearing spurs because of the interruption of the divine service by their ringing; spurred into action: forced to take action; spurring somebody or something on: enthusiastic support.

Saddle appears in structures like saddle up: begin an action; sold his saddle : meaning the person has quit a project; saddled with (a duty or obligation); to be in the saddle : to be in office; to be in a position of authority, to be ready for work; to set the saddle on the right horse: to lay the blame on those who deserve it; back-in-the-saddle: to resume one's duty; I will win the horse or lose the saddle: neck or nothing while to send in the cavalry means a last minute rescue.

Many British place names demonstrate horse origins such as Horsley which means a "clearing or pasture for horses", Horsmonden "woodland pasture where horses drink" and Horsham, a Saxon name which is thought to mean "village where horses are kept." Numerous English place-names, such as Stadhampton, Stoodleigh and Studham, refer to the keeping of "studs", in this case herds of horses. Even toponyms from Old Norse like Hestwall meant horse or stallion.

Consequently, in English culture, horses were essential accompaniments to the way of life and apart from performing utilitarian functions, horses possessed iconic appeal and acquired status and identity. This reflected not only in the language as identity markers but also in the value that was placed on as well as in the role that horses played in society as a whole.

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## ***SENSATION AND PERCEPTION AS MARKERS OF THE CATEGORY OF ASPECT***

**Cristina MIRON\***

***Abstract:** The paper aims at finding the semantic constitution of the verbs of perception as marking the category of aspect, mainly the opposition progressive/non-progressive. Verbs known as describing inert perception mostly refer to mere sensation and require the use of the non-progressive aspect, while verbs referring to active perception describe perception proper and can be used in the progressive aspect.*

***Keywords:** aspect, sensation, perception.*

### **1. Aspect – Definition and Specific Terminology**

Aspect is an important category of the verb and it is equal in importance to tense in understanding the way temporal relations are organized in a particular language. But if tense is somehow a traditional concept for the speakers of European languages in the sense that any speaker can intuitively say that, for example, past tense mainly expresses past time, aspect is not a traditional category for European languages. (see Binnick, 1991: 135) Tense locates the time of the events described in the sentence relative to the moment of speaking being thus described as a deictic category. It relates different kinds of events to the speech time and structures them by the relations of simultaneity, anteriority and posteriority. Thus, the verb in the sentence *George is working* is located temporally as simultaneous with the moment of speaking, while the verbs in the sentences *George was working at this time yesterday.* and *George worked a lot yesterday.* are located temporally as antecedent to the moment of speaking.

Aspect is different from tense if we notice that the difference between the previous two sentences *George was working at this time yesterday.* and *George worked a lot yesterday.* is not one of tense, since both forms have past time reference, but of aspect. The former sentence presents the situation referred to in its totality, while the latter refers to the internal temporal structure of the situation. So, since it relates the time of the event described in the sentence to a time of reference which is not the moment of speaking, it follows that aspect is a non-deictic category.

Holt (1943:6) defines aspect as such: “aspects are different ways of viewing the internal temporal constituency of a situation”, but his definition is somehow improved and developed by Comrie, who states that “aspect is not concerned with relating the time of the situation to any other time-point, but rather with the internal temporal constituency of the one situation; one could state the difference is one between situation – internal time (aspect) and situation – external time (tense).” (Comrie, 1976:5) So, what aspect informs us about is the contour of the event, i.e. the event can be presented either as a single unanalysable whole, with beginning, middle and end rolled into one, or divided into various individual phases; the interest falls on the existence of an internal structure.

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\* University of Pitesti, [cristinamironn@gmail.com](mailto:cristinamironn@gmail.com)



In the discussions on aspect, the term *situation* is often used as referring to what reality consists of, i.e. “individuals having properties and standing in relations at various spatio-temporal locations” (Barwise, Perry, 1983). That is to say that certain situations and not others are the case at any given point in time and space. Some situations hold over intervals of time (*It is snowing.*), others are, on the contrary, *momentaneous* (*The car stops.*). Then, on the other hand, certain aspectual situations are *gappy* (*Diana was making a cake yesterday.*) whilst others are not (*He has a headache.*). Situations with a human agent are said to be *agentive*, while situations with no human agent are *non-agentive*. Moreover, if we nominalise the respective verbs, we shall discover that certain aspectual situations are *uncountable* (*He is sad.*) while others are *countable* (*He drew a circle yesterday.*) In modelling situations, the notions of *phase/stage* and *occasion* are used; the stage denotes any time in the occurrence of a situation, the respective occurrence being called occasion. Occasions may be repetitive or not, while the repetition may occur during one single interval (iterative) or during more intervals (habitual situations).

## 2. Aspectual Categories

### 2.1. Aspectual Situation Types

The first well-known intuition about aspectual differences belongs to Aristotle who, in his *Metaphysics*, states that verbs in natural languages designate either the kind of activity or the end/result of that activity. In Greek terms, the meaning of some verbs involves movement, motion (*kineseis*) e.g. *to lose weight*, *to build*, whereas that of others involves action, energy (*energeia*) e.g. *to see*, *to live*, *to think*, *to walk*.

The Aristotelian aspectual distinction was rediscovered in the 20th century by the philosophers and linguists, who proposed new terms: Gilbert Ryle (1949) introduced the term *achievements* to distinguish the culminative (resultative) verbs from non-culminative activities, while Anthony Kenny (1963) distinguishes *activities* from *states* and replaces *achievements* with *performances*. It is Zeno Vendler (1967:97-121) who first systematically distinguishes among four different aspectual classes of verbs in the chapter *Verbs and Times* in his well-known *Linguistics in Philosophy: States, Activities, Accomplishments and Achievements*. His four types of situations are constructed on the basic concept of time. Vendler establishes time schemata for various verb phrases which help him make the following classification of situations:

“For activities: *A was running at time t* means that time instant *t* is on a time stretch throughout which *A* was running.

For accomplishments: *A was drawing a circle at t* means that time instant *t* is on the time stretch in which *A* drew that circle.

For achievements: *A won the race between t<sub>1</sub> and t<sub>2</sub>* means that the time instant at which *A* won the race is between *t<sub>1</sub>* and *t<sub>2</sub>*.

For states: *A loved somebody from t<sub>1</sub> to t<sub>2</sub>* means that at any instant between *t<sub>1</sub>* and *t<sub>2</sub>* *A* loved that person.” (Vendler, *op. cit.*: 106)

Here are some examples of verbs that can be integrated in Vendler’s categories: activities – *run*, *walk*, *swim*, *push a cart*, *drive a car*; accomplishments – *paint a picture*, *make a chair*, *deliver a sermon*, *draw a circle*, *push a cart*;

achievements – *recognize, spot, find, lose, reach*; states – *know, believe, have, desire, lose*.

## 2.2. Aspectual Pairs

A first aspectual pair is *Perfective vs. Imperfective*. Perfectivity indicates “the view of a situation as a single whole, without distinction of the various separate phases that make up the situation; while the imperfective pays essential attention to the internal structure of the situation.” (Comrie, *op. cit.*: 16) A classification of aspectual oppositions is also due to Comrie (*ibidem*: 25):

*Aspect*: Perfective vs. Imperfective

*Imperfective*: Habitual vs. Continuous

*Continuous*: Nonprogressive vs. Progressive

A second aspectual pair includes, as Comrie distinguished, *Habitual vs. Continuous Aspect*. Habituality refers to a “situation which is characteristic of an extended period of time, so extended in fact that the situations referred to is viewed not as an incidental property of the moment but, precisely, as a characteristic feature of a whole period. If the individual situation is one that can be protracted indefinitely in time, then there is no need for iterativity to be involved (as in *the Temple of Diana used to stand at Ephesus*) though equally it is not excluded (as in *the policeman used to stand at the corner for two hours each day*). If the situation is one that cannot be protracted, then the only reasonable interpretation will involve iterativity (as in *the old professor used always to arrive late*).” (*ibidem*: 28).

A third aspectual pair is made up of the opposition *Nonprogressive vs. Progressive*. A general definition of Progressiveness can be given as “the combination of progressive meaning and nonstative meaning”. So, “stative verbs do not have progressive forms, since this would involve an internal contradiction between the stativity of the verbs and the nonstativity essential to the progressive.” (*ibidem*: 35)

## 3. Sensation and Perception Verbs in Connection to the Category of Aspect

In psychological terms, sensation can be defined as “the conversion of energy from the environment into a pattern of response by the nervous system. It is the registration of information. Perception is the interpretation of that information. For example, light rays striking your eyes produce sensation. Your experience of recognizing your roommate is a perception. In practice, the distinction between sensation and perception is often difficult to make.” (Kalat, 2010:97) More specifically, sensation represents the detection of stimuli from the outer world with the help of the receptors i.e. “specialized cells that convert environmental energies into signals for the nervous system” (*ibidem*:98) that can be found in our sensory organs. The stimuli are translated by our brain into different representations.

The processes of sensation and perception are linguistically represented by verbs referring to the five senses: *see, hear, smell, taste, feel*. According to Leech (2013:28-29), there is a semantic complexity inherent to these verbs which, as we shall see, dictates the aspectual behaviour of the respective verbs. Thus, verbs such as *feel, taste, smell* can semantically cover two types of perception: ‘inert perception’, when “the sensation is an experience that simply happens to

me” (*ibidem*:28) and ‘active perception’, when “I go out of my way, physically, to focus my attention on some object” (*ibidem*).

Therefore, in terms of aspectual situations, perception verbs can be viewed either as states or as non-states since “different psychological theories differ as to just how active a process perception is and there is no reason to suppose that language presupposes the answer by uniquely classifying as either a state or a dynamic situation.” (Comrie, *op. cit.*:35) These verbs can denote either a single act of perception (which would be perception in psychological terms) or physiological processes that cannot be controlled (which would represent sensation in psychological terms), that is states. (see Kabakiev 2000:190) As Comrie (*op. cit.*:35) reminds us, in English (unlike, for example, in Portuguese) it is generally impossible to use verbs of inert perception in their progressive forms.

Any grammar of English lists the verbs of perception among “verbs not normally used in the continuous tenses” (Thomson, Martinet, 1986:113). Yet, some of the respective verbs are then described in point of their continuous aspect behaviour which is semantically marked.

The most important perceptions, seeing and hearing, have the most complex aspectual behaviour as verbs. As state verbs proper, semantically marking the psychological type of sensation, they do not take progressive forms and, although they are agentive, they do not imply the agent’s volition in this action: *I see a bird (flying)*. \**I am seeing a bird (flying)*. *I hear a nice piece of classical music*. \**I am hearing a nice piece of classical music*. Yet, when their meaning becomes more complex than just a simple sensation, when they imply perception and even another semantic feature added to the respective perception, they can be used in the progressive. Thus, the verb *see* can be used in the continuous “when it means ‘meet by appointment’ (usually for business), ‘interview’: *The director is seeing the applicants this morning*; *I am seeing my solicitor tomorrow*. Also when it means ‘visit’ (usually as a tourist): *Tom is seeing the town/the sights*. It can also be used in the continuous in the following combinations: *see about* = make arrangements or enquiries: *We are seeing about a work permit/or you*. (trying to arrange this); *see to* = arrange, put right, deal with: *The plumber is here. He is seeing to the leak in our tank*; *see somebody out* = escort him/her to the door; *see somebody home* = escort him/her home; *see somebody to + place* = escort him/her to + place: *ANN: Is Bill seeing you home after the party? MARY: No, he’s just seeing me to my bus*; *see someone off* = say goodbye to a departing traveller at the starting point of his journey (usually the station, airport etc.): *We’re leaving tomorrow. Bill is seeing us off at the airport*.” (Thomson, Martinet, *op. cit.*: 114)

The second most used verb of perception, *hear*, “can be used in the continuous when it means ‘listen formally to’ (complaints/evidence etc.): *The court is hearing evidence this afternoon*. *Hear* meaning ‘receive news or letters’ can also be used in the continuous form but only in the present perfect and future: *I’ve been hearing all about your accident. You’ll be hearing about the new scheme at our next meeting*.” (*ibidem*)

A separate discussion is made on the polysemantic verb *feel* which can refer both to sensation and perception (that we shall underline) and to feelings and emotions. “When followed by an adjective indicating the subject’s emotions or physical or mental condition, e.g. *angry/pleased, happy/sad, hot/cold, tense/relaxed, nervous/confident, feel* is normally used in the simple tenses but can also be used in the continuous: *How do you feel/are you feeling? ~ I feel/am feeling*

*better. Feel* meaning ‘touch’ (usually in order to learn something) can be used in the continuous: *The doctor was feeling her pulse*. Similarly, *feel for* meaning ‘try to find something by touching’: *He was feeling for the keyhole in the dark*. But, *feel* is not used in the continuous when it means ‘sense’: *Don’t you feel the house shaking?*, when it means ‘think’: *I feel you are wrong*. and when it is used as a link verb: *The water feels cold.*” (*ibidem*: 113-114)

With other two verbs of perception, *smell* and *taste*, the difference between their use in the progressive or nonprogressive aspect translates the difference between agentive and nonagentive type of aspect. Moreover, it may represent the opposition between volitional and nonvolitional actions. Thus, “the continuous is not used with *smell* meaning ‘perceive a scent/an odour’, e.g. *I smell gas*. or with *smell* used as a link verb, but can be used with *smell* meaning ‘sniff at’: *Why are you smelling the milk? Does it smell sour?* [...] *Taste* as a link verb is not used in the continuous: *This coffee tastes bitter* (has a bitter taste). But *taste* meaning ‘to test the flavour of’ can be used in the continuous: *She was tasting the pudding to see if it was sweet enough.*” (*ibidem*: 114)

Moreover, the verbs like *see* and *hear* develop an interesting distinction between perfective and imperfective actions expressed by the short infinitive or, respectively, present participle of a verb placed after the respective verbs of physical perception. In the following examples:

*I heard/say the soldier cross the street.*

*I heard/saw the soldier crossing the street.*

the infinitive in the first example shows perfectivity, while the indefinite participle in the second example shows imperfectivity. In Vendler’s terms, the infinitive *cross the street* belongs to the group of accomplishments, while the participle *crossing the street* denotes a process. (see Kabak iev *op. cit.*: 190)

#### 4. Conclusions

Aspect is a non-deictic category which relates the time of the event described in the sentence to a time of reference which is not the moment of speaking. In Vendlerian terms, there are four types of aspectual situations: states, activities, accomplishments, achievements. Aspectual oppositions are: Perfective vs. Imperfective; *Imperfective*: Habitual vs. Continuous; *Continuous*: Nonprogressive vs. Progressive.

Verbs referring to sensation (inert perception) and perception (active perception) mainly belong to the state situation types and are not normally used in the progressive aspect. Yet, they display enough semantic complexity - their meaning may be agentive or nonagentive, volitional or nonvolitional, or the perception marker can be enriched with other semantic markers - to be safely used in the progressive aspect, too.

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## ***A TERMINOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE ON MENTAL PROCESSES IN PSYCHOLOGY***

**Cristina NICULESCU-CIOCAN\***

**Abstract:** *Considering the mental processes in psychology and the various types of texts (and contexts) which use terms like sensations and perceptions, there are certain inconsistencies which I am willing to look into. On the one hand, there are linguists as specialists who create definitions on a regular basis. They are supposed to research the words/terms thoroughly before actually generating the definition as a standard of meaning and use. On the other hand, there are psychologists as the main scientific source of knowledge. There is also a third possible category, namely terminology users who decode the meaning. The main question is: which specialists are dealing with words and which ones with terms as part of their linguistic choice and use?*

**Keywords:** *mental processes, terminology, specialized language.*

Terminology is, according to one of its entries in the dictionary, a science within linguistics which analyzes the specialized terms of a specific domain<sup>1</sup>.

The terminological perspective relies upon a descriptive linguistic research. The approach of terminology is of lexical nature at this point in our study (according to the distinction between lexical and discourse-based terminology in Bidu-Vr nceanu 2012 – *Cuvînt înainte*), considering the quantity of semantic information in some of the quoted sources – which are dictionaries in this case. I will first look at the psychological theoretical framework in order to identify the right terms, and then I shall study their meaning to determine whether the semantic elements lead to preciseness (see also Bidu-Vr nceanu 2007: 31-37) according to sources which can be accessed in Romania.

The terms included in the category of mental processes in psychology are: *memory, attention, language, reasoning, and imagery*. The sources I have relied upon are the following: a general dictionary (DEXI), an encyclopedia (EFSU), and four specialized dictionaries, namely psychological dictionaries published 1997-2007 (LAR, DP, DEP, MDP). I have also included the original Romanian information from dictionaries which I have used in the current study alongside the English explanations in the discourse and in the tables included in this paper.

The quantitative analysis is, of course, the most obvious criterion which separates the general language dictionary from all the rest, considered nonlinguistic (according to DSL 2005: 174). DEXI includes brief definitions for the terms I am looking at. Another element of quantitative nature is the number of entries in each of these sources of semantic information; I can only highlight one exception – *imagination* – which is not defined in MDP with its simple form.

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\* Romanian-American University, [niculescuciocan.cristina@profesor.rau.ro](mailto:niculescuciocan.cristina@profesor.rau.ro)

<sup>1</sup> “Concept used with several interdependent meanings, whose meanings are not always clear: [...] 3) *terminology* is also used as an interdisciplinary science field concerned with general issues of terminologies (understood as 1 and 2), which analyzes the logic of knowledge, concept hierarchy, linguistic and nonlinguistic encoding, as well as the issues of scientific/technical word.” (DSL 2005: 535, author’s translation).

The qualitative items are still the basis of this paper, which is why I consider all the six dictionaries in Romanian useful from the very beginning. I sometimes notice the rich semantic information in nonlinguistic works, but I also need to take a closer look at the significance of diastatic marks: “*psih.*” as the mark of psychology in Romanian dictionaries.

The semantic aspects which are to be analyzed within this study are: cause, effect, beneficiary, instrument, reference time, awareness and verbalization.

The term *memory*<sup>1</sup> benefits from generous definitions, which also provide the data for most of the aspects I have analyzed. It seems like this unit does belong to the domain of psychology thanks to the diastatic mark I have found in DEXI.

Unfortunately, the cause includes variations. Nevertheless, DEP and MDP suggest some form of experience, even previous experience, which also indicates the reference time. Another hint, or semantic feature regarding this element is to be seen within the effects of *memory*. I have identified many nouns of verbal nature related to effects, i.e. nouns which derive from verbs in the Romanian definitions (reproduction, registration, etc.) and verbs in the infinitive form (to encode, to use, to upload, etc.). Regarding the lexical form, this semantic feature looks heterogeneous, but, semantically speaking, it is at least similar. This synonymy needs further research: sensations (in DEXI) and sensory images (in DEP) for instance.

Beneficiaries are extremely clear: “all human beings”, and the information is the same in DP and MDP. The instrument seems rather complex, but the main items are: “sensations”/ “sensory images”, “information” in EFSU and MDP, “pieces of information” in LAR. It so happens that sometimes the terms can be found with their syntagmatic equivalents. Reference time can be found in

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<sup>1</sup> **memorie** - „1 (*psih.*) (Proces psihic, mental care const. în) înțip rirea, conservarea, recunoașterea și reproducerea senzațiilor, trăirilor psihice, mișcărilor, cunoștințelor etc. din trecut. [...]” (DEXI 2007: 1127)/ „*Memoria în psihologie*. Din punctul de vedere al psihologiei, m. este ceva ce accept , printr-o serie de procese, s trateze o informație în timp. Primul aspect fundamental al m. este codificarea sau înregistrarea unui eveniment sub forma unei scheme, imagini sau concept. Al doilea aspect este retenția care se referă la tratarea sau înmagazinarea informației în timp. Al treilea aspect este recuperarea sau reevocarea care corespunde capacității de recunoaștere și reamintire a unei informații într-un al doilea moment.” (EFSU 2007: 665)/ „persistență a trecutului. Toate ființele vii, chiar și animalele absolut inferioare, au o memorie. [...] Memoria fixează experiențele trăite, informațiile receptate și le restituie. [...]” (LAR 2000: 193)/ „Capacitatea de a achiziționa, conserva și restitui informații. [...] Studiile psihobiologice pe animale și pe oameni arată că memoria nu constituie o funcție omogenă, ci corespunde mai curînd utilizării interactive a mai multor sisteme cu roluri diferite și care funcționează după modalități proprii. Este deci puțin probabil ca un singur tip de mecanism să poată sta la baza tuturor formelor de învățare și de memorie. [...]” (DP 1999: 488-489)/ „memorie (memorare) [...] Capacitatea și procesul psihic de reflectare a experienței anterioare prin fixarea (întipărirea și păstrarea), recunoașterea și reproducerea imaginilor senzoriale, ideilor, stărilor afective. Realizează coerența vieții interioare și a legăturilor interdependente cu realitatea obiectivă. M. este ca o coloană vertebrală a personalității fiind implicată în conturarea identității. Ea poate fi spontană și neintenționată, verbală, acțională, afectivă, dar și voluntară, intenționată. [...]” (DEP 1997: 439)/ „Capacitate a unui sistem de procesare natural sau artificial de a encoda informația extrasă din experiența lui cu mediul, de a o stoca într-un format adecvat și apoi de a o recupera și utiliza în acțiunile sau operațiunile pe care le efectuează. [...] Orice comportament uman este inexorabil legat de trecutul său [...]” (MDP 2006: 739)

all sources. It is also related to cause, beneficiary, and instrument. They all lead to the idea of the “past”, and its relation to present or a moment that occurs after *memory*. It might be verbalized according to DEP (the encyclopedic dictionary of psychology), which is why I have marked it “±”: “it can be spontaneous and unintended, verbal, action oriented [...]” (acc. to DEP). Yet there is no information on awareness as far as *memory* is concerned.

*Attention*<sup>1</sup> is another term which benefits from an impressive amount of semantic clues in dictionaries. It is also registered as specific to psychology in DEXI by means of the diastatic mark (*psih.*).

The first element I am interested in, the cause, is seen differently from one source to another. The level of specialization varies across dictionaries: LAR provides an extremely clear explanation, which can be decoded by most readers, whereas EFSU uses restrictive terms such as “specific stimuli”, which can mainly be understood by highly specialized people. This heterogeneity as far as the level of specialization is concerned can also be found in the effects: from “clear and precise orientation and focus” in DEXI, the authors get to “the selection of specific stimuli and their orientation towards cognitive activity” in EFSU and not only. The territory is clearly restricted to nonprofessionals, to people with poor knowledge on psychology.

Considering the beneficiary, EFSU and MDP agree upon “subject”, while DP prefers “organism”. The instrument is an object according to DEXI and DEP, something (LAR), stimuli (DP), and information (MDP). Obviously, LAR uses the most general form possible; the pronoun generates high imprecision. Reference time seems to be of no interest to the authors of these dictionaries. Still, there seems to be a conscious agent involved according to DEXI, and there can be no

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<sup>1</sup> **atenție** - „1 (*psih.*) Activitate psihic complex (con tinent sau incon tinent) de orientare și concentrare în mod clar și precis asupra unui obiect sau a unei activități din mediul ambiant [...]” (DEXI 2007: 152)/ „în psihologie, funcție care permite selecția de stimuli specifici și dirijarea asupra lor a activității mentale. Acest proces poate depinde de caracteristici ale stimulului, de context și predispoziții sau de așteptările subiectului care provin din nevoi intime, interese, motivații, rezonanțe emotive, experiențe acumulate. Studiul experimental al a. este una dintre principalele teme de cercetare ale cognitivismului [...]” (EFSU 2007: 74)/ „concentrare a spiritului asupra a ceva. A fi atent înseamnă, într-un fel, a te închide față de lumea exterioară spre a te focaliza asupra a ceea ce te interesează. [...]” (LAR 2000: 36)/ „Mult vreme atenția a fost definită doar sub aspectul ei selectiv, ca focalizare asupra unei activități particulare în detrimentul activităților concurente. În prezent se admite însă că este vorba de un concept multidimensional. [...] Atenția asigură deci o funcție de selecție [...]” (DP 1999: 90)/ „Forma autoreglajului psihic ce exprimă orientarea și concentrarea activității psihice în mod selectiv asupra unui obiect sau fenomen, situații implicate în procesul adaptării sau în scopul cunoașterii, supravegherii lui, al apărării etc. A. nu are conținut propriu informațional. Ea este implicată în toate activitățile fizice și intelectuale fiind întreținută de tendința de ierarhizare a activității în conformitate cu scopuri, obiective, condiții în vederea creșterii capacității de reflectare a acestora și în vederea eficienței activităților pe care acestea le implică. A. are ca bază de suport tendințe de economie a energiei psihice, de adaptare și organizare a funcțiilor sistemului senzorial, ideatic, funcțiilor activatoare și frenatorii [...]” (DEP 1997: 88)/ „Orientare a activității prin obiective, care are ca efect creșterea eficienței proceselor de culegere a informației și de executare a acțiunii. Activitatea este organizată prin obiective, care sunt scopurile explicite ale sarcinilor ce trebuie realizate, sau unele intermediare pe care subiectul și le propune ca să le realizeze pe cele dintâi. [...]” (MDP 2006: 120)



trace of verbalization according to the semantic aspects regarding the focus on the inner world and the access to awareness (DP).

Term/ semantic	MEMORY	ATTENTION
cause	event (EFSU); several types of mechanisms (DP); previous experience (DEP); environment specific experience (MDP)	specific stimuli (EFSU); to shut down from the outer world (LAR); tendency to save mental energy, to adapt, and organize the functions in the sensory system (DEP)
effect	embedding, maintenance, acknowledgement and reproduction of sensations, mental events, movement, knowledge (DEXI); encoding or embedding an event, retrieving [...] information and recovering [...] information (EFSU); attaches experience, information, and gives them back (LAR); to give back pieces of information (DP); giving back sensory images, ideas (DEP); to encode information from the relation to environment, to place it in a proper form and then to retrieve and use it in the undergone operations or activities (MDP)	orientation and focus in a clear and precise manner (DEXI); selecting specific stimuli and driving them according to mental activity (EFSU); to focus on what you are interested in (LAR); stimuli selection, stimuli prioritization (DP); knowledge, surveillance, protection, etc. of an object or phenomenon (DEP); higher efficiency in information acquisition [...] (MDP)
beneficiary	All living beings, even absolutely inferior animals (LAR); animals and people (DP); natural or artificial processing system, human behavior (MDP)	subject (EFSU); organism (DP); subject (MDP)
instrument	sensations, mental activities, movement, knowledge (DEXI); event, information (EFSU); undergone experiences, received information (LAR); sensory images, ideas (DEP), information retrieved from environment specific experience (MDP)	object or activity from the environment (DEXI), something (LAR); the stimuli of an organism (DP); object or phenomenon (DEP); information (MDP)
reference time	from the past (DEXI); in time (*2), in a secondary moment (EFSU); persistence of the past (LAR); time which separates the presentation of information from its recall (DP); previous (previous experience) (DEP); past (MDP)	?
awareness	?	±
verbalization	±	-

The third simple term, *language*<sup>1</sup>, seems to be quite significant as far as the quantity of information is concerned. Still, not all semantic categories are well

<sup>1</sup> **limbaj** - „1 Facultate a oamenilor de a comunica între ei și de a-și exprima ideile, sentimentele, dorințele etc. cu ajutorul sunetelor articulate (care pot fi transcrise) [...]” (DEXI 2007: 1046)/ „în sensul cel mai general, un sistem codificat de comunicare [...] Prin termenul de l. se desemnează, de asemenea, facultas loquendi, adică acea capacitate a omului de a se exprima verbal [...]” (EFSU 2007: 594)/ „funcție de exprimare și de comunicare a gândirii prin utilizarea de semne care au o valoare identică pentru toți indivizii

represented, and reference time or awareness are nowhere to be found as such or decoded.

Cause looks quite heterogeneous regarding its form and level of specialization. There is the ability “to learn and use [...] verbal signs” (DP), receptive-reactive communicative function (DEP) or the intention to communicate (MDP). Dictionaries agree upon the effects, and the actions to express oneself (DEXI, EFSU, LAR, MDP) and/or to communicate (EFSU, LAR, DP, DEP, MDP) are clearly the essence.

Another significant aspect is the way *language* relates to *reasoning* in LAR and MDP. Causality may define the relation between the two terms and, consequently, concepts. *Reasoning* is a cause regarding *language*.

There are two entities which are included as beneficiaries: either people with various forms which relate to the same meaning (DEXI, EFSU, DP, MDP), or the individuals of the same species (LAR). The reason of this variety may derive from the polysemy of *language*, which is considered a mere word (lexical unit of general interest) in DEXI; there is no diastatic information to suggest otherwise. The instrument of this process is agreed upon. There are signs or sign systems in specialized dictionaries and ideas, feelings, wishes (followed by “etc.”) in the general language dictionary. The possibility of verbalization also derives from instruments: “systems of verbal signs” (DP), *spoken* language (DEP), “vocal signs” and “system [...] of signs and symbols [...] conveyed *orally*, written or *gestually*” (MDP). Considering the coexistence of several forms of instruments, I have decided to mark this aspect “±”. Awareness is not included in any source.

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din aceeași specie, în limitele unei arii determinate. Limbajul, care este în același timp act și instrument de comunicare bazat pe legi independente de subiecții particulari, ne introduce în existența socială. Se disting mai multe forme de limbaj: 1) *pasiv*; 2) *activ*; 3) *verbal*; 4) *neverbal*. [...]” (LAR 2000: 180)/ „În terminologia științifică, acest termen desemnează capacitatea cu care este înzestrat orice ființă umană normal constituită, de a învăța și de a folosi unul sau mai multe sisteme de semne verbale pentru a comunica cu semenii și să se reprezinte în lume. Capacitatea speciei umane, cu caracter universal, limbajul trebuie deosebit de limbile naturale și de vorbire. [...] În uzul curent, el desemnează uneori orice cod de comunicare [...], precum și orice sistem de interpretare de producții culturale [...]” (DP 1999: 460-461)/ „Este un instrument (adecvat) de codificare obiectiv care face posibil trecerea funcției comunicaționale de la un stadiu receptiv – reactiv, la unul activ – debitant (de la cel situațional sau practic, la cel general – abstract). În același timp este expresia concretizată și particularizată a limbii vorbite de un individ altui individ sau de un individ unui grup, precum și invers, dar și o comunicare de dialog intern [...]” (DEP 1997: 415)/ „LINGV. 1. Comportament care manifestă o intenție de comunicare. [...] LINGV. 2. Capacitate specific umană care constă în comunicarea prin semne vocale (și, în subsidiar, scrise) organizate în sisteme, numite *limbi* și care presupun existența unei funcții simbolice, a unui aparat fonator și a unor centri nervoși specializați. [...] SOCIAL. Facultate umană care, prin intermediul unui sistem convențional de semne și simboluri legate între ele prin reguli, exprimate oral, scris sau gestual, servește ca principal mod de comunicare a ideilor și emoțiilor între indivizi și ca instrument de elaborare și de exprimare a gândirii la individ. [...] limbajul, dezvoltat la început ca instrument de comunicare social, este interiorizat și influențează structurile mentale, de vreme ce el se află la originea unui sistem simbolic abstract, care permite organizarea gândirii. [...]” (MDP 2006: 700-702)

*Reasoning*, which has two possible forms in Romanian (*gândire* – the newer form, and the older one – *gîndire*)<sup>1</sup> is the first term to have all the semantic aspects encoded in its definitions. Quantitatively speaking, the information is not impressive, but it is acceptable and suitable to fill all the aspects and decode the proper meaning.

Cause, for instance, is only included in Dictionary of Psychology (DP): “internalization of conducts and behaviors”. There are several effects, which are again expressed by means of verbal nouns or infinitive verbs: “the imaging of reality” (DEXI and DEP), “the adjustment to the outer world” (LAR), “to anticipate the future” (EFSU). EFSU also mentions reference time: future in this quotation. There appears the semantic relation to *language* again, and one of the effects of *reasoning* is the development of *language*.

Beneficiary is defined as people in EFSU and DEP, with other variations within the same meaning (human brain in DEXI, spirit in DP). The instrument varies across levels of specialization, with the highest level in DP and DEP. Awareness is conveyed directly, and so is the ability to verbalize: “GENER. Internal mental activity, featured by *awareness*”, mental activities “in their explicit form (aware and possibly verbalized)” (MDP).

There is the concept *memory* – the first term that has been analyzed – as a support for *reasoning*: „mental activity which lets people recreate outside information or information retrieved by means of memory” (according to EFSU).

*Imagery*<sup>2</sup>, just like *language* and *reasoning*, is similar to a common language item, as no diastatic mark is conveyed in DEXI. Besides, the term in its simple form is not to be identified in MDP, Great Dictionary of Psychology.

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<sup>1</sup> **gândire** - „gîndire – 1. Facultate superioară a creierului omenesc care reflectă, în mod nemijlocit, generalizat și abstract, realitatea prin noțiuni, judecăți, teorii etc. [...]” (DEXI 2007: 807)/ „în psihologie, activitate mentală care permite omului să reevalueze informații obținute din exterior sau prin aportul memoriei, cu scopul de a explicita implicațiile și/sau de a realiza anticipări cu privire la viitor.” (EFSU 2007: 386)/ „[...]Se distinge o gândire vigilență, realistă, orientată spre adaptarea la lumea exterioară, și o gândire autistă sau onirică, guvernată de trebuințele afective. Cea dintâi [...]se exprimă prin cuvânt (idee, concept) și propoziție (judecată). [...]” (LAR 2000: 137)/ „Gîndire. Termen din limbajul curent [...] cuvîntul gîndire trimite la toate manifestările spiritului, desemnînd atît conținuturi, idei, cît și activități, raționamente [...] și-a preocupat de originile gîndirii, conceput ca interiorizare a conduitelor sau comportamentelor, în favoarea dezvoltării funcției reprezentative și a limbajului. [...]” (DP 1999: 351-352)/ „GÎNDIREA [...] Într-un sens larg termenul exprimă actul de reflectare mijlocit, complex, abstractizat asupra realității ce operează cu simboluri, cu legături logice și este specific omului. Actul de gîndire se materializează în forme diverse de comunicare. [...]” (DEP 1997: 317)/ „GENER. Activitate psihică internă, caracterizată prin caracterul său conștient. [...] În psihologie, sensul este în general restrâns la activitățile pe care azi le numim cognitive, dar numai în forma lor explicită (conștient și verbalizabil) [...]” (MDP 2006: 499-500)

<sup>2</sup> **imaginație** - „1. Facultate specific umană de a reprezenta obiecte percepute anterior sau experiențe trăite. [...]” (DEXI 2007: 885)/ „activitate sau facultate mentală care produce și combină imaginile reale, percepute sensibil, și le reproduse. În filosofie, teoria este importantă pentru gnozeologie și pentru antropologie. [...]” (EFSU 2007: 475- 476)/ „aptitudine de a reprezenta obiectele absente și de a combina imaginile. Imaginația, care se situează la jumătatea drumului între conduita intelectuală rațională și gândirea strict individuală, supus exclusiv afectivității (vis\*, reverie\*), este legată de structura caracterială. [...]” (LAR 2000: 153)/ „Aptitudine de a forma și de a activa imagini mentale,

Cause (conveyed as “previously perceived objects or undergone experiences”) is clear in the general dictionary, and awareness – marked as “±” – derives only from Larousse dictionary. Effects are mentioned in four different sources. The common verbs which fill this aspect are *to produce, to represent, to build and to create*. Of course, synonymy (or quasi-synonymy) may be the reason of this variation. Combining (mental) images is an effect which arises from three sources: DEXI, EFSU and DEP.

Beneficiary is considered to be human in DEP, human being in DEXI. Instruments are defined as symbolic elements (DEP, LAR, DP) or reality elements (EFSU). Reference time is the past and is asserted as such in the general dictionary and indirectly in DP: “it is taken for the ability to evoke something” (DP). Verbalization is not included and is opposed to the intrinsic nature of the process.

Term/ semantic aspect	LANGUAGE	REASONING	IMAGERY
cause	ability [...] to learn and use one or more systems of verbal signs (DP); receptive-reactive communicative function (DEP); intention to communicate (MDP)	internalizing conduct and behavior (DP)	previously perceived objects or undergone experiences (DEXI)
effect	to [...] convey ideas, feelings, wishes, etc. by means of speech sounds (DEXI); communication, to express oneself verbally (EFSU); conveying and [...] communicating <i>reasoning</i> (LAR); to communicate with one's peers and to display one's world (DP); active discharging (general-abstract) communicative function (DEP), communicating ideas and emotions, development and [...] manifestation of <i>reasoning</i> , abstract symbolic system, which allows for <i>reasoning</i> to be organized (MDP)	reflecting reality (DEXI), to explain the implications and/or [...] anticipate the future (EFSU); adjustment to the outer world (LAR – on realistic reasoning); development of the representative function and of language (DP); reflecting [...] reality, mind specific actions (reflection) (DEP)	produces and combines real images, [...] keeps them and conveys them (EFSU); represents missing objects and combines images (LAR); forms and engages mental images (DP); creating new images cognitively, [...] mind projection, [...] creation, creativity, innovative products (DEP)
beneficiary	people (DEXI); man (EFSU); all individuals in the same species (LAR); any normal human being, human species (DP); individuals (MDP)	human brain (DEXI), man (EFSU), spirit (DP), man (DEP)	human being (DEXI); man (DEP)

în absența oricărui model perceput: în acest prim sens, imaginația se confundă cu capacitatea de evocare. În al doilea sens, imaginația se definește ca o capacitate de combinare a imaginilor într-un tablou sau în succesiune. [...]” (DP 1999: 386)/„Proces psihic de creare de imagini noi în plan mental, formă de proiectare mentală, act de creație. [...] Mai mult decât inteligența (gîndirea), i. este specific omului. [...] Unii psihologi [...] consideră i. ca o expresie a creativității, iar creativitatea ca o formă de gîndire (divergentă) sau ca o formă de gîndire intuitivă ce se concretizează în produse inovatoare. [...] I. operează cu material simbolic în decupaje [...]. I. operează cu imagini [...]” (DEP 1997: 352-353)/ Termenul *imaginație* este definit doar sintagmatic, sub forma *delir de imaginație* în MDP 2006: 569.

instrument	ideas, feelings, wishes, etc. (DEXI); signs that are identical to all individuals of the same species (LAR); systems of verbal signs, writing systems of formal fields (DP), spoken language + inner dialogue, perceptions, impressions, <i>imagination</i> , willingness (DEP); speech signs (and [...] written) organized in systems, a conventional system of signs and symbols interrelated by rules, which are expressed orally, written, or gestually (MDP)	reality by means of notions, judgment, theories (DEXI); word (idea, concept) and proposition (reasoning) and symbolic representations (LAR); content, ideas [...] activities, judgment (DP); symbols, [...] logic connections (DEP); information, judgment, problem solving, creating new concepts (MDP)	real images (EFSU); missing objects and images (LAR); mental images (DP); selective symbolic material, images (DEP)
reference time	?	anticipating the future (EFSU)	previously perceived objects or undergone experiences (DEXI); it may be taken for the ability to evoke something (DP)
awareness	?	+	±
verbalization	+	±	-

Even though the lexicographic and terminological records are defined by heterogeneity and inconsistency and the entries are highly descriptive and less normative, there are tangent points in their various definitions. The most significant elements I have taken into consideration are the following: the special interest of the audience towards psychology, the issue of polysemy, the high terminological density in some definitions, the fallacy of circular definitions, which relies upon other terms in the field, and the lack of inspiration and/or knowledge in some cases (such as the definition of *attention* in LAR which includes a pronoun as a hypernym).

It is therefore prominent that *memory*, *attention*, *language*, *reasoning* and *imagery* only partially meet the terminological requirements of unambiguity, preciseness and monoreferentiality in the quoted dictionaries and they will be subjected to a textual analysis for objectivity in final conclusions on their terminological status.

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EFSU – Cosma, Luminița (transl.) *et al.* *Enciclopedie de Filosofie i Științe Umane*. Bucure ti: Ed. ALL EDUCATIONAL. 2007. Print.

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# ***SUBJECTS IN CHILD ROMANIAN: EVIDENCE OF EARLY SENSITIVITY TO ARGUMENT STRUCTURE***

**Otilia TEODORESCU\***

**Abstract:** *Recent acquisition studies have shown that children's early subjects mirror sensitivity to the argument structure of predicates (Larusso, Caprin and Guasti 2004, Cabre Sans and Gavarró 2007). The data reported in these studies reveal a lower subject omission rate with unaccusatives, as well as an early preference to place the subject of unaccusatives in post-verbal position. The aim of the present paper is to investigate the distribution of early subjects in child Romanian with a view to identifying whether the way in which children use overt subjects reveals early sensitivity to the unaccusative/unergative/transitive distinction. The paper analyzes the distribution of early subjects on the basis of one longitudinal corpus of monolingual Romanian (child B., age range 1;9- 2;10, 15 hours of transcribed conversations of spontaneous speech between the child and a caretaker). In line with previous findings for Spanish, Italian and Catalan, our results show that the Romanian child is sensitive to the argument structure of the predicate. The rate of post-verbal subjects is higher with unaccusatives than with transitives or with unergatives. The rate of null subjects is lower with unaccusatives.*

**Keywords:** *subject, unaccusative, unergative, transitive, child Romanian.*

## **1. Introduction**

### **1. Introduction**

In the acquisition literature, it has been shown that children are sensitive to the distinction between unaccusatives and unergatives at a very early age (Larusso, Caprin and Guasti 2004, Cabre Sans and Gavarró 2007, Vernice and Guasti 2014). In particular, the way in which they use early subjects reveals an asymmetry between subject omission with unaccusatives and with unergatives, as well as an early preference to place the subject of unaccusatives in post-verbal position. Such findings offer evidence that children use subjects in accordance with the argument structure of verbs from the very early stages of language acquisition. They are, however, in contradiction with what has been reported in Babyonyshev et al. (2001), where it is argued that children do not distinguish between the two classes of verbs from the very beginning. Their findings show that children treat both unaccusatives and unergatives as intransitives which project an external argument, i.e. they assign all mono-argumental verbs the syntax of unergatives.

All the available acquisition studies which investigate early subject use relative to verb class focus on languages in which unaccusativity is syntactically encoded. Extending the investigation to languages in which syntactic evidence of unaccusativity is underspecified in the input might shed light on whether children can correctly represent unaccusatives as verbs which take a single internal

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\* Ph D candidate, University of Bucharest, [negru.otilia@yahoo.com](mailto:negru.otilia@yahoo.com)

argument irrespective of whether unaccusativity is/is not syntactically encoded in the target language. This is precisely the goal of the present paper, whose aim is to investigate the early use of subjects with transitives, unaccusatives and unergatives in Romanian, a language for which it has been argued that unaccusativity is only ‘weakly’ syntactically encoded (Dragomirescu 2010). For the investigation of the acquisition of subjects in Romanian, in particular, identifying whether early post-verbal subjects are associated mainly with unaccusatives, as argued for child Italian and child Catalan, might provide evidence with respect to the acquisition of the syntax of subjects and of the availability of verb movement in the early grammar.

The present paper investigates the distribution of early subjects in child Romanian with a view to identifying whether the way in which children use overt subjects reveals early knowledge of the argument structure of verbs. The analysis focuses on subject use with unaccusatives and unergatives.

The paper is organized as follows: Section 2 briefly presents the main syntactic properties of unaccusatives and unergatives. The main findings with respect to early subjects with unaccusatives and unergatives reported in the previous studies are summarized in section 3, i.e. the distribution of early subjects in child Italian and in child Catalan. The study itself will be presented in section 4, where the distribution of early subjects in child Romanian is analyzed on the basis of one longitudinal corpus. The data reveal that the Romanian child is sensitive to unaccusativity: the use of subjects of unaccusatives shows that these verbs are correctly represented as distinct from unergatives and transitives. The relevance of the findings for our understanding of the acquisition of subjects is addressed in section 5. Section 6 summarizes the conclusions.

## **2. Main syntactic properties of unaccusatives and unergatives**

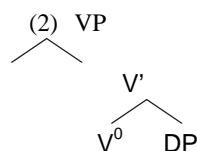
Perlmutter (1978, in Avram 2006) argues that one-argument intransitives may be divided into unaccusatives and unergatives, as there is a difference between these two classes both from a syntactic and from a semantic point of view. Semantically, the difference may be described as the lack/presence of agentivity. Thus, unaccusatives (illustrated in 1) are the class of verbs whose argument is assigned a Patient or Theme theta-role, as the only event participant does not have any control over the action which is denoted by the verb:

- (1) a. The leaf was falling from the old tree.
- b. The boat was floating down the river.
- c. The bomb exploded.

The class of unaccusatives includes verbs of existence or happening, verbs denoting ‘non voluntary emission of stimuli that impinge on senses’, the so-called duratives and aspectual predicates.

The argument of unaccusatives has similar properties with those of an object. This is why it has been argued that it merges with the verb as an internal argument, in the complement position of the verb. The D structure of a sentence with an unaccusative verb is the one in (2):



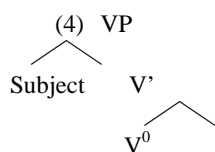


Another important property of these verbs is their inability of assigning Accusative case to the argument in complement position. Burzio's generalization links this property to the lack of an external argument: a verb which cannot project an external argument cannot assign Accusative case to its internal argument in complement position (Avram 2006).

Unergative verbs differ from unaccusatives in terms of agentivity. The argument of this class of verbs is assigned an Agent theta role and in most cases it has control over the action denoted by the verb. These verbs denote mainly volitional acts: *laugh, smile, run, work, walk, play, etc.*:

- (3) a. The children played in the park.  
 b. The boy ran after the cat.  
 c. They all laughed.

The argument of the verbs in (3), as mentioned above, is assigned the Agent theta-role, like prototypical subjects. This is why it has been analysed as merging in the Spec,VP position, on a par with the subject of transitives. The D-structure of a sentence containing an unergative verb is shown in (4) below, where the argument merges in Spec,VP as an external argument:



As the verb projects an external argument, according to Burzio's generalization, in certain conditions, it will assign Accusative case to a DP in complement position (to a cognate object):

- (5) They laughed a happy laugh.

There are, therefore, three main classes of verbs: transitives, unergatives and unaccusatives. Transitives and unergatives project an external argument and can assign Accusative case to the DP in complement position, whereas unaccusatives do not project an external argument and, therefore, cannot assign Accusative case either.

The few available studies which tackled the issue of unaccusativity diagnostics in Romanian seem to agree on one point: unaccusativity is only weakly encoded in this language. Dragomirescu (2010), following ideas put forth in Dobrovie-Sorin (1994) and Cornilescu (1995), considers that there is only one strong

unaccusativity diagnostic in this language: the use of the past participle as a noun modifier inside the DP. This is grammatical with transitives (6a) and unaccusatives (6b), but not with unergatives (6c):

- (6) a. *cartea scris*  
 book.the written  
 'the written book'
- b. *om îmb trânt*  
 man aged  
 'an aged person' (from Iancu 2014)
- c. \**femeie str nutat*  
 woman sneezed (from Iancu 2014)

Dragomirescu (2010) also mentions that unaccusatives, unlike unergatives, cannot take cognate objects, since they cannot assign Accusative case to the DP in complement position:

- (7) a. *i-a tr it traiul*  
 cl has lived life.the  
 'he has lived his life'
- b. \**el a sosit sosirea*  
 has arrived arrival.the  
 'he arrived the arrival' (from Dragomirescu 2010)

However, due to the fact that in Romanian many unergatives lost the ability to take cognate objects, there is only a small number of unergatives which preserved this property, which weakens the strength of this diagnostic.

As these data show, the difference between unergatives and unaccusatives is not strongly encoded in the syntax of Romanian. For acquisition, this translates into an underspecified input, which does not contain robust cues with respect to this distinction.

The use of subjects with these two classes of intransitives is not more transparent either.

In *pro*-drop languages, such as Romanian (the language investigated in the present study) or Italian and Catalan (the languages investigated in the studies briefly summarized in section 3 below), the argument whose syntactic function is that of subject can appear both in pre- and in post-verbal position, irrespective of verb class. This is illustrated in (8) – (10) for Romanian:

- (8) a. **Copilul** a c zut.  
 baby.the has fallen  
 b. A c zut **copilul**.  
 has fallen baby.the  
 'The baby has fallen.'

- (9) a. **Copilul** a alergat.  
 Child.the has run  
 b. A alergat **copilul**.  
 has run child.the  
 ‘The child has run.’
- (10) a. **Copilul** bea apă .  
 child.the drinks water  
 b. Bea **copilul** apă .  
 drinks child.the water  
 ‘The child drinks water.’

According to Alboiu (2002), in Romanian subjects are licensed in their first Merge position, where they get Nominative case, irrespective of verb class (Alboiu 2002:75). If they move from this first Merge position, they do it for reasons different from Case. Therefore, the post-verbal subjects of unaccusatives occur in the complement position of the verb, whereas the post-verbal subjects of unergatives and of transitives occur in the Specifier of VP. Importantly, when the subject is in post-verbal position, there is no definiteness constraint (Alboiu 2002), as is the case in Italian or English, not even with unaccusatives (see 11 below). Both definite and indefinite subjects can occur in post-verbal position:

- (11) a. Vine un copil.  
 comes a child  
 b. Vine copilul.  
 comes child.the  
 ‘A/the child is coming.’

Given the current understanding of unaccusativity in Romanian, one can say that this language is not very transparent with respect to the different properties of verb classes. The input which children receive does not contain robust cues for unaccusativity. Since post-verbal subjects are allowed with any verb class, irrespective of whether the subject is definite or indefinite, subject position cannot offer clear cues with respect to verb class either. Similarly, pre-verbal subjects are allowed with any verb class, provided the subject can be interpreted as topic or focus.

### 3. Previous studies

#### 3.1 Early subjects and verb classes in child Italian

Larusso, Caprin and Guasti (2004) address the distribution of overt subjects in early child Italian. The focus is on the way in which children use overt and null subjects in the context of various verb classes: transitives, unergatives and unaccusatives. The main claim of their article is that Italian children are sensitive to verb class; they use subjects in different ways depending on the argument structure of the class. Their analysis relies on both longitudinal and cross-sectional data. The longitudinal data come from four corpora of monolingual Italian children (age range 18 - 36 months). The investigated corpus includes 2,838 utterances

(declarative sentences, including a verb). The cross-sectional data come from 59 children (age range 22 -35 months). The investigated corpus consists of 2,577 utterances. The authors examined the use and the omission of the subject in connection to the main verb: transitive, unaccusative and unergative in declarative sentences. They also investigated whether the overt subject occupied a pre- or a post-verbal position. The child data were compared to adult speech.

The results obtained from the analysis of subject use by children and adults were similar: the percentage of null subjects in the longitudinal corpus was 74% for adults compared to 75% for children. Yet, the distribution of the subject with different classes of verbs is not the same across the two groups. Children use more overt subjects in sentences with unaccusatives, whereas adults use about the same percentage of overt subjects both with unergative and unaccusative verbs. But both adults and children tend to use more post-verbal overt subjects with unaccusatives.

The analysis of the cross-sectional data reveals a similar picture with respect to the distribution of overt subjects with the various classes of verbs. The children in the corpus used an overt subject with unaccusatives 28.7%, but only 12% with unergatives. The percentage of post-verbal subjects is higher with unaccusatives (53.71%) than with both unergatives (26.09%) and transitives (26.35%). Interestingly, in the cross-sectional data, the Italian children used an overt subject 21.5% and adults 36.3%, which may indicate that during the early stages, even children acquiring a null subject language tend to omit the subject more often than adults. Actually, the authors notice that there is an increase in overt subject use parallel to an increase in MLU.

Summing up, Larusso, Caprin and Guasti (2004) offer data which show that Italian children distinguish between classes of verbs at a very early age and build their sentences accordingly. In particular, they are aware of the status of internal argument of the subject of unaccusatives. The distribution of subjects with these verbs is different both in the longitudinal and in the cross-sectional data; the omission rate is lower with unaccusatives than with the other two classes of verbs and the overt subjects used with unaccusatives are preferentially placed in post-verbal position.

The pre- vs. post-verbal asymmetry is accounted for in terms of early sensitivity to the syntax of subjects with the various classes of verbs. In accordance with the VP-internal subject hypothesis, the external argument is base-generated inside the VP, in Spec VP. This is indeed the case with transitive and unergative verbs. In this position, the subject cannot be assigned case; it has to move out of the VP to a case-marked pre-verbal position. The argument of unaccusatives is base-generated in complement position; it can either move outside the VP, as the subject of the other verbs, and get Nominative case in a pre-verbal position or it can remain in post-verbal position, where it is base-generated, and where it receives partitive case (Belletti 1988, in Larusso, Caprin and Guasti 2004), i.e. for the subject of unaccusatives the syntax of Italian offers two options: movement to pre-verbal position or an *in situ* position.

The omission asymmetry is also accounted for in terms of the different syntactic properties of the subject of unaccusatives. Null subjects have been analysed as occupying the canonical subject position, the Spec,IP. Therefore, the subject of unaccusative verbs can be null only when it moves to Spec,IP; but as there is still a possibility for the subject to remain *in situ*, there are fewer chances for it to be omitted. The fact that the omission rate of the subject of unaccusatives is very low

is taken as evidence that children treat the subject of these verbs as an internal argument.

### 3.2 Early subjects and verb classes in child Catalan

Following the line of Larusso, Caprin and Guasti (2004), Cabre Sans and Gavarró (2007) address the acquisition of subjects in early child Catalan. Their goal is two-fold: to investigate whether there are differences between the use of subjects in the speech of Catalan children and adults and the ways in which children use overt subjects in the context of transitive, unergative and unaccusative verbs. The main claim of their article is that children are sensitive to verb class, i.e. they use subjects in different ways depending on the verb class, and that children and adults use similar patterns for subject distribution.

The data used in the analysis come from three longitudinal corpora of three monolingual Catalan children (age range 14 - 36 months); the investigated corpus includes 3,001 utterances (declarative sentences, including a verb). The authors also investigated the speech of the persons who took care of the children and analyzed their recordings in order to compare child speech to the input which they received. The use and the omission of the subject in connection to the main verb were investigated (transitive, unaccusative and unergative in declarative sentences). The (pre- or post-verbal) position of the subject was also investigated. Similarly to the findings reported for child Italian in Larusso, Caprin and Guasti (2004), there was no difference between the percentage of null subjects used by adults in the longitudinal corpus (62%) and that of null subjects used by children (69%). An observation should be made; children scored higher after the MLU reached 2.5, i.e. adult-like levels of overt vs. null subjects are achieved at this point (in the beginning, when their MLU is lower than 2.5, children produce a significantly higher proportion of null subjects).

The results are, however, different with respect to subject distribution. Thus, before a 2.5 MLU is achieved, the percentage of overt subjects in post-verbal position in the speech of the children is relatively high, irrespective of verb class. But, as mentioned earlier, the situation changes when the child reaches an MLU of 2.5, when the rate of post-verbal subjects with unergatives and transitives lowers and it is significantly lower than with unaccusatives, where the rate remains similar to the one for the first stage. Adults use a significantly higher proportion of preverbal subjects with unergatives and transitives, while no differences are attested with the subjects of unaccusatives; these are used in a similar way by children and adults.

The child data and the comparison with adults are summarized in Table 1:

Table 1. Postverbal subjects and verb class in child Catalan compared to adults

Type of verb	Children Post-verbal subjects MLU < 2.5	Children Post-verbal subjects MLU > 2.5	Adults Post-verbal subjects
Unaccusative	61.90%	65.05%	49.15%
Unergative	71.43%	25 %	28.57%
Transitive	72%	16.67 %	43.90%

(adapted from Cabre Sans and Gavarró 2007)

The results reveal that Catalan children use more post-verbal subjects in sentences with unaccusatives, whereas adults use about the same percentage of overt subjects with transitive and unaccusative verbs. The analysis of the data also reveals a tendency to place the subject in front of the verb when it is unergative or transitive. The omission rate is higher with transitive and unergative verbs than with unaccusatives. The authors' conclusion is that children differentiate between the various classes of verbs very early and are able to use the subject in accordance with the syntactic properties of each class.

#### **4. Subject distribution in child Romanian**

##### **4.1 Predictions**

As mentioned in section 2 above, Romanian does not provide the straightforward syntactic encoding of unaccusativity found in languages like Italian. The input which the Romanian child receives with respect to the argument structure of unaccusatives and unergatives is underspecified. Moreover, subjects of any verb can occur in either pre- or post-verbal position.

The main question addressed in the present study is whether subject use is determined in any way by verb class in child Romanian in spite of input underspecification.

Italian is more transparent with respect to the different properties of verb classes (Rizzi 1982, Vernice and Guasti 2014). But, when we compare the positions of the subject of unaccusatives, we notice that the syntax of both Romanian and Italian offers two options: movement of the subject to pre-verbal position or an *in situ* position. Leaving the subject *in situ* may be less costly, since it avoids movement. If movement is relevant to computational complexity and if computational complexity matters in the acquisition process, the similarity between the post-verbal subjects of unaccusatives in the two languages predicts a similar acquisition pattern. Larusso, Caprin and Guasti (2004), as shown in section 3, provide evidence that Italian children tend to place the subject of unaccusatives in post-verbal position at a higher rate. They account for this finding in terms of movement of the subject to pre-verbal position. If their analysis is on the right track, we can predict that in child Romanian we should get the same preference for post-verbal subjects with unaccusatives.

The subject omission asymmetry found in child Italian is also accounted for in terms of movement. Null subjects occupy the canonical subject position, the Spec,IP. Therefore, the subject of unaccusative verbs can be null only when it moves to Spec, IP; but since the subject can remain *in situ*, there are fewer chances for the subject to be omitted. If this analysis of null subjects is correct, we can predict a lower omission rate with unaccusatives in Romanian as well.

##### **4.2 Corpus and method**

The data come from the B. corpus, available on CHILDES (and described in Avram 2001). The longitudinal corpus used in the analysis is presented in Table 2:

Table 2. The longitudinal data

Child	Age range	MLU range	Nr of files	No. of recorded hours
B.	17 months-28 months	1.305 - 2.358	17	17

I examined all the files for the production of unaccusative, unergative and transitive verbs in declarative sentences. The subject was categorized as null or overt. The position of the overt subject was also considered in relation to verb classes. A number of 182 utterances were used in the present analysis.

### 4.3 Results

The first overt subjects are attested very early, at 1;10 (see also Avram and Coene 2010), and they appear both in pre- and post-verbal position from the beginning:

- (12) Bambi nu e. (B. 1;10)  
Bambi not is  
'Bambi is not (here).'
- (13) M nânc Dolly. (B. 2;0)  
eats Dolly  
'Dolly is eating.'
- (14) Pap Bianca banana. (B. 2;0)  
eats Bianca banana.the  
'Bianca is eating the banana.'

The analysis of the data reveals that the child uses a higher percentage of null subjects overall. The null/overt subject ratio is presented in Table 3 below:

Table 3. Overt vs. null subjects in child Romanian

Overt subject	Null subject
34.99%	65.01%

The results are similar to those reported for Catalan, Italian and Spanish. Table 4 compares the Romanian data with those for other *pro*-drop languages.

Table 4. Overt vs. null subjects. Child Romanian compared to other *pro*-drop languages

Language	Overt subject	Null subject
Romanian	34.99%	65.01%
Italian (Larouso et al. 2004)	25%	75%
Catalan (Casanovas 1999, Cabre Sans and Gavarró 2007)	38%	62%
Catalan (Cabre Sans and Gavarró 2007)	31.08%	68.92%
Spanish (Bel 2003, Cabre Sans and Gavarró 2007)	32.7%	67.3%
Spanish (Casielis et al. 2005, in Cabre Sans and Gavarró 2007)	32.12%	67.8%

According to Grinstead (2000), there is a stage in the development of Spanish and Catalan children when they use verbs without subjects. Cabre Sans and Gavarró (2007) and Aguado Ore and Pine (2002) argue against this hypothesis, claiming that the data Grinstead used were extremely thin; there is only one file in which utterances containing finite verbs lack overt subjects, which might be purely accidental. Our data provide evidence against Cabre Sans and Gavarró (2007) and Aguado Ore and Pine (2002) and in favour of Grinstead (2000). As can be seen in Table 5 below, overt subjects are attested only at 1;10; before that, B. does not use any overt subject (see also Avram and Coene 2010 for a discussion along this line). There is also a slight increase in the use of overt subjects in child Romanian across stages. This has also been attested for Italian (Serratrice 2005, in Avram and Coene 2010), Catalan and Spanish (Grinstead 2000). The analysis of child directed speech reveals a different pattern: the proportion of overt subjects in child-directed speech is slightly decreasing over time. It seems that the proportion of null subjects is slightly higher in child speech during the early stages across languages. Interestingly, there is an asymmetry between the rate of null subjects with unaccusatives and with unergatives for the period investigated in this study; the former is lower than with either unergatives or transitives. The results are summarized in Table 5:

Table 5. The use of overt and null subjects with unaccusatives, unergatives and transitives

Age	Transitive		Unaccusative		Unergative	
	Overt	Null	Overt	Null	Overt	Null
1;9	0%	100%	0%	100%	0%	100%
1;10	0%	100%	50%	50%	38.47%	61.53%
1;10.29	28.57%	71.43%	45.45%	55.55%	25%	75%
1;11	0%	100%	75%	25%	14.29%	85.71%
2;0	28.58%	71.42%	90%	10%	83.34%	16.66%
2;1	41.18%	58.82%	54.55%	45.45%	25%	75%
2;2	31.59%	68.51%	74.08%	25.92%	30.62%	69.38%
Mean percentage	18.55%	81.45%	55.44%	44.56%	30.96%	69.04%

Overt subjects are placed in both pre- and post-verbal position. But one notices a difference between unaccusatives and the other two verb classes. With unaccusatives, the rate of post-verbal subjects is higher than with transitives or unergatives. The findings are summarized in Table 6.

Table 6. Pre- vs. post-verbal subjects with unaccusatives, unergatives and transitives

Age	Transitive			Unaccusative			Unergative		
	Overt		Null	Overt		Null	Overt		Null
	pre-V	post-V		pre-V	post-V		pre-V	Post-V	
1;9.03	0%	0%	100% (n=4)	0%	0%	100% (n=2)	0%	0%	100% (n=2)



1;10.01	0%	0%	100% (n=7)	25% (n=1)	25% (n=1)	50% (n=2)	23% (n=3)	15.3% (n=2)	61.53% (n=8)
1;10.29	14.28% (n=2)	14.28% (n=2)	71.43% (n=10)	11.11% (n=1)	33.33% (n=3)	55.55% (n=5)	12.5% (n=2)	12.5% (n=2)	75% (n=1)
1;11.26	0%	0%	100% (n=2)	0%	75% (n=3)	25% (n=1)	0%	14.28% (n=1)	85.71% (n=6)
2;0.11	23.80% (n=5)	4.76% (n=1)	71.42% (n=15)	13.33% (n=4)	76.66% (n=23)	10% (n=3)	0%	83.33% (n=5)	16.66% (n=1)
2;1.18	23.52% (n=4)	17.64% (n=3)	58.82% (n=10)	36.36% (n=4)	18.18% (n=2)	45.45% (n=5)	0%	25% (n=5)	75% (n=15)
2;2.13	20.37% (n=11)	11.11% (n=6)	68.51% (n=37)	16.66% (n=9)	57.40% (n=31)	25.92% (n=14)	4.08% (n=2)	26.53% (n=13)	69.38% (n=34)
Total	11.71% (n=11)	6.82% (n=6)	81.45% (n=37)	14.63% (n=9)	40.79% (n=31)	44.56% (n=14)	5.65% (n=2)	25.27% (n=13)	69.04% (n=34)

## 5. Discussion

Larusso, Caprin and Guasti (2004) and Cabre Sans and Gavarró (2007) have shown that children are sensitive to the distinction between unaccusatives and unergatives at a very early age. Moreover, their use of early subjects revealed an asymmetry between subject omission with unaccusatives and with unergatives, as well as an early preference to place the subject of unaccusatives in post-verbal position. In the present paper I investigated the distribution of early subjects in child Romanian with a view to identifying whether the way in which children use overt subjects reveals early sensitivity to the argument structure of verbs, the analysis focusing on subject use with unaccusatives and unergatives. The comparison of subject positions in the syntax of Italian and Romanian led to the prediction that Romanian children will show the same early knowledge of argument structure of verbs, using subjects differently with unaccusatives. The prediction was borne out by the data. The results indicate that child Romanian has a similar overall rate of subject omission as child Catalan (Cabre Sans and Gavarró 2007), child Spanish (Bel, 2003, Casielis et al., 2005 in Cabre Sans and Gavarró 2007) and child Italian (Larouso, Caprin and Guasti 2004). The Romanian child whose speech was investigated for the present study treated subjects of unaccusatives as internal arguments, placing them preferentially in post-verbal position, just like Italian and Catalan children.

With regard to early sensitivity to the argument structure of verbs, the data have shown that, in spite of the fact that Romanian does not encode unaccusativity syntactically, indeed, the Romanian child differentiates between the various classes of verbs. This indicates that the different semantics of the two classes (agentivity with unergatives and lack of agentivity with unaccusatives) might facilitate the early acquisition of the argument structure of these verb classes.

## 6. Conclusion

In this paper we investigated the distribution of early subjects in child Romanian with a view to identifying if children's use of overt subjects reveals early knowledge of the argument structure of verbs. The focus was on unaccusatives and unergatives, and the main question was whether the Romanian child is able to differentiate between verb classes, even though the Romanian language does not encode unaccusativity syntactically in a very transparent way. Our data came from a longitudinal corpus of child Romanian. The results provided evidence that the Romanian child differentiates between different classes of verbs very early, in spite of input underspecification.

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## **THE INTERNAL STRUCTURE OF PPS SOME SYNTACTIC AND SEMANTIC MATTERS**

**Tania ZAMFIR**

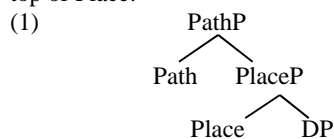
***Abstract:** The internal structure of Prepositional Phrases (PPs) has been the topic of various analyses and it has focused on teasing out their basic structure. The goal of this presentation is to propose an examination of the basic structure of directional spatial expression in terms of their (a) semantic and (b) syntactic features. We will argue that directional PPs are PathPs, while locative PPs are PlacePs and last but not least, we will show that the Path head is not a unique projection hosting directional elements, but it consists of several heads, each with its unique syntactic structure.*

***Keywords:** preposition, PathP, PlaceP.*

### **1. Introduction**

On examining the basic structure of directional spatial expressions- that is the Place and Path distinction, one cannot fail to consider the two different frameworks which also represent the starting point of our discussion: (i) a *semantic approach* and (ii) a *syntactic approach*. The two functional heads in the syntactic structure of directional expressions- *Place* and *Path*- presuppose also a semantic decomposition, as each of the heads in the syntactic structure is expected to have some semantic contribution. Thus, a discussion of the two heads unavoidably raises both syntactic and semantic matters.

In light of this view, there is a general consensus (Jackendoff, 1985; Mateu 2008; Svenonius 2008, 2010; Pantcheva 2009, 2011) that the syntactic structure of directional expressions consists of two heads: a *Path head* and a *Place head*. Under this view, the *Place head* encodes location while the *Path head* hosts directional markers regardless whether they encode Source or Goal of Motion. The minimal syntactic structure can be diagrammed as follows, where Path is built on top of Place:



The paper is organized as follows: Section 2 faces two distinct approaches which offer interesting accounts of the Place- Path distinction: a semantic approach as proposed by Jackendoff (1985, 1990) and a syntactic approach based on the works of Svenonius (2000, 2010) and Pantcheva (2009, 2011). Section 3 discusses the distribution of Place and the distribution of Path, and accounts for the idea that the Path head is not a unique head in the syntactic structure but it has a richer structure than previously assumed. Section 4 briefly summarizes the main conclusions.

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\* University of Bucharest, [tania.zamfir@yahoo.com](mailto:tania.zamfir@yahoo.com)

## 2. The internal structure of PPs

### 2.1. A semantic approach

Jackendoff (1983, 1990) proposes a semantic treatment for the Path and Place distinction. He identifies a set of conceptual categories, the “semantic parts of speech”, which includes such entities as Thing (or Object), Event, State, Action, Place, Path, Property and Amount. There is a principle of correspondence between syntax and conceptual structure in the sense that every content-bearing major phrasal constituent of a sentence (such as S, NP, PP, etc.) corresponds to a conceptual constituent. Consider the following example where a PP can express a Place and a Path:

(2) a. Syntactic structure

[<sub>S</sub>[<sub>NP</sub> Bill][<sub>VP</sub> went[<sub>PP</sub>into[<sub>NP</sub>the house]]]]

b. Conceptual structure

[<sub>Event</sub> GO ([<sub>Thing</sub> JOHN], [<sub>Path</sub> TO ([<sub>Place</sub> IN ([<sub>Thing</sub> ROOM]))])] ]

In the above conceptual structure, the verb corresponds to the Event-function Go<sup>1</sup>, thus the sentence expresses motion. The subject of the sentence corresponds to the first argument of Go and the PP corresponds to the second argument of Go. The second argument consists of a Path-function TO which takes a Place as its argument. Place decomposes itself into the Place-function IN and a Thing argument-ROOM, which is expressed by the object of the preposition. Each semantic category can be further elaborated. It is not our intent to elaborate all of the above semantic categories; we will concentrate mainly on the most important distinction within the class of senses of spatial PPs, that is [Paths] and [Places].

While a [**Place**] projects into a point, illustrated by a state verb, and is accepted by a verb as illustrated in (3a), a [**Path**] consists of a path function and a reference object, given by a motion verb (3b). Jackendoff (1983: 163) notices that the function Path dominates the function Place as illustrated below:

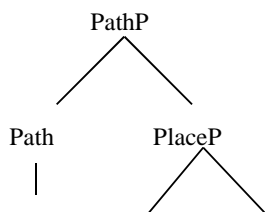
(3) a. John in in the room. (state verb)

A lamp is standing on the floor.

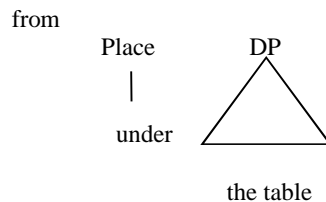
([Thing] occupies [Place])

b. The mouse ran from under the table. (motion verb)

(<sub>Path</sub> FROM ([<sub>Place</sub> UNDER ([<sub>Thing</sub> TABLE ]))])



<sup>1</sup> The category Event can have two functions: a GO or STAY function, each of which takes two arguments. The arguments of GO (which shows motion along a path) are the Thing in motion and the Path it traverses, while the arguments of STAY (which shows stasis over a period of time) are the Thing standing still and its location (Jackendoff, 1990)



Following Jackendoff (op.cit), [Paths] have a varied structure as compared to [Places]. On the one hand, the internal structure of a [Path] consists of a path-function and a reference object as in *toward the mountain, around the tree, to the floor*. The argument of a path-function may be a reference place, expressed by such phrases as *from under the table*. On the other hand, the internal structure of a [Place] consists of a Place-function plus an argument that belongs to the category Thing. A PP in English may mention a reference object as the object of the preposition as in *on the table*, or even two, as in *between the square and the circle*. Each place-function brings about conceptual constraints on the nature of the reference object. Furthermore, a Place-function takes as an argument a thing and gives as an output a place, while a Path-function takes as argument a Place and returns a Path.

According to the path's relationship to the reference object, Jackendoff (op cit.) suggests three main types of paths. Firstly, we can speak of **bounded paths**. They include *goal paths*, encoded by the English preposition *to* (4a), and *source paths* encoded by *from* (4b). The second type of paths is called **directions**, where the reference object does not fall on the path. They are expressed through *source directions* encoded by such prepositions as *away from* (5a) and *goal directions* encoded by *toward* (5b). The last type of paths is **routes** exemplified through *by, along, through* (6a) (Jackendoff, 1983:165):

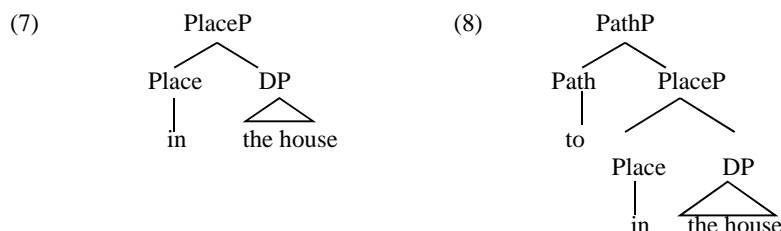
- (4) a. John ran to the house. (bounded path)
- b. John ran from the house. (bounded path)
- (5) a. John ran away from the house. (direction)
- b. John ran toward the house. (direction)
- (6) a. The car passed by the house. (route)
- along the river. (route)
- through the tunnel. (route)

In a nutshell, Jackendoff (1983, 1990) sets out to give a semantic treatment to the major conceptual categories involved in the structure of directional spatial expressions. Within the class of senses of spatial PPs the ontological categories [Place] and [Path], expressed by prepositional phrases were mainly given attention to. Under this view, a [Place] projects into a point, illustrated by a state verb *A lamp is standing on the floor*, while a [Path] consists of a path function and a reference object, given by a motion verb *The mouse ran from under the table*. Drawing on the work of Jackendoff (op cit.), Svenonius (2008, 2010) and Pantcheva (2009, 2011) develop a syntactic approach which will be under close examination in the following section.

### 2.3 A syntactic approach

Svenonius (2006, 2010) and Pantcheva (2009, 2011) develop a syntactic approach which draws on the influential work of Jackendoff (1985) and which analyses the functional structure of the PPs (Svenonius, 2008, 2010). In the same vein, Pantcheva (2009, 2011) proposes that the syntactic structure of directional expressions is quite rich; under this view, she proposes a decomposition of the commonly assumed *Path* head into a *Source* head dominating a *Goal* head, thus pointing towards the fact that the Path head is not a unique head in the syntactic structure but it has a richer structure than previously assumed.

In the same line of thought, Svenonius (op. cit) points out that the main distinction between the location and direction lies in the differences in the internal functional structure projected by the PPs. Thus, while locative PPs are PlacePs (even though they might be ambiguous between a locative and a directional reading), directional PPs are always PathPs. Consider the following schematic structure which spells out the locative PP in the house (7), while a directional PP into the house will be attributed a structure as in (8), where Path embeds Place, thus the Path head to takes a PlaceP complement:



Starting from the idea that, syntactically, directional expressions are decomposed into a multiple projections, *Path* and *Place*, thus the following section will provide a description of the very different syntactic distribution of the two heads.

## 3. Distribution of the two heads

### 3.1 Distribution of Place

*Place* elements provide information about the *Figure* and the *Ground*. Following Talmy (1978, 2000a) the *Figure* is the entity, object in motion, while the *Ground* represents the location with respect to which the Figure is located. In most of the situations the complement of the preposition is always the Ground and the Figure is expressed by the direct object of the verb. Take the following examples where this pattern is expressed; the reverse cannot be used (2000a:312):

- (9) a. Max stuck his finger in his nose.      \*Max stuck his nose around his finger.  
 b. The kids put decorations on the tree. \*The kids put the decorations among the tree.

However, in some cases the two entities may cast in each of the roles:

- (10) a. The bridge is above the river.  
 b. The river is below the bridge.

Furthermore, PlaceP can be the complement of stative verbs expressing location (11a) or can appear as a locative adjunct to VP with non-motion verbs (11b) (Svenonius, 2008: 3)

- (11) a. The boat remained *behind* the hill.  
 b. The boat burned *beyond* the city limits.

Place prepositions can function as restrictive modifiers in co-occurrence with common nouns (Svenonius, 2008: 4)

- (12) a. the boat behind the hill  
 b. the boat inside the cave

Svenonius (2006) notices that the omission of the ground can be possible with some prepositions (13a, b) when anaphoric identification is realized. However, some Place heads (14a, b) disallow anaphoric identification. Consider the following examples:

- (13) a. I saw a line of soldiers. The one *in front* (of it) was talking on the phone.  
 b. Nils looked over the snowdrift. The frozen fjord *beyond* (it) was dotted with seals.  
 (14) a. As the group approached the final summit, Espen stayed *among*\* (them).  
 b. There was a beach. *Next*\* (to it), the cliffs swarmed with birds.

Svenonius( 2006), following Kayne (1994) suggests that the spatial words *here* and *there* can appear in a PP, to the left of the preposition as illustrated in (15a-d) and they can also be added to full DPs as in (number c, d):

- (15) a. Come *here* inside the closet.  
 b. Lie *there* behind the dresser.  
 c. the house *there*  
 d. the man *there*

The most basic prepositions in English (in, on) which occupy the *Place* position, take the role of particles in expressions as *put the coat on*, *take the laundry in*; consider the following expressions which have a locative meaning in PP constructions:

- (16) a. The cat is up the tree.  
 b. The horse is down the hill

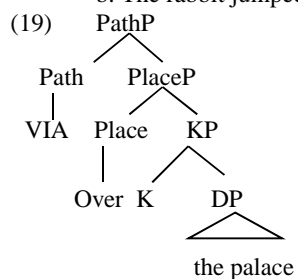
Place expressions can easily be combined with particles like up, down, etc. as illustrated in the following examples (Svenonius, 2008:3):

- (17) a. The boat drifted from **up** above the dam.  
 b. The boat drifted from **down** inside the cave.

### 3.2 Distribution of Path

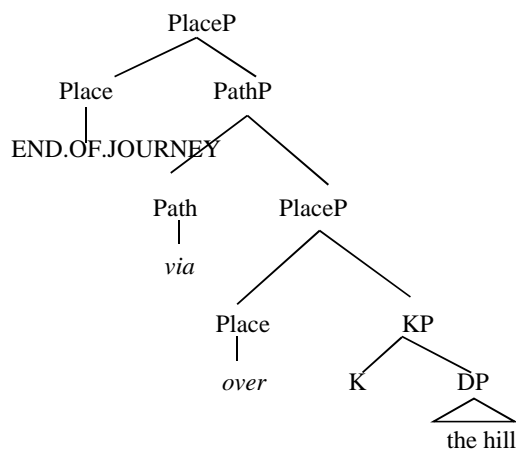
Paths contain Places- *Over, under, across* are PathPlace heads; they are constructed from both a Path and a Place (Svenonius, 2007)

- (18) a. The plane flew *over* the palace.  
 b. The rabbit jumped *through* the cage.

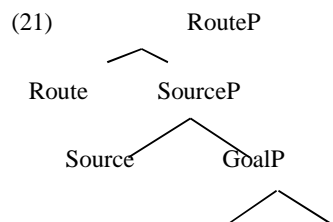


Places can sometimes be formed from Paths:

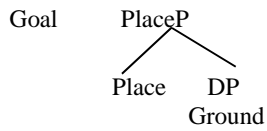
- (20) The sawmill is over the hill from the library.



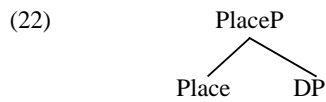
In a similar vein, **Pantcheva** (2011) illustrates that directional expressions are built on top of Locatives. In this respect, she proposes a split of the PathP into several hierarchically ordered heads (Route, Source, Goal), which will be each discussed in detail in what follows:



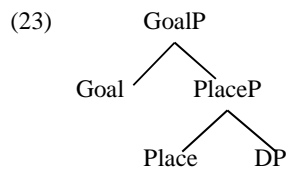




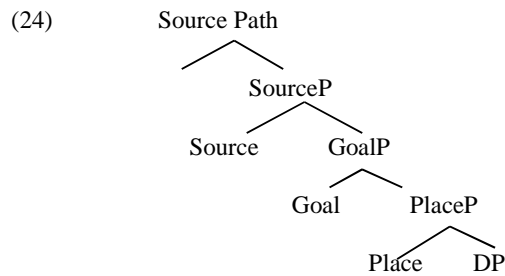
Locative constructions are formed by adding PlaceP to a DP:



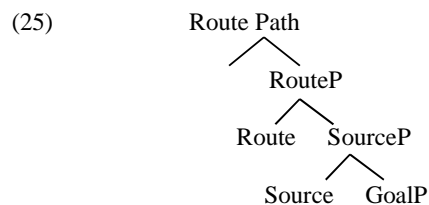
A goal Path is realized by adding a Goal head to a Locative construction:

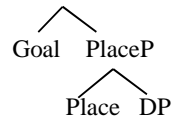


Source expressions are built on top of Goal expressions by simply adding a morpheme, thus accounting for a hierarchical structure between the two expressions:



The syntactic structure of Route paths can be illustrated by the following tree, where Route Paths are formed on top of Source Paths by adding a Route head, thus it takes the Source Path as its complement:





#### 4. Conclusions

Within the analysis, I have argued that directional PPs are PathPs, while locative PPs are PlacePs. Semantically, locative PPs locate entities/ events in space, directional PPs specify a direction and an endpoint for the motion. With respect to directional PPs, they are relatively free in what concerns the positions they appear in as opposed to locative PPs which are adjoined to a projection of a verb, which itself licenses an endpoint. Moreover, locatives can get a directional reading with a limited set of verbs of motion which will also constitute the object of an in depth analysis. Last but not least, the Path head is not a unique projection hosting directional elements, but it consists of several heads, each with its unique syntactic structure. The syntactic structure of Paths varies depending on whether we have a Goal-oriented path, a Source-oriented path or a non-oriented Route path.

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**MAKING ONESELF RECEPTIVE VIA HERMENEUTICS,  
EXEGESIS, TYPOLOGY, AND MIDRASH  
IN INTERPRETING THE BIBLE AND AMERICAN  
LITERATURE  
(A CASE STUDY ON THE MAJOR WORKS OF HERMAN  
MELVILLE)**

**Cristina ARSENE-ONU\***

***Abstract:** Hermeneutics and interpretation go hand in hand with the Bible, but especially with the fashion in which literary criticism developed, the latter having been influenced by Biblical criticism since earliest times. Furthermore, every type of literary interpretation is rooted in Biblical exegesis, and this is also the case for the nineteenth-century American literature where the novelists are the ones to show the Bible's influence, Herman Melville's "Moby-Dick" being a famous case in point.*

***Keywords:** reception, metaphors, symbols, the Bible, American literature*

**Conceptual Framework**

On the first level of text analysis there are the literal words of the Biblical text, which function similarly to those from other books, according to St. Thomas. However, they are the signs of things, of realities other than themselves, and this referential meaning is to be gathered from the text itself and from its context. But in the case of the Bible, due to God's structural governance of supernatural history, the realities signified by the text have a referential relationship to other realities in history. The Old Testament Jews having been liberated from Egypt and from the waters of the Red Sea is more than a word but also a historical fact.

Hermeneutics and interpretation go hand in hand with the Bible, but especially with the way literary criticism developed, the latter having been influenced by Biblical criticism since earliest times. Furthermore, every type of literary interpretation is rooted in Biblical exegesis. As Prickett claims, "medieval polysemous typology was an essentially literary solution to a hermeneutic problem" (Prickett, 1998: 160). The modern discipline of 'literary criticism' has developed largely out of ancient traditions of Biblical interpretation, and this is why David Jasper offers details about the Bible's range of interpretations that later on were transferred in the secular literary criticism and interpretation. For instance, ancient Jewish hermeneutics comprised four overlapping methods of reading – Literalist, Midrashic, Peshet and Allegorical, acknowledging the complexity of the act of reading (Jasper, 1998: 21).

***Hermeneutics*** is a second order interpreting activity in which one stands back and attempts a contemplation of what happened in one's own reading practice or in that of others. It is also used to describe the ways in which ancient texts are related to the contemporary world. In this mode it functions as a kind of mediating activity, bridging the gap between an authoritative text like the Bible and the time of the reader.

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\* University of Pite ti, e-mail: [onu.cristina@yahoo.com](mailto:onu.cristina@yahoo.com)

*Exegesis* is closely related to hermeneutics, differing in objectives. According to Ilana Pardes's explanation, the primary objective of many exegetical traditions from antiquity on has been to draw out of Scripture its presumably deeper and less accessible latent meanings (Pardes, 2008: 11.). One possible way to do so – most notably in the Midrash but also in popular sermons of all times (Father Mapple's reading of Jonah is an exquisite case in point) – is to retell the Biblical tale. Exegesis, then, not only within the realm of modern literature, often generated an attempt to find in the Bible the potential for another narrative.

In Judaism, as well as in Christianity, the antitypes of prophecy in the Old Testament are the coming of the Messiah and the restoration of Israel. The Old Testament is, for Jews, typological without the New Testament. *Typology* is the juxtaposition of types (including people, institutions, or events), and is employed in exegesis when a Biblical scene or figure is taken up and viewed as an interpretative analogy for a contemporary belief or practice. Christopher Rowland points out that “the relationship between type and antitype is suggested by the accumulation of points of correspondence between two (or more) narratives or characters” (Rowland in Lemon et al, 2009: 19). Accordingly, the writers of the New Testament regarded the Old Testament in terms of prefigurements of incidents in the life of Christ, so that everything that happens in the Old Testament is a type or adumbration of something in the New Testament and everything that happens in the New Testament is an antitype or realized form of something that the Old Testament foreshadows. The New Testament is presented as a key to, or an explanation of, the Old Testament. Israel is the type, Jesus the antitype. Just as Moses organizes the twelve tribes of Israel, so too does Jesus bring together twelve disciples. By crossing the Red Sea, Israel achieves its identity as a nation; when Jesus is baptized in the Jordan, he is recognized as the Son of God. The crossing is also a type of the Resurrection (Frye, 1982: 172-3).

It is precisely the mutual influence, of Biblical text upon literary rewriting, and of literary rewriting upon Biblical text, that has provoked much theoretical debate in recent years. To produce a viable theoretical model for this two-way exchange between the Bible and its literary progeny is both difficult and necessary. Therefore, many critics have embraced the concept of *midrash* – the Hebrew term for the Jewish practice of retelling Biblical tales in such a way as to extract more profound meanings from gaps or insignificant details – in order to recognize the symbiotic relationship between the Bible and its rewritings.

As Jo Carruthers suggests, and we go along with him on this, “in reading the Biblical story of Adam and Eve's sin and expulsion from the garden of Eden, images from literature and popular culture come to mind” (Carruthers, 2006:260): the eating of the forbidden fruit or more commonly of the apple; the shameful covering of nakedness with hands or fig leaves; the complicity of Eve above Adam; the sexual nature of Eve's tempting of Adam with the apple. In fact, all of these factors are not explicit in the Biblical account, but occur prominently in famous rewritings or have simply diffused into popular culture.

This reciprocity of the Bible and its rewritings even affects our very mode of reading. Hence, the readership is surprised when they read the Genesis narrative because they already have expectations of what the narrative should and should not contain.

### The Interpretative Reception of Melville's Major Works

In 1819, when Melville was born, the United States was entering a period of tremendous religious and philosophical turmoil that affected every aspect of society. As the nation was just completing three decades of its experiment in constitutional democracy, many political and religious leaders believed that the American people were deplorably lacking in social graces, moral values, and ideas of communal responsibility (Eliott, in Gunn, 2005: 171).

Hawthorne writes of Melville that: "He can neither believe, nor be comfortable in his unbelief; and he is too honest and courageous not to try to do one or the other. If he were a religious man, he would be one of the most truly religious and reverential; he has a very high and noble nature, and better worth immortality than most of us." (Stewart, 1941: 432-33). Hawthorne's renowned remark is indispensable to the understanding of Melville's religious imagination. It calls for a consideration of Melville as a blasphemous believer, as a "pilgrim-infidel" who never ceases to wander between the two poles.

Melville's biblicism was never doubted – from the groundbreaking studies of Nathalia Wright (*Melville's Use of the Bible*, 1949) and Lawrence Thompson (*Melville's Quarrel with God*, 1952), the first to excavate Melville's biblical poetics, to the more recent studies of Americanists and postcolonial critics (Sacvan Bercovitch, Michael Rogin, Lawrence Buell), whose inquiries added a much-needed historical contextualization of Melville's use of the Bible. But while the former focused on Melville's readings of biblical texts, devoting little attention to the cultural context, the latter did the opposite. That is, they primarily discussed Melville's innovative exegesis in relation to American religious and political thought, dealing only sporadically with the biblical material itself. We intend to do both cultural and biblical exegesis.

Melville knew the Bible so well, writes Nathalia Wright, that "he could smell the burning of Gomorrah and the pit; hear the trumpet in the Valley of Jehoshaphat[,] ... taste Belshazzar's feast, feel the heat of the fiery furnace (Wright, 1949)." But she does not dive into these biblical scenes with Melville to follow the details of his intimate, sensuous encounter with the ancient verses and the particular features of his biblical aesthetics. Nor does Thompson, who highlights Melville's debt to Job and Jonah in his "quarrel with God," go far enough in probing the rhetoric and cries of the two great questioners of biblical tradition. The same holds for those who have dealt with Melville's exegetical background. Such readings provide panoramic views of Melville's dialogues with other interpretive modes, primarily shedding light on American literature and culture rather than on the history of biblical exegesis (Pardes, *op. cit.*: 3).

Melville is equally intrigued by the exegetical potential of allegorical readings. He plays historical and allegorical readings of the Bible against each other – Kitto and Mapple in Jonah's case – never hesitating to thrive on both while uncovering their respective limitations. But, above all, New does not go far enough in exploring the vast aesthetic-hermeneutic project of *Moby-Dick*. Melville does not merely allude to other commentaries in passing. His metacommentary on Eadie's entry offers an extensive consideration of the actual reading strategies of biblical scholarship as it dwells on the most minute details in the Book of Jonah (*Ibid.*: 48).

Just before the *Pequod* sets sail, Father Mapple delivers a memorable sermon on the Book of Jonah from his shiplike pulpit at the Whaleman's Chapel in New Bedford, adding "sea-taste" to the well-known tale about the stubborn, disobedient prophet who escaped to the sea. The sermon opens with an alluring invitation to dive into the Book of Jonah. "Shipmates," Mapple declares as he turns over the leaves of the Bible, "this book, containing only four chapters – four yarns – is one of the smallest strands in the mighty cable of the Scriptures. Yet what depths of the soul does Jonah's deep sea-line sound! What a pregnant lesson to us is this prophet! What a noble thing is that cantic in the fish's belly!" (41). Mapple seeks to take his listeners on an exegetical voyage. He captures their ears through a flow of sonorous alliterations – "soul"/ "sea-line" / "sound"; "belly" / "billow" / "boisterously"; "seaweed" / "slime"/"sea" – that echo Jonah's cantic in the belly of the fish.

Mapple's sermon, however, is but an opening interpretive note. *Moby-Dick* as a whole is a "billow-like" and "boisterously grand" interpretation of the Book of Jonah. It offers a virtuoso projection of the terse text of Jonah on a gigantic canvas: the long epic story of the *Pequod*'s search after the inscrutable White Whale. What would happen, Melville ventures to ask, if we were to transfer Jonah from biblical times into the nineteenth century and split his figure between the outcasts and renegades of an American whaling ship? What new interpretations would emerge once Jonah is set in a context where intimate encounters with the bodies of great fish are a daily experience? Each crew member of the *Pequod* strives – wittingly or unwittingly – to map out Jonah's route. Ishmael, who slips into the mouth of a whale, playfully exclaiming, "Good Lord! is this the road that Jonah went?" (332), and Ahab, who leans over his wrinkled sea charts relentlessly searching after the route of the inscrutable White Whale, are but two notable examples. Queequeg, Tashtego, and even the maddened Pip are also Jonahs of sorts, each highlighting a different course in the travel narrative of the biblical prophet, all reaching realms unheard of within Mapple's Calvinist framework (*Ibid.*: 47).

In rendering his Jonahs, Melville responds to a diverse array of other readings of the Book of Jonah. Calvin's commentaries on Jonah, popular sermons of a Calvinistic bent (Mapple's sermon is modeled on this genre) and Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (Crusoe is regarded as a sinful Jonah in one of the opening episodes) are but a few of the prominent ones.

Given our focus on the exegetical trends prevalent in nineteenth-century America we single out Melville's response to Kitto's *Cyclopedia*, one of the first British encyclopedias to endorse the findings of German biblical criticism. It had the advantage of providing a popularized scholarly introduction to the historical-geographic research of the Bible in an accessible format. Kitto's successful reception in America was part of a broader process of cultural translation through which the continental scientific approach to the Bible became part and parcel of the American exegetical scene.

Melville devotes an entire chapter – "Jonah Historically Regarded" – to John Eadie's entry on Jonah in Kitto's *Cyclopedia*. In this chapter Ishmael engages in a mock debate with the scholars whose readings are surveyed by Eadie, calling into question their scientific presuppositions, among them the assumption that "history" is a traceable, concrete concept. Though this chapter serves as the core of Melville's reflections on the exegetical innovations of biblical criticism his

dialogue with Kitto reverberates through the entire novel, serving as a vital springboard for Melville's own reading of Jonah as a text whose historical significance cannot be detached from its implications within contemporary cultural settings, above all, antebellum America (*Ibid.*: 48).

That Melville had Kitto's Cyclopaedia by his side while writing *Moby-Dick* was noted already in Wright's *Melville's Use of the Bible* (1949) and in Vincent's *The Trying Out of Moby-Dick* (1949). But it is only in Elisa New's "Bible Leaves! Bible Leaves!" that Melville's subtler hermeneutic exchange with Kitto is first examined (beyond source criticism). New draws attention to Kitto in her attempt to define Melville's "Hebraic historicism." Melville, she argues, follows Kitto's lead in showing that "the proper aim of hermeneutics is not the discovery of an allegorical Word" but rather the fashioning of a historical view of the text that would be attuned to the ways in which every culture constructs its own worldview, its own distinct "clothing" of truth (New, 1998: 294).

In Father Mapple's sermon, Melville preaches that Jonah had to do what God wanted: "Jonah did the Almighty's bidding. And what was that, shipmates? To preach the Truth to the face of Falsehood! That was it!" (*MD* 48). This is what Melville was determined to do, to tell the truth as he saw it, about the narrow-mindedness, gullibility, and hypocrisy of many ostensibly "good" churchgoers. According to Ilana Pardes, in the book of Job, more than in any other biblical character, Melville finds an admirable model for his own tantalizingly paradoxical position as a blasphemous believer (*Ibid.*: 24).

Melville, in the same tradition as Hawthorne, struggled with the concepts of Original Sin, Predestination, and Divine Grace, also. The belief in Original Sin is met with in Melville's posthumously published novel *Billy Budd, Sailor*, in which Billy Budd, the young and handsome sailor, embodied "essential innocence." (*BB* 892) He is set against John Claggart, who represents the naturally "malign" (*BB* 856).

Subsumed under the doctrinal category of theology proper is the biblical doctrine of predestination. Rather than find "that unflinching comfort" in the fact that "it's all predestinated" (*MD* 168), Melville's characters struggle "all alone" – for example, Ahab in *Moby-Dick* – to escape the "walls" of Providence while their peers passively witness and listen "in a dumbness like that of a seated congregation of believers in hell listening to the clergyman's announcement of his Calvinistic text." (*BB* 887)

For Ahab, *Moby Dick* represents everything that represses and denies. Believing only in a fundamental malevolence, he feels towards the white whale something of 'the general rage and hate felt by the whole race from Adam down.' (*MD* 317) Having lost his leg in a previous encounter with his enemy, he also desires vengeance, not just on the 'dumb brute' that injured him but on the conditions that created that brute, which for him that brute symbolizes – the human circumstances that would frustrate him, deny him his ambitions and desires (Gray, 2004: 211).

Around 1885, after losing not only his first born child, Malcolm, but also his other son Stannie, Melville began to do some writing that would lead to his final masterwork. *Billy Budd, Sailor* contains many biblical allusions and references to sin, which continue to evoke various and controversial interpretations.

Melville's religious allusions are basic to his artistic vision and to his intellectual thought. They are essential in understanding his works on the most important levels. They reveal the spiritual struggle of a deeply thinking person at a time when traditional ideas about God and the Bible were being challenged and even destroyed by the sciences and by the new biblical criticism coming out of Europe (Coffler, 2006.).

Melville's *Billy Budd* is heavily modeled by a Christ-theme. Billy Budd is the innocent figure, loved by his father-figure (Captain Vere, with a name carrying the Latinate form of "truth" or "verity"). Billy, just like Christ, is not spared death by his just father figure (Townsend, 2004: 67). As Tyrus Hillway said, "Within the act of [Billy Budd's] sacrifice, a symbol of expiation for all the sins of mankind, burns the spark of hope for eventual moral regeneration." Billy "looked like one impaled" and his expression was "as a crucifixion to behold," the narrator of *Billy Budd* informs us. When Billy Budd utters his climactic line "God bless Captain Vere" before death, it is almost as if Melville is reversing Christ's "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do."

The tragic plot evolves as follows: Billy Budd, a surpassingly innocent and handsome young seaman, kills by a single blow John Claggart, a venomous petty officer (master-at-arms) who falsely and maliciously accuses him of mutiny. Billy's death blow is further complicated because he strikes only after he is unable to speak owing to his congenital stutter – an "organic hesitancy" (*BB* 53) – exacerbated by heightened emotion from Claggart's accusation borne of sheer envy and personal hatred. Nevertheless, naval law dictates hanging for the act, and the fact that the events occur in 1797 at sea on HMS *Bellipotent* in the aftermath of the major mutinies that rocked the British navy at Spithead and Nore in the spring of that year while England was at war with France seems to require strict adherence because of the threatening virus of anarchy in the social order during wartime. At this juncture the third major actor in Melville's drama, Captain Edward Vere, although he understands fully Billy's innocence and his victimization by a repugnant man, feels compelled to convince his subordinates to carry out the capital punishment. Vere even cries out that Claggart has been "struck dead by an angel of God! Yet the angel must hang!" (*BB* 101). And before he does hang, Billy declares in antiphonal counterpoint, so to speak, "God bless Captain Vere!" (*BB* 123) – with no taint from his usual stuttering. So the innocent comes to a tragic end.

Despite Melville's being rooted in Calvinism, his forthrightness and spiritual turmoil put him at odds with the church. He was an outcast like Ishmael, not belonging to the chosen ones. Yet Melville searched for truth as Ishmael made his way through the world seeking a place in it. He represents alienated man in the modern world, too secular to fall back on doctrine or tradition, but too rooted in it to deny it or be comfortable without it. Being preoccupied with the writing of truth when he published *Moby-Dick*, Melville moved to "a phase in which his writing, unlike earlier journalistic work, became more abstract and symbolic, a phase in which he consciously addressed the most difficult spiritual questions of mankind" (Buell, 1986: 61). His work and lectures showed his scorn for dogma, but not for spirituality. In a letter to Hawthorne he wrote: "With no son of man do I stand upon any etiquette or ceremony, except the Christian ones of charity and honesty." Melville's allusion to the Book of Job in the Epilogue of *Moby-Dick* emphasizes the degree to which the spiritual dilemma haunted him, especially since this story



symbolizes the problem of the existence of evil and suffering in the world of a beneficent God for modern man. When describing Ishmael as the lone survivor of the *Pequod*, Melville used the words of the servant who came to tell Job of yet another misfortune: "And I only am escaped alone to tell thee." Significantly, the verse, not completed by Melville, ends: "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; Blessed be the name of the Lord. For all this Job sinned not, nor ascribed aught unseemly to God" (Job 1:1) (Schleifer, 1994: 5).

It is not surprising that Melville sought solace in the Wisdom of Solomon at the time he was finishing *Moby-Dick* and wrote. "I read Solomon more and more, and every time I see deeper and deeper meanings in him." Nor is it surprising that there were many "passages he marked in his Bible illustrating the unequalled and often curiously demonstrated power of God (Wright, *op.cit.*: 186)".

Now, we will provide a few remarks about Melville's actual bibles and use of biblical lexicon. Melville's family owned various bibles. The most important of these, the one of primary use for Melville, was the bible he bought in the initial stages of working on *Moby-Dick*, in which he inscribed "March 23rd 1850 New York." Published by E.H. Butler & Co. (Philadelphia, 1846), it is a large nineteenth-century family bible, with gold embellishments on its red-brown leather cover and an embossed image of the Tablets on its front. It contains the Old and New Testaments together with Apocrypha and a section of family records, where familial births and deaths were written, mostly by Melville himself. The bulk of scholarly attention, however, has been devoted to the numerous markings in this Bible. There are, as Nathalia Wright points out, a few conspicuous discrepancies (Wright, *op.cit.*: 9-10). Some of the texts that are central to his work bear no markings, whereas others to which he does not allude are profusely marked. But all in all, they bear witness to Melville's immersion in Bible reading and underscore some of his notable preferences (Pardes, *op.cit.*: 13).

Melville's bibles, like most of the English bibles in antebellum America, were editions of the King James Version. His elaborate allusions to the King James Version, one should bear in mind, are accompanied by numerous minute echoes of the particular idioms and textures of this canonical translation: "whoso," "forasmuch as," "verily," "thee," and "thou" are but a few of his favorite adverbs and pronouns. In a self-reflexive moment, Ishmael describes the Quakers of Nantucket as "naturally imbibing" from childhood "the stately dramatic thee and thou of the Quaker idiom" (*MD* 73). At another revealing point, he quotes Bildad's words to Queequeg on hiring him – "Son of darkness ... if thou still clingest to thy Pagan ways, which I sadly fear, I beseech thee, remain not for aye a Belial bondsman" – and remarks that the ship's owner's language was "heterogeneously mixed with Scriptural and domestic phrases" (*MD* 89).

But, according to Ilana Pardes, Melville was not only interested in the resonant language of the King James Version. He was as attuned to the unlexicalized biblical expressions invented in the course of everyday life on whalers. "Bible leaves! Bible leaves!" as Melville explains in "The Cassock," "is the invariable cry from the mates to the mincer. It urges him to be careful, and cut his work into as thin slices as possible, inasmuch as by so doing the business of boiling out the oil is much accelerated, and its quantity considerably increased, besides perhaps improving it in quality" (*MD* 420). Melville's evocation of such whaler slang offers a mock imitation of the solemn use of biblical terms and leaves within the realm of institutional religion. Here the expression "Bible leaves"

depicts the fine ritualistic cutting of blubber by a mincer (Ishmael's "candidate for an archbishoprick") whose cassock is made out of the foreskin of a whale.

### Concluding Remarks

The Bible is the basic text of American civilization, its influence having been identified since the colonial beginnings and consequently in Melville's fiction. In light of the above, we have highlighted the interpretative methods of hermeneutics, exegesis, typology, and midrash which both the Bible and lay literature share, focusing on Herman Melville's approach in these respect in some of his most important works. Not only was the nineteenth-century novelist fully aware of the way biblical texts were analysed, interpreted and read, but he was also willing to scrutinize them and apply the findings to his works.

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**“WE MAKE OUT OF THE QUARREL WITH OTHERS,  
RHETORIC, BUT OF THE QUARREL WITH OURSELVES,  
POETRY.”**

***Stages of W. B. Yeats’s Representations of the Self***

**Maria-Camelia DICU\***

*Abstract: In his prose work, Per Amica Silentia Lunae, W. B. Yeats states that unlike the quarrel with the others, which becomes rhetoric, the quarrel with the self becomes poetry. It is well-known the fact that the Anglo-Irish poet, William Butler Yeats, has searched for a perfect poetic expression, throughout his entire life. Therefore, the volumes of poetry he conceived, the plays or the prose work bear his personal imprint and they are impregnated with the toil of a life time for reaching “a form as Grecian goldsmiths make/ Of hammered gold and gold enamelling/ To keep a drowsy Emperor awake; / Or set upon a golden bough to sing/ To lords and ladies of Byzantium/ Of what is past, or passing, or to come.”*

*In other words, through the present paper, I intend to examine some of Yeats’s poems with the aim to demonstrate that each of them, as stages of his poetic creation and quarrels of his self, reflects the inner quarrel with his self in order to accomplish his desideratum asserted in Sailing to Byzantium.*

**Keywords:** poetry, personality, perfect poetic expression.

For William Butler Yeats, in the beginning of his writing career, poetry was a subjective subject matter. It represented the utterance of the creator’s personality and temperament. The poetic self identifies itself with the voice of the poet, a quality that was also common to the Romantic and pre-Raphaelite poets. Nevertheless, Yeats realized that such poetry, despite being a reflection of his genius, could have failed to achieve the qualities of an artefact, for little stress on the poetic technique and much subjectivity could have only put him at risk to become too sentimental, and thus express in poetry an altered version of reality. And yet, he still could not embrace the theories subsequently laid down by Eliot in his essay “Tradition and Individual Talent”, in which he argues that “the more perfect artist, the more completely separate in him will be the man who suffers and the mind which creates; the more perfectly will the mind digest and transmute the passions which are its material” (Eliot, 1932: 18). As a young poet, Yeats stood against modernity and Modernism. He rejected the changes brought by modernity in people’s lives and he discredited the qualities of Modernism in poetic creation. His stubbornness to write as men have always written, referring here to Romantic poets, produced however some of his best poetry.

In the first chapter of her book, Helen Vendler (Helen Vendler, 2007: 1) quotes W.B. Yeats with a 1926 letter “Whatever I do, poetry will remain a torture”, thus explaining the “strain” of writing lyrics and of the “exhaustion”, both mental and physical it caused. As early as 1908, Yeats wrote: “Creative work always ruins one’s nerves for a time.” Regarding the effort necessary for a poet to write, Yeats asserts that “getting a single line right can take hours” (ibidem). Referring to the

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\* “Constantin Brancusi” University of Targu-Jiu, Eroilor nr. 30, Targu-Jiu, Gorj, Romania

same point of discussion, namely the strenuous effort of writing, it is worth being mentioned that in *Adam's Curse*, a conversation occurs among Yeats, Maud Gonne and her sister, Kathleen Pilcher (Daniel Albright<sup>1</sup>, 1994: 487). The topic of the conversation is the struggle which the poet has in order to obtain perfection of the verse, while the woman's beauty is obtained effortless, naturally. Yet, Kathleen Pilcher contradicts Yeats in saying that a woman's beauty demands equal sweat.

In *The Circus Animals* (Vendler, *ibidem*), Yeats puts it that for six weeks he has sought in vain for a theme; he also reminds the reader that he has to wait until his mind fills up again, as if he, by struggling, had drained it dry. Then he explains that there were times when he could not write any verse because his mind was busy with something else; or other times, he felt themes running through his head which made him write them down in a notebook. The real issue here is not finding the themes, but transposing them into verses.

His lifelong belief was that serious thought and study and passionate inner life were necessary conditions for composition. As the title of this paper states, Yeats found a stark difference between rhetoric and poetry, between the quarrel with the others and the quarrel with ourselves which ultimately represents the essence of writing poetry. The verses represents the solution of the quarrel with oneself and it is the expression of the inner torments. Helen Vendler (*ibidem*) states that expression and adequacy of the technique are intertwined, more precisely, expression is closely related to the technique. In mature years, Yeats emphasized three qualities which are necessary for a poet's technique: the poet's utterances should be similar to speech, the words must be in their natural order and that an emotional unity should be the binder among the components of a work of art.

Therefore he, quoted by Helen Vendler (Vendler: 2007, 1) underlines:

"I always try for the most natural order possible, largely to make thought which being poetical always is difficult to modern people as plain as I can". On the other hand, not only was mastering technique the important attribute of the poem, but style must be derived from the traditional lifelong resources proceeding to it. In other words, as Yeats quoted by Vendler state (Vendler: 2007, 2) declared "the work of art" consists of a minor part of "real world" yet "technique" was the utmost ingredient that enabled the poem to become personal and timeless.

At this point, Vendler puts it that, at large, biographers, scholars and critics have neglected considering Yeats's labour to reach the techniques of "rhythm, balance, pattern" except for few remarks on the nature of Yeats's rhymes. To put it in other words, Vendler underlines that there is no book dealing with Yeats's choice of stanza for the subject of his poems, namely the sonnet, the ballad, the ottava rima or using certain rhythms or stanza form. All these devices, Vendler explains, represent vehicles of expressing his feelings; all the more for Yeats, more meaning is expressed by structured form, "architecture of a poem" (Vendler, *ibidem*). In another train of ideas, for Yeats, the way the poem begins or ends, the way of conveying meaning from the beginnings toward the end become of an utmost relevance. Vendler ends his divagation in saying that the evolution of

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<sup>1</sup> Like *Easter 1916* and certain other fine poems, its theme is the process whereby random casual life attains, at a great cost, dignity and permanent form. Yeats's first assumption seems that expressed in his poem He tells of the *Perfect Beauty*: the poet labours endlessly while beauty is un-labouring, effortless (*ibidem*).

form represents, in fact, Yeats's life as a writer. The wide variety of verse form determined the critic to study Yeats's lyric style, which by utilizing different stanzas, meters and genres makes each of the poem unique, each of them being a reflection of Yeats's complex system of beliefs. Moreover, the critic finds a close connection between Yeats's sketches in prose and his poems and transposing the ideas in poetics demanded physical and emotional hard work from Yeats. During his work on a poem, there were many aspects to be taken into consideration from words to stanza forms, line length, and rhythmic variants and this is to be seen from the drafts preserved in working on a poem, Vendler asserts (Vendler: 2007, 3).

Less has been written on the poet's decision on the forms of the poems: inner, outer, technical and generic. The scholars have been interested more in the poet's historical and personal drama that paralleled his work in the detriment of the choice of forms. The poet himself was not too generous in giving details upon his work. Fugitive remarks we have from Yeats, quoted by Vendler (Vendler: 2007, 4), "I have written a poem", "I have several poems in my head"; the poet's explanation is enlightening though, "I find it extraordinarily difficult to explain to any, my own system of sensations for I have very little but an instinct" (Vendler, *ibidem*). At this point, the intellectual effort necessary to forge his thought in poetry is merely a given fact.

Helen Vendler goes even further and finds a connection between the choice of forms and the "when" and "why" they were chosen at that time; the early forms of poems, the late forms of poems; or the forms that lasted his entire career; how could the poet deal with an old English form? Why the blank verse was so rarely utilized?

In short, Helen Vendler finds the form of a poem the most important clue in understanding the poet's poetic system. As the scholar herself asserts "the evolutionary and final inscapes of Yeats's poems are indispensable to a full understanding of the work" (*ibidem*). Yet the scholar puts it plainly that Yeats's poems are not to be read with the eyes, that is silently; they have to be read for the ears, that is to be heard (Vendler: 2007, 5).

In order to comply both with the topic of the paper and also to demonstrate that there is a close relation between the subject matter of the poem and Yeats's choice of form, I have chosen two poems from different periods of creation. These poems are: *Adam's Curse* and *The Circus Animals' Desertion*, which Vendler finds as pillars of the poet creation. Both poems are representative not only for Yeats's periods of creation, but also for his inner feeling corresponding to his personal life.

To begin with, *Adam's Curse* was published in the volume *In the Seven Woods* and was published in 1902. Chronologically speaking, 1902 is the year when *Cathleen Ni Houlihan* was staged with Maud Gonne playing the title role. It is also the year when Yeats meets Joyce who said that the poet was too old "to be of any use to the young writers" (Albright: 1994, xxiii).

The reader finds out from Albright's notes (Albright: 1994, 487) that the poem emerged from a conversation among Yeats, Maud Gonne and her sister, Katherine Pilcher:

"We sat together at one summer's end  
That beautiful mild woman, your close friend,  
And you and I, talked of poetry.

I said, 'A line will take us hours maybe;  
Yet if it does not seem a moment's thought,  
Our stitching and unstitching has been naught.  
Better go down upon your marrow-bones  
And scrub a kitchen pavement, or break stones  
Like an old pauper, in all kinds of weather;  
For to articulate sweet sounds together  
Is to work harder than all these, and yet  
Be thought an idler by the noisy set  
Of bankers, schoolmasters, and clergy men  
The martyrs call the world.'

And thereupon  
That beautiful mild woman for whose sake  
There's many a one shall find out all the heartache  
On finding that her voice is sweet and low  
Replied, 'To be born woman is to know –  
Although they do not talk of it at school –  
That we must labour to be beautiful.'

I said, 'It's certain there is no fine thing  
Since Adam's fall but needs much labouring.  
There have been lovers who thought love should be  
So much compounded of high courtesy  
That they would sigh and quote with learned looks  
Precedents out of beautiful old books;  
Yet now it seems an idle trade enough.'

We sat grown quiet at the name of love;  
We saw the last embers of daylight die,  
And in the trembling blue-green of the sky  
A moon, worn as if it had a shell  
Washed by time's waters as they rose and fell  
About the stars and broke in days and years.

I had a thought for no one but your ears:  
That you were beautiful, and that I strove  
To love you in the old high way of love;  
That it had all seemed happy, and yet we'd grown  
As weary-hearted as that hollow moon."<sup>1</sup>

The poem encompasses five stanzas, each of them with a different number of lines. Speaking of the verse forms, the first stanza is sonnet of fourteen lines with a rhyme scheme *abab*, the last verse being free. The next sections consist of six lines' stanza, seven lines' stanza with the last one of five line stanza. The poet initiates his poem by introducing the moment in time when the discussion

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<sup>1</sup> W.B. Yeats, *Adam's Curse* in *The Poems*, Daniel Albright editor, Everyman, Orion Publishing Group, London, updated 1994, p. 106

takes place “one summer’s end” and the characters taking part in the conversation “your close friend and you and I”. The topic of the conversation is poetry for the beginning, since writing poetry has been Yeats’s life time preoccupation. The poet explains to the ladies interlocutors that writing may take hours of “stitching and unstitching” and yet the poet is considered “an idler” by those whose profession is more visible “bankers, schoolmaster, clergymen”. The next topic in the friendly discussion is beauty. The poet draws a clear distinction between writing a poem that needs hard working and the beauty of a woman which is natural, a native gift. “That beautiful mild woman replies that, on the contrary, being and keeping beauty requires the same amount of labour. The last topic of friendly chat was love, living not any woman, but loving Maud Gonne, whom we know Yeats proposed marriage many times and was refused every time, until they became “weary-hearted as the hollow moon”.

To cut it short, the poem represents Yeats’s lifelong interests: forging the perfect poetic expression in a suitable form so that it may convey the poets’ inner thoughts and feelings, on the one hand; on the other *matter* he “strove” for, was Maud Gonne, the woman whom he fell in love with, whom he desired all his life and thus representing the image of the unfulfilled love.

Speaking of the way in which Yeats succeeds in conveying the message of the poem by utilizing form as a vehicle, it is worth saying that the poem begins optimistically with the sonnet form and then the stanzas in point of line decrease, as if by demonstrating that one thing he could not gain, and that is Maud’s love.

My second example of Yeats’s choice of forms in order to express his inner thoughts and feelings is *The Animal Circus Desertion*. Reading Albright’s notes, (Albright: 1994, 840) the reader finds out that the poet rejected some titles until he found that one: *Tragic Toys, Despair, On the lack of a theme*. Also from Albright, the reader finds out that the poem reveals the poet tried lifelong to construct a self and this has something to do with masks Richard Ellmann speaks about in his Yeats: *The Man and the Masks*, London, Macmillan, 1949. Only in this poem the poet deconstructs the self (ibidem, Albright). The myth of his biography breaks into pieces, he once used to construct his self.

I

“I sought a theme and sought for it in vain,  
I sought it daily for six weeks or so.  
Maybe at last being a broken man  
I must be satisfied with my heart, although  
Winter and summer till old age began  
My circus animals were all on show,  
Those stilted boys, that burnished chariot,  
Lion and woman and Lord knows what.

II

What can I but enumerate old themes,  
First that sea-rider Oisín led by the nose  
Through three enchanted islands, allegorical dreams,  
Vain gaiety, vain battle, vain repose,  
Themes of the embittered heart, or so it seems,  
That might adorn old songs or courtly shows;  
But what cared I that set him on the ride,  
I, starved for the bosom of his fairy bride.

And then a counter-truth filled out its play,  
The Countess Cathleen was the name I gave it,  
She, pity-crazed, had given her soul away  
But masterful Heaven had intervened to save it.  
I though my dear must her own soul destroy  
So did fanaticism and hate enslave it,  
And this bought forth a dream and soon enough  
This dream itself had all my thought and love.

And when the Fool and Blind Man stole the bread  
Cuchulain fought the ungovernable sea;  
Heart mysteries there, and yet when all is said  
It was the dream itself enchanted my:  
Character isolated by a deed  
To engross the present and dominate memory.  
Players and painted stage took all my love  
And not those things that they were emblems of.

III  
Those masterful images because complete  
Grew in pure mind but out of what began?  
A mound of refuse or the sweepings of a street,  
Old kettles, old bottles, and a broken can,  
Old iron, old bones, old rags, that raving slut  
Who keeps the till. Now that my ladder's gone  
I must lie down where all the ladders start  
In the foul rag and bone shop of the heart.”<sup>1</sup>

The poem was published in the volume *Last Poems*. The poem itself appear to be written between November 1937-September 1938, a long enough period of time, as we already know the hard work necessary for finding the perfect artistic formula.

The poem consists of three sections: the first section consisting of one stanza, the second section consisting of three stanzas, while the third section consists again of one stanza. The stanza itself is an example of *ottava rima*, eight iambic pentameters rhyming *ababab* (Pia Brînzeu: 1992, 64).

The poem renders the poet's torments towards finding another theme for a poem, which a not very easy task, as the poet exhausted all the themes. We find out about his search in the first stanza: “I sought a theme and sought for it in vain”. The poet is disappointed that he has no theme at hand. Instead the other stanzas in the second section represent an overview of the themes he employed along his life and reminds the reader the most representative of them, namely “the sea-rider Oisín”, *The Countess Cathleen* [...] pity-crazed, had given her soul away” and, of course, “Cuchulain fought the ungovernable sea”. In the last section and stanza of the poem, the poet finds himself surrounded by the images that accompanied his life, yet wondering “where all began?” In response he finds examples which I find similar to Arghezi's *Testament*: “A mound of refuse or the sweepings of a street, /

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<sup>1</sup> W.B. Yeats, *The Circus Animals' Desertion* in *The Poems*, Daniel Albright editor, Everyman, Orion Publishing Group, London, updated 1994, pp. 394-395



Old kettles, old bottles, and a broken can, / Old iron, old bones, old rags, that raving slut/ Who keeps the till”; while Arghezi puts it: “Din bube, mucegaiuri si noroi/ Iscat-am frumuseti si preturi noi”<sup>1</sup>, thus leaving the inheritance of verses to the heirs. Yeats is on the verge of concluding his life and creation, he sees no option: “Now that my ladder’s gone/ I must lie down where all the ladders start/ In the foul rag and bone shop of the heart.”

In order to conclude my study, it is worth mentioning that, by reading the two poems, namely, *Adam’s Curse* and *The Circus Animals’ Desertion*, the reader witnesses two periods in the poets’ life: manhood and old age. The two facets of the poet display different attitudes. Thus in the first poem, the readers finds an optimistic Yeats, chatting friendly to two ladies; while in the second poem, old Yeats, our interlocutor, is pessimistic, he has no expectations from life, his creativity has drained, old age brings illnesses in his body.

It is also worth mentioning that the forms of the poems help the reader to comprehend the poet’s inner struggle; while the first poem begins with a sonnet, known as the love verses, in the second poem’s ottava rima make us think of a ballad – the ballad of W. B. Yeats – the man and the poet.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.poeziile.com](http://www.poeziile.com)

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## ***MRS DALLOWAY'S PERFORMATIVE IDENTITY RENDERED THROUGH THE TECHNIQUE OF MONTAGE***

**Cristina-Alexandra DR GOI**

*Abstract:* Throughout Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway*, the main character's identity is depicted as being in a continuous process of shaping and re-shaping, function of the sensations and perceptions that her mind receives and that are encompassed within her interior reality by means of free associations. Thus, far from being clearly delineated, this character's identity appears to be a fluid reflection of the chaotic existence that unfolds at the level of her consciousness. Mrs Dalloway's performative identity is reflected within the novel by means of montage, a technique which allows for a genuine representation of the free associations which mould the character's flexible identity.

*Keywords:* performative identity; montage.

### **Turning solipsism into a narrative purpose**

In novels such as *Mrs Dalloway*, Virginia Woolf's narrative purpose is that of conveying an individual's consciousness, which she considers to be the only means of rendering life in a genuine manner. Attempting to seize life within a literary work by means of adopting a point of view exterior to the characters and of complying with the rigid principles of chronology and causality appears to be a vain endeavour for Virginia Woolf, who is of the opinion that, far from comprising logically ordered sequences noticeable from an objective perspective, life is "[...] a luminous halo, a semi-transparent envelope surrounding us from the beginning of consciousness to the end" (Woolf, 2002: 71). Therefore, an individual's genuine existence is confined to what unfolds at the level of his mind; hence, if a writer wishes to provide the reader with an account of a character's life, the writer should take as a reference point the character's interiority and "[...] record the atoms as they fall upon the mind in the order in which they fall [...]" (*ibidem*: 72), thus achieving discontinuous patterns which match the chaotic flow of the character's mind. In accordance with the beliefs she expresses within her essays, Virginia Woolf's novels are based on narrative techniques aiming at exploring the stream of consciousness of the characters. Novels such as *Mrs Dalloway* disregard the world that surrounds the characters and permeate their inner world, focusing on the intricate nexus of thoughts within their mind. By exploring what unfolds at the level of the characters' consciousness, such novels proclaim the lack of genuineness of the world exterior to the characters.

Thus, Virginia Woolf's novels can be perceived as a literary expression of the philosophical doctrine of solipsism (Lodge, 1993: 42), in virtue of which there is nothing genuinely real exterior to an individual and hence, the only real existence is that occurring within the individual's interiority. The narrative purpose which Virginia Woolf theorizes in her essays and attempts to put into practice in her novels appears to be based on a doctrine which can be traced back to Gorgias of Leontini, who advances the following three arguments: "[...] (1) that nothing

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\* PhD student at the Doctoral School of Literary and Cultural Studies, Faculty of Foreign Languages and Literatures, University of Bucharest, [cristinadragoi91@yahoo.com](mailto:cristinadragoi91@yahoo.com)

has being; (2), that even if it did have being, no human being could apprehend it; (3) that even if it was apprehensible, still it could not be expressed or explained to our neighbour” (Waterfield, 2000: 232). In other words, according to this philosophical doctrine anything that exceeds the individual’s interiority surpasses the boundaries of genuine existence, as nothing outside inner reality is irrefutably real.

And Virginia Woolf’s novels seem to be based precisely on such a doctrine, as they represent an exploration of the mind perceived as comprising the real life of an individual: disregarding exterior reality as being utterly peripheral to an individual’s genuine existence and focusing on the stream of consciousness through various narrative techniques are an illustration of the manner in which solipsism can be turned into a narrative purpose. However, novels such as *Mrs Dalloway* evince a powerful connection between the characters’ inner world and the world surrounding them, as exterior reality is depicted as having a profound impact upon the flow of a character’s mind. In other words, by taking as a reference point a character’s interiority and by focusing on what occurs at the level of his mind, such novels do not assert the utter inexistence of a world outside the individual; rather than that, they assert the genuineness of an individual’s inner world as it is delineated by the individual’s appropriation of exterior reality. Exterior reality exists, but it does not have a definite form: it has innumerable facets which stem from individuals appropriating it and encompassing it within their inner world. And therefore, exterior reality bears little, if any significance in itself: what is truly relevant for the depiction of genuine existence is the individuals’ inner world, which is, at least to a certain extent, determined by the surrounding world.

#### **Free associations generated by the appropriation of exterior reality**

In novels such as *Mrs Dalloway* the focus is, thus, put on what unfolds at the level of the individual’s mind, as the stream of consciousness is considered to delineate an individual’s genuine existence. The mind appears to be at the core of genuine life, while exterior reality seems peripheral to an individual’s existence. Even though it is not a constitutive part of an individual’s existence as genuine life is confined within the mind, exterior reality continues to bear considerable significance in what an individual’s life is concerned, because what the individual experiences within the mind is in close connection with everything that surrounds the individual. In other words, external reality functions as a triggering factor which generates free associations within the individual’s mind. Thus, far from being utterly unrelated to an individual’s existence, exterior reality has a remarkable impact upon the unfolding of an individual’s life as it functions as a permanent catalyzer which determines the flow of consciousness through the free associations it brings about. An individual’s existence cannot be restricted to what surrounds the individual; in fact, exterior reality is not even a part of an individual’s existence, as nothing outside an individual’s consciousness is genuine: but the surrounding reality still influences an individual’s interiority by means of free associations.

Free associations derive from “[...] the power of one thing to suggest another through an association of qualities in common or in contrast, wholly or partially” (Humphrey, 1962: 43). In other words, something pertaining to the

exterior reality with which the individual comes in contact can determine the flow of the individual's consciousness by bringing about something else within his mind. Thus, free associations shape the manner in which the individual's mind leaps from one thing to another, which constitutes the core of the individual's existence in virtue of the belief that nothing is real except for what unfolds within the mind. Therefore, it can be said that arguing for the genuineness of inner world does not equate with proclaiming its uniqueness: both inner and outer worlds exist, but the latter exists as a triggering factor for the former, having no relevance to genuine existence in itself. The core of genuine existence is within the individual's interior reality, which is shaped by what occurs outside it.

The narrative purpose of the novel *Mrs Dalloway* appears to be precisely that of evincing the main character's genuine existence and therefore this work focuses on presenting Clarissa Dalloway's life taking as a reference point the character's interiority. Thus, the novel renders the free associations that emerge within her mind triggered by various elements pertaining to the surrounding world. For example, at the beginning of the novel, Mrs Dalloway is depicted as walking towards a florists' with the aim of buying flowers for the party she is throwing later on that evening. During her walk, Clarissa Dalloway bumps into an old acquaintance, Hugh Whitbread, with whom she engages in a short conversation. Their dialogue is rendered as it is perceived by Clarissa Dalloway, with emphasis being put on the highly subjective manner in which the character appropriates, at the level of her mind, what occurs at the level of exterior reality.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, instead of rendering the dialogue between the two characters by recording what each of them has stated, Virginia Woolf opts for providing an account of the dialogue as it is assimilated by one of the two characters involved. Without there being clear mentions regarding what each character has said, the reader is left to reconstruct the dialogue based on what can be deduced from the manner in which it has been filtered by one of the character's consciousness. At the end of the quoted fragment there is, however, a remark regarding the character who has uttered a particular sentence ("said Hugh"), but the character's words are not clearly delineated through inverted commas, as they would have been in a literary work aiming at recording a dialogue from a perspective exterior to the characters involved: instead, the words of the character alluded to are merged within the subjective rendition of the dialogue. The encounter between Clarissa Dalloway and Hugh Whitbread is not presented as an event pertaining to a definite, objective exterior reality; rather than that, it is depicted in the subjective manner in which it is assimilated by one of the two characters. Events that occur at the level of exterior reality are thus presented from the point of view of Mrs Dalloway's mind, because what is relevant to this character's existence is precisely the manner in which she incorporates these events within her consciousness.

Of great importance to Clarissa Dalloway's genuine existence is also what a particular event motions within her mind: thus, the novel emphasizes the fact that her encounter with Hugh Whitbread makes Clarissa Dalloway recollect other past happenings by means of free associations triggered by what her mind has

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<sup>1</sup> "They had just come up – unfortunately – to see doctors. Other people come to see pictures; go to the opera; take their daughters out; the Whitbreads came 'to see doctors'. [...] Was Evelyn ill again? Evelyn was a good deal out of sorts, said Hugh [...]" (Woolf, 2012: 130)

perceived at the level of exterior reality. In other words, the encounter between Clarissa Dalloway and Hugh Whitbread is presented from Clarissa's perspective, with prominence being given to how the event is assimilated by her at the level of her mind and to how the event moulds the flow of her consciousness by functioning as a triggering factor which generates a stream of thoughts linked through an intricate process of free associations. Thus, all of a sudden, another acquaintance comes to Mrs Dalloway's mind.<sup>1</sup> And from this point on, Clarissa Dalloway's mind is pervaded by thoughts related to Peter Walsh, to his conduct in particular past events which emerge within her consciousness triggered by her having run across Hugh Whitbread.

The encounter between Mrs Dalloway and Hugh Whitbread does not bear great significance in itself; what seems to be of great importance is what occurs within Mrs Dalloway's mind as a result of this encounter. Exterior reality does not constitute a genuine existence in itself; rather than that, an individual's life unfolds at the level of the mind and exterior reality determines, by means of free associations, the fragmentary and incoherent manner in which thoughts occur within an individual's consciousness. Therefore, capturing the free associations that emerge within an individual's inner reality equates with an accurate representation of the individual's life. The rendition of such instantaneous shifts within consciousness requires the use of certain narrative techniques through which the chaotic flow of an individual's mind can be truthfully conveyed. Hence, novels such as *Mrs Dalloway*, which have a narrative purpose traceable to the doctrine of solipsism, exhibit a discontinuous pattern which stems from the use of techniques such as montage and which matches the fragmentariness of the character's interiority.

### **The technique of montage**

An individual's physical existence unfolds within the frame represented by exterior reality, characterized by definite temporal and spacial coordinates. But the existence itself is not the sum of happenings which can be recorded at the level of exterior reality; rather than that, an individual's genuine life comprises the flow of thoughts which constantly pervades his mind. However, outer and inner reality are not entirely disconnected, as outer reality shapes inner reality, on the one hand through the manner in which it is assimilated by an individual and, on the other hand, through its triggering function, as events that occur at the level of an individual's surrounding world have a tremendous impact upon the concatenation of thoughts emerging within the individual's mind. Thus, an event pertaining to exterior reality moulds the individual's stream of consciousness as it may precipitate the emergence, within the individual's mind, of a nexus of thoughts which seem unrelated but which have been linked together by means of a free association.

The defining trait of free associations seems to be their arbitrariness: an event such as the encounter between Clarissa Dalloway and Hugh Whitbread can bring about an infinite number of potential, latent thoughts within Mrs Dalloway's

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<sup>1</sup> "She could remember scene after scene at Bourton – Peter furious; Hugh not, of course, his match in any way, but still not a positive imbecile as Peter made out [...]." (Woolf, 2012: 131)

mind; among all these, only a limited number become manifest in an arbitrary process in which a connection is established between them and the event functioning as a triggering factor. These thoughts that emerge within the character's mind as a result of free associations often revolve around temporal and spacial coordinates which differ from the ones that confine the character's physical being. Thus, even though the individual as a physical being is confined to a particular time and space, his mind evades such frontiers and is able to suppress temporal and spacial barriers through free associations which take the individual in a journey beyond conventional time and space.

The permanent fluctuation at the level of an individual's mind is often rendered in novels such as *Mrs Dalloway* through montage, a technique which is borrowed from the cinematic field and which allows for "[...] the freedom of shifting back and forth, of intermingling past, present and imagined future" (Humphrey, *op. cit.*: 50). Thus, this technique manages to capture the various leaps which an individual's mind exhibits as the result of free associations. Therefore, one manner of achieving the "psychic anatomy" (*ibidem*: 14) which such novels aim to convey is the use of montage as a technique exhibiting the capacity of evincing the intricate web of thoughts within a character's mind. Instead of attempting to establish order among what unfolds in the life of a character by employing narrative techniques such as omniscient description, Virginia Woolf opts for preserving the lack of order within the characters' mind and, therefore, novels such as *Mrs Dalloway* exhibit a disrupted pattern which stems from the massive use of techniques such as montage and which harmonizes with the disjointed flow of the mind that they aim to convey.

Function of the relation that is established between the fixed and the variable, two distinct types of montage can be identified: on the one hand, the time-montage, in which the individual remains stuck in space and his mind moves in time and, on the other hand, the space-montage, in which the individual remains stuck in time and his mind moves in space (*ibidem*: 50). In both cases, one coordinate remains fixed, while the other fluctuates, causing the individual's mind to move suddenly either in time, or in space. It is to be noticed that the dichotomy time-montage/space-montage is rooted in the premise that one coordinate, either time or space, is always stable; there is, thus, a certain rigidity given by the fixity of one of the two dimensions. Hence, judging by the classification of montage into two distinct types - each of them revolving around a fixed dimension, this technique appears to exhibit the capacity of partially conveying what unfolds within a character's mind, as it seems to have the limited potential of rendering a unilateral shift of the mind.

However, when taking into consideration the above quoted fragments from Virginia Woolf's novel, it can be noticed that the associations that occur at the level of Clarissa Dalloway's mind after her having encountered an old acquaintance determine a sudden movement of the mind both in time, and in space. Thus, it can be said that, in an attempt to convey the genuine flow of the character's consciousness, the author manages to create a mixture of the two distinct types of montage as, when thinking of events related to Peter Walsh as a result of her encounter with Hugh Whitbread, Mrs Dalloway's mind moves both in time and in space. The movement in time is given by the fact that she recollects some past events; there is, therefore, a shift from the present in which events pertaining to exterior reality happen and the past which is recollected by means of

free associations. The movement in space is given by the fact that the events she recollects have occurred in a different place than the place where she is when remembering them. Both time and space become fluid and, by means of a free association triggered by an exterior event, the character's mind manages to suppress temporal, as well as spacial barriers.

Through this type of mixed montage in which the movement in time is doubled by a movement in space all the boundaries that confine the individual's physical existence are annihilated and a representation of the absolute freedom of the mind is achieved. Thus, it can be said that the mixed montage manages to capture the genuine leaps that occur within an individual's mind, as the mind can move in time and space simultaneously.

### **Mrs Dalloway, a performative identity**

The entire novel focuses upon exposing Clarissa Dalloway's mind, the narrative purpose of this literary work being that of conveying its main character's genuine existence, understood as unfolding at the level of the character's inner world. Thus, the novel focuses upon rendering the continuous flow of the character's mind, conveying the various sudden shifts in time and space that occur within her interior reality. The rendition of the permanent flow of the character's consciousness is inextricably connected to the configuration of a processual identity of the character. In other words, Mrs Dalloway's identity seems to be in a constant process of shaping and re-shaping, in accordance with the perpetual shifts which occur at the level of her mind as a result of free associations triggered by her coming in contact with exterior reality. Clarissa Dalloway's life is conveyed as a ceaseless merge of experiences which fuse within her mind, where they transcend conventional temporal and spacial barriers. Therefore, the character is not presented as having a definite, clearly delineated identity which remains stable from the beginning to the end of the novel; instead, she is depicted as being embedded in a process of constant becoming. In other words, it can be said that the novel brings to the fore a character whose identity is permanently achieved (Lawler, 2008: 1-10).

The intricate process which moulds the character's identity is in immediate connection with the character's flow of consciousness, as what unfolds within her mind impacts upon the constant construction of her identity. However, Mrs Dalloway's identity should not be perceived as a "black box" (*ibidem*: 6), confined to her interiority, as exterior reality has a considerable influence on the process through which her identity is shaped. An individual's identity, although undeniably linked to the individual's inner world, cannot be limited to the individual himself and should be perceived as being influenced by the relation the individual establishes with exterior reality (*ibidem*: 7).

By turning solipsism into a narrative purpose and attempting to give prominence to the character's interiority and to expose the character's flow of consciousness, it may seem that Virginia Woolf provides her readers with characters who are entirely confined to themselves and to whom the surrounding world bears no relevance or significance. However, the technique of montage, which captures the movement in time and space of the character's mind, manages to seize the connection between inner and outer world, as, most often than not, it renders the shifts occurring within the mind as a result of the individual coming in



contact with exterior reality. In other words, by exposing the free associations which emerge at the level of a character's consciousness as a consequence of the character having appropriated an event pertaining to exterior reality, the technique of montage reveals the bridge between the character's interiority and the surrounding world. Exposing the triggering function of exterior reality by foregrounding the free associations it brings about within an individual's mind, this technique discloses the impact exterior reality has upon the flow of an individual's consciousness and, hence, upon the individual's identity.

The novel *Mrs Dalloway* focuses on depicting the main character's flow of consciousness, thus presenting her as being in a constant process of becoming and of achieving her identity, as every shift of her mind contributes to the shaping of who she is. However, the powerful link with exterior reality is not left unexplored, as techniques such as montage unveil the manner in which the surrounding world determines the sudden leaps of the character's mind. In other words, Clarissa Dalloway's processual identity, which is encapsulated within her interiority without being confined to it, is depicted as being determined, at least to a certain degree, by her coming in contact with the surrounding world and appropriating in a highly subjective manner happenings pertaining to exterior reality. The novel configures a fluid identity of the main character, as the continuous movement of the mind, oscillating between various moments and places, has a tremendous impact upon the manner in which the character's identity is constructed. Thus, rather than being a fixed construct, Clarissa Dalloway's identity appears to be constantly shaped, function of what unfolds at the level of her mind as a result of numerous processes of free associations.

The continuous process of moulding determined by the fluidity of the mind endows identity with a certain performativity. Thus, alongside with being highly processual, Clarissa Dalloway's identity appears to be performative, precisely because of its complete lack of stability and of its permanent redefining. "Performative utterances make something happen [...]" (Lawler, *op. cit.*: 113); thus, performativity leads to an alteration of a certain state of affairs. In other words, something that does not exist before a performative utterance comes into being concomitant with the utterance itself, the utterance determining its existence. In a similar way, free associations determine an individual's identity: identity does not exist as a fixed, immutable construct; it is formed through a ceaseless process, taking a different shape after each free association that occurs at the level of an individual's mind. The processual character of identity determines its performativity because an individual's identity takes a distinct form and hence comes into being in every stage of the process through which it is shaped by the free associations that determine the flow of the individual's mind. Thus, free associations delineate the stages of the process which leads to the shaping of identity; but every juncture of this process generates a different facet of an individual's identity and, therefore, it can be said that identity is not only processual, but also performative.

Thus, given the fact that the novel focuses on rendering the character's stream of consciousness, Mrs Dalloway appears to be a representative illustration of the continuous process through which an identity is shaped: she does not have a fixed identity; rather than that, she becomes herself through each free association which moulds her mind and which is rendered by means of montage. It can be said, therefore, that the use of the technique of montage leads to the configuration

of a processual and, therefore, performative identity of the character presented in the novel, this technique exposing the permanent shifts in time and space that occur within the character's mind and that shape the character's identity.

## Conclusions

Virginia Woolf's novel, *Mrs Dalloway*, focuses on depicting the character's interiority with the aim of rendering her existence as it unfolds at the level of her mind. Conveying the chaotic flow of the character's consciousness leads to the achievement of a narrative purpose rooted in the doctrine of solipsism, according to which nothing is genuinely real outside an individual's inner world.

The character's stream of consciousness is rendered as being discontinuous and fragmentary, as it is permanently shaped by free associations which occur most often than not triggered by various events pertaining to exterior reality: the events as such bear little significance, as what seems to be essential is their impact upon the character's mind. In other words, events from the world surrounding the individual determine, aside from a highly subjective manner of appropriation within the individual's inner world, the emergence of certain thoughts which exist within the individual's mind in a latent form until they become manifest as a result of the occurrence of a free association. By means of such free associations, one element pertaining to exterior reality triggers, in an arbitrary manner, a stream of thoughts which are not necessarily related to the temporal and spacial frame in which the exterior event has occurred. There is, therefore, a ceaseless journey that the mind embarks upon and hence an individual's mind disobeys the temporal and spacial barriers which confine the individual as a physical being.

Achieving the narrative purpose of exposing a character's interiority requires the use of narrative techniques through which the disconnected flow of the mind can be seized. Thus, the free associations which occur within Clarissa Dalloway's mind are often conveyed through the technique of montage, which allows for the possibility of suppressing temporal and spacial borders and is thus able to capture the continuous flow of the mind. Virginia Woolf manages to fuse time-montage and space-montage and render the absolute freedom of the mind, which moves both in time, and in space simultaneously. The use of mixed montage allows for the rendition of the complex dynamics of the character's mind, at the level of which concomitant temporal and spacial shifts occur as a result of free associations.

The permanent movement of the mind leads to a permanent shaping of the character's identity, as the connections the character makes determine who she is; or rather, who she is constantly becoming. Thus, the emphasis being put on the lack of fixity of her mind, Clarissa Dalloway is depicted as being in a permanent process of defining herself and of achieving her identity. Every free association that occurs within her mind contributes to the ceaseless process through which her identity is constructed, thus bringing about a new facet of her identity. Therefore, far from being a stable construct, Mrs Dalloway's processual identity is rendered as being endowed with a certain performativity. It can be said that the technique of montage, which captures the free associations that determine the existence of each of the facets of Clarissa Dalloway's identity, seizes not only the processual, but also the performative dimension of the character's identity.

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**“READ IT IF YOU CAN”:  
DECONSTRUCTIONIST AND POSTSTRUCTURALIST  
READINGS OF HERMAN MELVILLE’S WRITINGS**

**Irina DUBSKÝ**

***Abstract:** The current paper highlights a number of landmarks in the exegesis of Herman Melville’s fiction undertaken from the perspective of deconstructive and poststructuralist criticism. Deconstructive readings of Melville are meant to bring to light the limits of what is possible for literary criticism to accomplish just as deconstruction reveals the limits of what is possible for human thought to accomplish. The deconstructionists hailed Melville as an unparalleled master of aporia and indeterminacy which he handled with intellectual ease - a quality which singled him out, distancing him from his unsophisticated contemporaries. The notions of de-centering, displacement, secondariness, the turning of reference into self-reference, defining for any deconstructive practice are employed in the exploration of the American author’s writing with a view to foregrounding the idea that the metaphysical and epistemological questions in his work become mere linguistic questions, reality being generated by the free interplay of signifiers.*

***Keywords:** post-structuralism, deconstruction, reading.*

A fresh approach to Melville’s fiction is offered by the critical tools of deconstruction which can retrieve the meaning that traditional criticism ambiguates by simply reading “against the grain” of that tradition.

Derrida’s coinage, “deconstruction”, represents a particular method of textual analysis and philosophical argument involving the close reading of works to reveal logical or rhetorical incompatibilities between the implicit and the explicit planes of discourse in a text and how these incompatibilities are designed and assimilated by the text. A deconstructive reading focuses upon the binary oppositions in a text. Derrida’s deconstructive method focuses on those textual points where a dichotomy or a line of argument breaks down to reveal radical incongruities in the logic or rhetoric. The contradictions expose the text to a displacement from a univocal center of meaning. Derrida and his followers do not seek to destroy meaning but to expose the production of meaning as an arbitrary effect of writing. With all its strategies of de-centering, de-totalization, free-play and self-referentiality, a deconstructive reading of a text reveals that there is nothing except the text; that is, one cannot evaluate, criticize or construe a meaning for a text by reference to anything external to it. Douglas Tallack generates a fluid and sophisticated discourse about the short-story genre by deconstructively reading a number of 19<sup>th</sup> century short stories, Melville’s tales being a focal point of his analysis. He investigates some of Melville’s narrative techniques, identifiable both in his tales and his novels. For instance, the search for “a definitive point of view, present in *The Town Ho’s Story* is repeated at length in *Moby Dick*”, each shift of perspective bringing a “displacement of self” (Tallack, 1993: 160): the self “who trod the ship and knew the crew” is replaced by the self who knew *Moby Dick* and so the process goes on. Eventually, Melville’s displacement of himself and on to Ishmael, is implicated in “the same problematic

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\* “Spiru Haret” University, Bucharest, [irinadubsky@yahoo.com](mailto:irinadubsky@yahoo.com)

of proximity and distance, originality and secondariness” (Tallack, *op. cit.* 161).

Tallack looks upon *Bartleby the Scrivener* as an eloquent example of the category of secondariness. For the narrator of *Bartleby*, the hero’s singularity can only be accounted for with reference to primary or “original sources” (Melville, 1961: 107), but in *Bartleby*’s case, “those are very small” (idem). The narrator’s “temporalizing of representation” (Tallack, 1993:162) indicated by the several displacements signaled by constant changes of tense, is indicative of a tension between a hidden narrative which promises a recuperation of the truth about *Bartleby* and a surface narrative which fails in its task. The surface narrative throws at us the challenge of responding to “an unknowing silence, the void that underlines all human artifacts” (*ibidem* 163).

This brilliant study foregrounds the notion of de-centering, defining for any deconstructive practice. Melville’s choice of New York as the urban setting for *Pierre* as well as *Bartleby*, “emphasizes the lack of center and the need for other kinds of knowledge besides that which concentrates attention in a single place” (*ibidem* 167).

Tallack quotes Kazin’s description of New York, which, “for more than a century, has been an imperial center with most of its people in outlying provinces which are not the center of anything” (Kazin, 1973: 7). The context of *Bartleby* is even vaster than the imperial New York, comprising the postal system with all its indeterminacies, since *Bartleby* “has been a subordinate clerk in the Dead Letter Office at Washington” (Melville, 1961: 140). As a former clerk in the Dead Letter Office, Tallack observes, “*Bartleby* has given up on signification, although the lawyer is still trying out models of communication” (Tallack, 1993: 172).

The solidity of the Tombs - a place of symbolic concentration par excellence - is somehow made fluid by its degree of “dissemination” - a “spilling” or “diffusion” of meaning (idem). The critic calls our attention to the fact that we should not miss Melville’s mention of the grass in his description of the prison-yard, which evokes a grave-yard, a place where death is interconnected with an “inscribed history” (idem) – as he puts it – and not with a universal nature. The sequel to the story serves to return *Bartleby* to the world of representation and history, instead of interring him in the ground from where he will spring up like the fresh shoots of grass. In this way, *Bartleby* achieves a human voice instead of an immortal vision.

John Carlos Rowe proposes an engaging deconstructive reading of *Bartleby*, in which he emphasizes the transformation of the physical Tombs into “a psychological monument” through the agency of *Bartleby* who

continues to circulate as the Derridean principle of difference: the uncanny and vagrant property in language that motivates expression. The avowed purpose of this tale has been to awaken curiosity, which the narrator has been unable to gratify. We are only left with a ‘vague report’ of a certain suggestive interest in which dead letters and dead men are equated (Rowe, 182: 137-138).

Another seminal work offering a deconstructive “reading” of Melville and other writers of the American Renaissance writers is authored by John Irwin. Irwin investigates a recurrent motif in *Moby Dick*, namely, the undecipherable character

of the hieroglyph. The central hieroglyph is Moby Dick with its “pyramidal white lump” and its “mystic-marked brow” (Melville, 1952: 308). Ahab functions as the whale’s human hieroglyphic counterpart, being described as looking like “a pyramid” and having “an Egyptian chest” (idem), the marks on his brow being redolent of the hieroglyphic markings on the forehead of the whale. Ishmael’s discussion of the whiteness of the whale reveals indecipherability as the essential characteristic of the hieroglyph for Melville. The hieroglyph of the world, represented by Moby Dick, is inscrutable not because it does not bear any meaning at all, but, as Irwin points out, “because its own indefiniteness allows it to bear any and every meaning and, since it means everything, it means nothing” (1992: 109). The critic identifies this “colorless all-color of meaning” as a critical condition emblematic of the 19<sup>th</sup> century:

with the loss of belief in an external absolute and in the possibility of objective knowledge, the self expands to fill the void, but at the moment when the self becomes the absolute, when everything becomes a projection of itself, then the self realizes it has become nothing, that it is indistinguishable, a ‘colorless all-color’ (Irwin, 1992: 112).

Following the same deconstructive line of argument, as deconstruction turns reference into self-reference, Irwin takes the discussion of absence/presence one step further. He submits that “if all the various appearances of the world are only projections of the self and if the world appears to be a void, the only conclusion is that the real void is within the self” (idem). Therefore, the attempt to hunt down the whale turns out to be a self-destructive one in the final analysis. The qualities Moby Dick displays are simply the projected attributes of its hunters. *The Doubloon* chapter makes it explicit through Ahab’s interpretation of the markings on the coin as tokens of his self. The process of interpretation attains fulfillment the moment the tattooed Queequeg contemplates the hieroglyphic coin. The hieroglyphic subject contemplates the hieroglyphic object.

According to Irwin, this encounter reveals the double indecipherability of the world: it is indefinite in itself and “in its own indefiniteness it allows the individual subject to project on it the structure of a self as inscrutable as the world itself” (1992: 110). The circular nature of this process has no connotations of redemption or perfection which are usually associated with this geometrical figure. On the contrary, for Melville, the circle which governs the hieroglyph of the Universe inspires the terror of a self-enclosed knowing process in which, as Irwin phrases it, “man projects the self’s personal structure on an indeterminate ground and then reads it back” (idem). The essayist foregrounds the self-reflexivity of the symbolist tradition initiated by the literature of the American Renaissance, a literature that “self-consciously makes the process of symbolization its continuing theme” (Irwin, 1992: 112).

A deconstructive analysis operates upon the assumption that a text cannot be related to anything extra-textual and that reference is ultimately self-reference. The essayist makes the observation that, in the works of Melville, metaphysical and epistemological questions become mere linguistic questions, “not questions of what really is but rather how in our knowable model of the world language creates what really is” (Irwin, 1992: 108).

In the *Cetology* chapter Melville attempts a classification of the world of whales by arranging them according to their sizes and for this systematization he

employs as ordering metaphor the sizes of books –“folio”, “octavo” and “duodecimo”. The book metaphor is symbolic of the fact that the world of whales is governed by linguistic order. John Irwin concludes his exquisite analysis with the essentially deconstructive contention that reality is generated by the free interplay of signifiers and that “for man, the ultimate reality is language” (*ibidem* 112).

Barbara Johnson is the proponent of an exciting anti-naïve reading of *Billy Budd*. All the claims she makes are entirely supported by the text itself. Johnson’s first item on her deconstructive agenda is to call Billy’s innocence into question. She looks upon Billy as a “literal reader” (Johnson, 1980: 85), in the sense that he seems to take things at face value, mistaking what seems to be for what really is. The critic claims that what Claggart questions in Billy is precisely the potential discrepancy between seeming and being, in other words, is Billy as innocent as he seems to?

Johnson contends that Melville’s delineation of the character of Billy Budd is itself not exactly as it appears to be. Although Billy is a “literal reader” he seems capable of editing out whatever does not fit into his outlook on life. Unlike Billy, Claggart is “an ironic reader” (*ibidem* 88), that is, he is apt to always suspect the disparity between seeming and being. However, she insists, this is not always the case. When one of his spies makes up lies about Billy, Melville tells us that Claggart “never suspected the veracity of these reports” (Melville, 1961: 41). That is, he can be naïve too, just like Billy. Both of them suppress or fail to read whatever does not dovetail with their world outlook. As Johnson rightly observes, “Billy is sweet, innocent and harmless, yet he kills. Claggart is evil and (...) perverted, yet he dies a victim” (Johnson, 1980: 82). Finally, she contends, “the fatal blow, far from being an unmotivated accident, is the gigantic return of the power of negation that Billy has been repressing all his life” (Johnson, 1980: 91).

Deconstructive readings of Melville are meant to bring to light the limits of what is possible for literary criticism to accomplish just as deconstruction reveals the limits of what is possible for human thought to accomplish.

Poststructuralist theories and practices in general share an oppositional stance towards traditional humanism and place a special emphasis on the role of language in all signifying practices. This emphasis is easily noted in those critical methods concerned with hyper-textuality, meta-textuality and the instability of meaning.

According to A. Robert Lee, Melville’s *The Confidence Man* is so open-ended that it could, “with some justice, claim to operate as the exemplary postmodern text, subversive of and at all times deconstructing its own idiom and imagined world”(1984:158).

George Landow has pointed out that de-centeredness and lack of narrative closure are defining traits of hypertexts, which are, in fact, interactive forms: the text has a distinct identity, while its narrative can be constructed and reconstructed according to the reader’s participating disposition, on account of the impressive number of hyperlinks: “we must abandon conceptual systems founded upon ideas of center, margin, hierarchy, and linearity and replace them with ones of multilinearity, nodes, links, and networks” (1989:2).

Gustaaf Van Cromphout argues that Melville’s narrative strategies result in a subversion of the idea of epistemological stability: Melville’s narrative strategies also call into question the possibility of one’s knowing others. Critics

have often commented upon the narrator's unreliability, inconsistencies, equivoques, and general trickery at the reader's expense - characteristics reflected in, among other things, a self-contradictory rhetoric and an indirect, convoluted, self-referential, and sometimes "self-erasing" style (Van Cromphout, 1993: 40). This playful, de-centered anti-narrative form is suggestive of Melville's sustained "engagement with questions of epistemology", which, in the critic's view, marks his mind as distinctly "modern" (*ibidem* 37).

Takashi Tsuchinaga, a Japanese Melvillean scholar, addresses a similar matter, namely the metafictional facet of *Bartleby*. He argues that *Bartleby* is both an author and a text, that *Bartleby the Scrivener* is allegorically *Bartleby* the author/text, pendulating between these two stances. The critic emphasizes the inexhaustible power of the text to generate commentary although no final interpretation is possible. "This generative power of the text constitutes its potential life" (Tsuchinaga, 1991: 12), he observes.

Marvin Hunt engages the issue of the ever-fluctuating multitude of interpretations and the instability of meaning in the same Melvillean story. He surveys other interpretations advanced by "postmodernist critics who have shifted the argument from the ethical status of the attorney-narrator to the problematics of language" (Hunt, 1994: 275). In support of his analysis, Hunt quotes an insightful poststructuralist opinion, formulated way before the advent of post-structuralism in America, belonging to James Guetti, who identifies in *Moby Dick* the presence of "special and artificial kinds of language serving to draw attention to the limitations of such language" (Guetti, 1967: 28).

Hunt formulates the basis of his poststructuralist perspective, stating that he aims to investigate the premise that "the narrator finally does comprehend *Bartleby* [...] by insisting upon the linguistic basis of that comprehension" (Hunt, 1994: 280). He notes that the concluding remark of the story "Ah *Bartleby!* Ah humanity!" coincides with the final stage of a "reductive process that construes truth/reality as ultimately linguistic" (Hunt, 1994: 283).

He goes on to discuss the systematic isolation of *Bartleby* from the material world and his progressive metamorphosis into a linguistic icon: "the devolution from functioning scrivener to starved corpse represents a shift of value from factual to the symbolic, from *Bartleby* as flesh-and-blood reference to *Bartleby* as verbal sign (*ibidem* 284).

The thrust of the study is that the synecdochical utterance which closes the story is in fact an illustration of the narrator's progress from limited, legal rationalism towards his "prefer[ring]" a metaphorical language - for "*Bartleby* is humanity, the unabridged text of universal fate" (*ibidem* 287). At the end of his experience with the scrivener, the narrator is "epistemologically reformed", Hunt contends, for *Bartleby* motivates "a new idiom": through *Bartleby*'s agency, the narrator leaves behind an inefficient rationally-based Enlightenment methodology in order to embrace a mode of speaking and knowing constructed upon super-rational linguistic mechanisms. Therefore, from a poststructuralist stance, Marvin Hunt reveals the logo-centric nature of the reality in *Bartleby*, a single "word" being able to "turn tongues and heads" (1994:275).

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## **THE INFLUENCE OF ARISTOCRATIC WOMEN ON EARLY EDUCATION TOWARDS THE ERA OF “NEW WOMEN”**

**Edith-Hilde KAITER**

***Abstract:** During the centuries, the education process was influenced not only by remarkable men but also by educated aristocratic women who supported it entirely by sponsoring or founding colleges, who later became famous and important universities in England, such as Pembroke College (founded in 1347 by Marie de St Pol, Countess of Pembroke). But soon after some strong and wealthy women managed to be involved in the growth of universities, this field remained an extremely male-orientated society and women’s duty was only to focus on their role in the home.*

*The hereby article presents the way in which women regained their right to education. The prefix ‘new’ was imposed on the feminist cause in the late 1800s and everything started to change.*

***Keywords:** aristocratic, women, university.*

### **The Influence of high-born women on the early colleges**

Women, particularly those of the catholic faith, had an important influence over temporal affairs and their astonishing contribution to Cambridge University for example, was a remarkable one. Therefore, seven of the sixteen colleges that were in existence by the end of the sixteenth century had been founded by women. From 1290, when Edward I’s wife Eleanor had bequeathed money for the benefit of poor scholars at Cambridge, women had a considerable influence on the development of the university. They were involved in the foundation of colleges, in their management and in the endowment of professors’ chairs.

Typical of the wealthy and well-connected female college sponsors was Elizabeth de Clare. Her wealth came through inheritance: she was a granddaughter of Edward I, her brother died without an heir at the Battle of Bannockburn in 1314 and she had buried three husbands before she was thirty. Through her wealth and influence the poorly endowed University Hall was refounded in 1338 as Clare Hall, doubtless to the relief of its founder Richard de Badew, Chancellor of the university. Within her heraldic lozenge, displayed at the college front gate, there is a circle of golden symbols. Some refer to them as tears for her three lost husbands, but they are more likely to represent her wish to spread ‘the precious pearls of knowledge’ to which she referred in the college’s foundation charter.

Although, as was so often the case, there was a Cambridge academic of more modest social standing behind the founder of the college, Lady de Clare stayed closely involved with her institution’s funding and direction. College archives reveal that in the early 1350s she was concerned over certain irregularities which later prompted her encouragement of a commission of enquiry to investigate further. These founders, therefore, did more than just lend their name: well-

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\* “Mircea cel B trân” Naval Academy Constanța, [green\\_flower19@yahoo.com](mailto:green_flower19@yahoo.com)

connected aristocrats, who could secure for the college the right of mortmain from a monarch or a bull from a pope to consecrate a chapel, were an essential ingredient behind a successful college foundation.

Another aristocratic lady, Marie de St Pol de Valence, founded the Hall of Marie Valence, later known as Pembroke College, in 1338. She belonged to the same Anglo-French ruling class as Lady de Clare. Unlike Lady de Clare, she was married only once: however, it has been suggested that she played the three roles of maid, bride and widow on her wedding day. The reality is less dramatic: her husband, Aymer de Valence, Earl of Pembroke, died not at a wedding day joust, but in northern France of apoplexy a few years after their marriage. Nonetheless, it was once again the combination of wealth, widowhood and court connections which was turned to the university's advantage. Her influence is shown through the college articles, which state the preference was to be given to scholars born in France, 'if such could be found': she also required that those observed drinking to excess or frequenting brothels were to be reported by their peers.

Although college archives reveal a typical amount of scholarly misbehaviour, they divulge little evidence of Frenchmen as members of college. Indeed, Pembroke was eventually to nurture William Pitt the Younger, who laid the foundations for the defeat of Napoleon's France: his statue has been placed in front of the college library and the Pitt Building stands almost opposite the college's front gate. The name of Marie de Valence lives on in small ways, from remembrance in chapel services and toasts at hall feasts to the moniker 'V' painted, to the mystery of many junior college members, on college bicycles.

After five colleges were set up in the mid-1300s, there was a period of almost 100 years in which no colleges were founded. The reputation of a medieval university depended on the number of scholars it could attract and Henry VI's foundation of King's College in 1441 paid scant attention to the needs of the university: at the outset he planned for there to be only twelve scholars. It was a woman – Margaret of Anjou, the wife of King Henry VI – who met the need of the university to expand at this time. The new college, ultimately to be known as Queen's College, was formed in 1448 from an existing student hostel known as the College of St Bernard. The principal of the hostel, Andrew Docker, became the first head of the new college. The new foundation was charged to conserve 'the Faith'. College articles also directed that daily lectures be held to support 'the magnificence...of Queen's College...and to laud and honour of sex feminine...'

Queen's has never interpreted the wishes of its first patroness as a requirement to adopt a corporate mission statement promoting women's interests. Indeed, it does not even have a record of support for women at the university. On formal occasions in college, its presidents sometimes remark on this irony with rueful reference to the 500 years that passed before women were permitted to study there. Their exclusion of women over many centuries would not have surprised Margaret of Anjou, however. Her reference in the college articles to women's honour probably reflected her wish for women to be remembered in the liturgy during chapel, acknowledging that they could be saints and powerful intercessors with God.

Queen's acquired two further queen-patronesses as a result of the Wars of the Roses. Margaret of Anjou was forced out of the country when the Lancastrian fortunes stumbled and was succeeded as college patroness by Edward IV's wife, Elizabeth Woodville. The third queen who became college sponsor was Anne

Neville, wife of Richard III. Centuries later this abundance of *queens* was used to justify the shift of the apostrophe in the college's name.

During Richard III's reign the royal couple endowed the college magnificently: indeed, Richard had made his first endowment of the college early in the reign of his brother. After Richard's demise at the Battle of Bosworth in 1485 Henry VII confiscated those gifts, but briefly Queen's had been the university's richest college. Richard and Anne are remembered twice a year at the college's Commemoration of Benefactors service, apparently to the accompaniment of quiet cheers at the mention of Richard's name and moderate boos for the king who removed the college's wealth. Queen's also adopted as one of its two main shields of arms the silver boar's head used by Richard as his personal badge. On formal occasions the college refers with pride to its three royal patronesses – but, surprisingly in this context, they are usually named as Margaret Anjou, Elizabeth Woodville and Elizabeth II. Anne is rather overlooked.

Memorials to Richard III also exist within the town's landmarks. Great St. Mary's contains a small commemoration of this Yorkist king within a Victorian stained glass window in the north-west corner, marking his support of the church's medieval restoration. The universe was well supported by Richard – besides his interest in Queens' he also funded King's College Chapel more promptly and willingly than did either his brother Edward or his Tudor successors. But proper acknowledgement of this is, perhaps predictably given the subsequent success of the Tudors, hard to find in Cambridge.

Queens' college had no official patroness between Anne Neville in 1485 and Elizabeth, the wife of George VI, in 1948, who accepted the role on the occasion of the college's quincennial celebrations of that year. However, both Lady Margaret Beaufort and Catherine of Aragon probably enjoyed an unofficial involvement with the college. Although all the sixteen oldest colleges have patron saints, only King's and Queen's have secured the support of living patrons. The patrons of the old colleges were sometimes monastic houses which were not replaced when their direct involvement with Cambridge ended at the time of their repression.

Another rich and widowed aristocratic lady, Anne Neville, the dowager duchess of Buckingham, refounded a college in the 1470s at the time Queens' was acquiring and discarding its female patrons. There is some doubt as to whether it was she or her grandson, Henry Stafford, the second duke, who supported the foundation of Buckingham Hall (later Magdalene College), but it is now thought most probable that credit should be given to the dowager duchess. She was also the mother-in-law of the next great widowed aristocratic lady who assisted Cambridge so much: Lady Margaret Beaufort. Founder of both Christ's and St. John's colleges in the early 1500s, Lady Margaret had also given support in the 1490s to John Alcock, the founder of Jesus College.

The involvement of women with St. John's continued into Stuart England. Mary, Countess of Shrewsbury, financed the building of Second Court; her statue was placed on the west range above the gatehouse in 1671. She was the daughter of the better-known Countess of Shrewsbury, Bess of Hardwick, who had acquired the wealth which ultimately benefited the college. Bess was married and widowed four times and it was her second marriage, to William Cavendish, that produced Mary, whose descendants helped develop Cambridge as a centre of science.

Sidney Sussex College was the last of the oldest colleges to be founded by a woman. Its founder, Lady Frances Sidney, actually died in 1589, seven years before the college came into existence, but funded the college through the terms of her will. She was the widow of the earl of Sussex.

The contribution of these aristocratic women is remarkable; nothing similar occurred at Oxford. It was clerics, monarchs or chancellors who generally founded medieval colleges, yet at Cambridge women with strong personalities and great wealth wished to be involved in the growth of the university. Furthermore, the academics, determined to expand the university through founding colleges, demonstrated that they could, time and again, attract the support of those at the heart of the regime.

### **The exclusion of women from the daily life of the university**

Nonetheless, the university remained an extremely male-oriented society, whose chauvinism lingered well into the twentieth century. Although this had much to do with the monastic influence on the university, it also reflected English society. A woman's duty was to focus on her role in the home; this made her unsuitable for the worldly matters on which education was focused. Cambridge University, as so often, conformed to the values of time.

For centuries women had no place in daily life at the university. Even female visitors to colleges were very rare; they could not pass beyond the communal areas, while often the only person permitted to receive a female non-relative was the head of college. However, the existence long ago of a scale of punishments at Peterhouse for breaking these rules suggests that breaches must have occurred; the college even instructed its medieval fellows to ensure that their heads were washed only by males. As late as 1801 the first British population census recorded the remarkable imbalance of 803 males and 8 females in the university, the latter presumably the spouses of college heads.

At times even service roles within the university have been denied to women. In the 1500s King's College ruled that all its domestic servants had to be male; another university edict in 1635 forbade women under the age of fifty 'to make beds or perform any other service within the scholars' chambers'. Unsurprisingly, laundry remained the responsibility of women, but soiled garments would have been left for collection at the college gate. Women were eventually employed as bedders, but there is fortunately no evidence to support the unkind notion that selection was based on their having an unattractive physical appearance. The sentiment of some classics scholars that these women must be 'senex et horrid ex aetate' – 'an old woman who time had rendered hideous' – has no basis in fact. Nonetheless, most of the female college staff were of an age which made sexual liaisons between them and the scholars improbable.

The culture which required celibacy and distance from women lasted for centuries. Consequently pretty, and less pretty, barmaids throughout the many pubs in Cambridge have long received exceptional attention from the university's scholars.

It seems hardly necessary to add that women were also excluded from the university as students; but this did not leave them all bereft of education. The country's leading families, both noble and bourgeois, had traditionally arranged private education by tutors at home for both their sons and daughters. In Tudor

times, for example, Robert Ascham had taught Elizabeth I, while other women, such as Lady Jane Grey, Katherine Parr and Thomas More's daughter, Margaret, won wide intellectual acclaim. However, the vast majority of less privileged women had no access to education.

The injustice of this situation became more intolerable as the wealth and the population of the country grew, and by the mid-1800s colleges for women, such as Queen's and Bedford, had opened in London. Towards the end of the nineteenth century similar pressures led to the creation of the all-female colleges of Newnham and Girton. The small number of women who studied there were technically 'townspeople', as they were not accepted as members of the university. Both colleges nonetheless represented a very significant step towards ending the exclusion of women from higher education at Cambridge.

### **Passing unnoticed**

The critical first breach by women of the male-dominated university came in 1871, when Henry Sidgwick, a liberal professor in philosophy at Trinity College, leased a house for a few women at No. 74 Regent Street. This was the precursor of Newnham College, over which Sidgwick's friend Anne Clough later took charge.

Even Sidgwick remarked of the first five students that they were of 'unfortunate appearance'- they were too attractive and fashionable 'to pass unnoticed', as he chose to express one of the early demands made on women at the university. At that time the idea of young women living away from home was more scandalous than the fact of them being educated - and any whiff of scandal would have delayed the prospect of female education.

The seed which grew into second college for women at Cambridge had been planted during 1869 in Hitchin, Hertfordshire, by Emily Davies, with the help of the liberal element among Cambridge's dons. This was a safe thirty miles from the university, but the difficulty of studying a wide range of subjects with the limited teaching resources available in Hitchin prompted a move to Girton, within two miles of Cambridge, in 1873. Miss Davies considered her Girton College to be superior to the establishment at Newnham and the two women's colleges rapidly acquired the two characteristics of snobbism and mutual mistrust which some older colleges had spent centuries honing.

Miss Davies mistrusted Miss Clough particularly for her lack of determination in the fight to extract degrees from the university for their young women, condemning the Newnham people as representing 'the serpent eating away at our vitals'. About the students of each college she wrote: 'Girton is for ladies, while Newnham is for governesses'. Doubtless she was happy with the popular contention that the ladies of Girton wore stays while the members of Newnham went about town unlaced. Miss Clough, on the other hand, was more concerned to educate women as teachers, seeing cohorts of female teachers as the best means of challenging the subjugated status of women.

The foundation of these two colleges was only the beginning of women's struggle to secure fair access to higher education, however, and male prejudice still denied equal treatment to those who had been brave enough to breach the male citadel. Some educational facilities, for example, remained out of bounds to the girls: their use of the university's library was restricted, their presence at lectures

was limited and they were excluded from competing for university prizes and scholarships.

The services of the eminent Victorian architect Basil Champneys were secured to design Newnham College in the 1870s. The college is built in the Queen Anne Revival style typical of the late Victorian period; its Dutch gables and stone quoins, along with the rejection of enclosed courts, creates a more welcoming feel than is usually found at the older colleges. Another characteristic of old colleges was challenged through the undergraduates' rooms being accessed from long corridors, as opposed to the multiplicity of staircases leading to a few rooms seen in the older colleges. But when the land for this adventure into women's education was leased from St. John's, its fellowship clearly felt little confidence in the project as they tried to stipulate that only substantial cottages be built, which could have been converted to residential homes should the experiment have failed.

Newnham still has a building in its grounds which was originally used as a laboratory. It had been thought inappropriate for the college's young ladies to spend the long hours required by many scientific experiments in close proximity to the other sex and the well-equipped Cavendish Laboratory was thus out of bounds to women. A perverse benefit of this restriction has been that some of the Newnham science equipment, no longer needed once the sexes could mix more freely, has been preserved. Typical of a late-nineteenth-century laboratory, it is on display at the Whipple Museum of the History of Science in Free School Lane.

Distrust as to the motives of these early Cambridge female undergraduates, who merely wished to receive an education, was widespread. Many thought of them, unfairly, as little different to the 'fishing fleet' of middle-class young women who sailed out annually to India looking for husbands among the army officers and business wallahs in the days of the English Raj.

### **New women and bicycles**

From these small beginnings it took over 100 years to establish full membership, co-educational colleges and then numerical equality between female and male students. The modest progress made by women in the 1870s simply reflected the changing position of women in society, which had been triggered by legislation such as the 1870 Women's Property Act. Those directing the university did not embrace the cause of women's rights; illiberal as ever, they responded belatedly and with reluctance.

Opposition to the advance of women's interests was strong. For example, after a Senate debate on women's education in 1865 the eminent geologist Adam Sedgwick, in a conversation recorded by John Willis Clark, referred to the young girls who might be interested in taking the Local Examinations set by Cambridge for the country's secondary schools as 'nasty forward minxes'. Even the Liberal leader W.E. Gladstone, whose daughter was at Newnham in the late 1870s, could speak of how the granting of further rights would 'trespass on the delicacy, the purity, the refinement in the nature of women'. With such opposition from the liberal end of the political spectrum, the steps along the path towards equality were destined to be painfully slow. The conservative academics closed ranks against women's participation in all aspects of university life: as late as 1932 the university's comedians performing at the Footlights were almost forced to close their acting club after employing professional actresses in the female roles of their

productions. It took a few more years before the female undergraduates themselves were able to perform on stage.

The prefix 'new' was imposed on the feminist cause in the late 1800s and used in Cambridge because of its pejorative overtones. 'New' has rarely been a flattering prefix for any social or political movement: Catholics at the time of the Reformation had popularized the term 'New Learning' as an abusive description of protestant theological belief. As a term of opprobrium, 'New' was even caught up with the Labour Party in twenty-first-century Britain, despite having initially been used by the party itself to suggest its own regeneration. Conversely, through the importance given to Classical culture and the acceptance that wisdom was acquired with age, 'Old' was a term of respect. The term 'New Woman' was thus an insult. *Punch* portrayed the 'New Woman' as bored who were never quiet; in the one article of 1894 the magazine referred to them as living off a diet of only 'foolscap and ink'.

Interestingly, in a place such as Cambridge, which has shown such an interest in velocipedes, bicycles became a symbol of the New Woman. The birth of the women's emancipation movement coincided with the wider use of these machines and women fully appreciated the greater freedom they brought. When the Senate discussed whether to admit women as full members of the university during 1897, it was an effigy of a woman on a bicycle which protestors chose to suspend from the first floor of the ancient Trinity Street bookshop opposite the Senate. Some men celebrated the denial of full membership on this occasion by an assault on the Newnham entrance of Newnham College.

The life of a female undergraduate long after the late 1800s cannot have been easy. They were isolated through restrictions which had never been imposed on male members of the university even in medieval times. It is telling that the first of the three main entrances which Newnham College used required the girls wishing to leave college to walk some distance in the opposite direction from the town in order to reach its centre.

By then, however, discipline had clearly slipped, as the girls were allowed to invite men to the occasional tennis party on the grass courts to the north of Old Hall. Portions of the tennis pavilion could be booked for teas. Tennis Teas evidently became a bit of a wheeze to entertain favoured male friends, as they were soon referred to as 'Tennis Tea Parties without Tennis'. The citadel of Girton, two miles away from the dangers of the town, remained more difficult to breach.

Another symbol of the invisibility many men at Cambridge thought appropriate for women came about as a result of the tragic death in 1893 of the brilliant electrical engineer John Hopkinson in an Alpine climbing accident, along with one of his sons and two of his daughters. His widow founded a new Engineering in Free School Lane, which has upon it a commemorative plaque. The inscription, which can be read from the pavement, acknowledges the father and his son, but, astonishingly, excludes his two daughters. It is possible that the son's name was included because he had already been accepted, though had not matriculated, at Trinity; nonetheless the exclusion of his sisters from the plaque is difficult to understand from a twenty-first-century perspective.

From the beginning, obviously, there were some women who excelled at their studies. A few years after 1881, the year in which the Tripos exams had been unofficially opened to women, a Girton student, Agnata Ramsey, achieved the top Classics degree. It provoked *Punch* to publish another celebrated cartoon: two



male railway guards bowing to her as she entered a First Class railway carriage. Similarly, in 1890 Philippa Fawcett, from Newnham College, achieved a higher mark than the top mathematics Wrangler. From 1882, the women of Girton and Newnham could sit mock exams which were marked by the more liberal academics. None, apparently, was more willing to help than Professor Canon Kennedy, once known better to many schoolchildren as the author of the famous *Revised Latin Primer*.

Appositely, it seems to have been Kennedy's daughters who transformed his original work – hence the *Revised* – into the popular text still occasionally used in schools offering classics today. Another professor, Henry Sidgwick, permitted women to attend his lectures. The majority, however, resisted the advance of women. The first female lecturer at Cambridge, Ellen McArthur, who taught Economic History at Girton, was not appointed until 1894. An endowment created by her will still fund lectures and research positions.

Progress for women at Cambridge was slow in comparison with the more liberal universities in Scotland and Wales, as well as the English universities of London and Durham. By the 1890s those universities offered full degrees to women. Perversely, some at Cambridge then argued that since women had access to higher education in those places, there was no need for change at their own institution; the further argument that Cambridge would lose 'the best male scholars' to Oxford was also used. Doubtless, the same argument was aired at Oxford.

Homerton, which achieved full college status only in 2009, was the first place of co-education associated with the university. It moved to Cambridge from London's East End in the 1890s, where it had been a mixed college dedicated to the training of teachers. Homerton, as Miss Clough of Newnham had argued, advanced the cause of women's education through addressing the lack of female teachers. Homerton's initial attempt at co-education in Hills Road was not a success; its records contain references to some of the more proper young ladies complaining both that 'they could not speak freely in front of men' and that some of their own sex 'forgot themselves'. Others commented that the men forgot that women did not come to lectures to be 'made eyes at'. Centuries of separation had left huge potential for misunderstanding on both sides. Men had made up 30 of the 130-strong student body at the time of the move from London, but a few years in Cambridge was sufficient for the college to return to single-sex education, choosing to educate only women.

However, the pressure for change continued, particularly as more women joined the university community through marriage. Fellows had been allowed to marry since 1860 at some colleges – the Caius fellowship was the first college to use this freedom, many of the other colleges retain the statutes which required celibacy for a further twenty years. The Caius fellows were perhaps helped by the fact that their Master, Dr Guest, had himself married in 1859, when the statute revisions were being drafted. The Royal Commission set up in 1877 finally agreed statutes in 1882 which permitted all fellows to marry. Nonetheless, some heads of colleges tried to maintain the ancient exclusion from their fellowship of all matters feminine. Dr George Corrie, Master of Jesus for thirty-six years from 1849, expressed his confidence to the Jesus fellowship that none of them would take advantage of the statute. In a refreshing example of the limitations of a master's authority, it is recorded that one fellow then married after a fortnight, some others

within twelve months and virtually the entire Jesus fellowship had taken marriage vows within a few years. Once marriage had been deemed acceptable the prospects for proper co-education must have subtly changed. Furthermore, the centuries-old bachelor accommodation in college, which could not reasonably house new spouses, must have either caused marital disharmony or prompted moves out to the newly built villas to the west of the Backs.

Beyond bringing a much-needed female balance to the often hermetically sealed masculine culture of a college fellowship, the marriage of dons had another impact. For centuries the genes of clever academics had had no legitimate outlet. The celibacy of its staff over centuries must have been of incalculable loss to the nation's gene pool; rich bachelor dons' bequests of their estates to their college hardly compensated.

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## **DAS BILD DER FRAU IN DER FRAUENLITERATUR**

**Olga KAITER**

***Abstract:** Die 70er Jahre bringen ein neues Frauenbild in die Literatur, das von einer neuen Gefühlskultur geprägt ist. Neue Subjektivität, Innerlichkeit, Sinnlichkeit und Natürlichkeit sind wichtige Merkmale, die die Werke der deutschen Autorinnen der Frauenbewegung auszeichnen.*

*Die vorliegende Arbeit nimmt sich vor, die Wahrnehmung der Identität der Frau in den Werken der österreichischen Autorinnen Brigitte Schwaiger und Ingeborg Bachmann darzustellen. Das Aufeinanderprallen von weiblichen Gefühlen und männlicher Vernunft hat als Folge die Persönlichkeitszerstörung und die Vernichtung von weiblicher Identität.*

*Die detaillierte Beobachtung und Beschreibung der eigenen Erfahrungen, der individuellen Sehnsüchte, Ängste und Enttäuschungen ist eine Gelegenheit für die Autorinnen, die gesellschaftlichen Normen, die die Persönlichkeit der Frau beschränken und letztendlich zerstören, scharf zu kritisieren.*

**Keywords:** Frauenliteratur, Frauenproblematik, Rolle der Frau.

In den 70er Jahren des 20. Jahrhunderts tauchte eine ganz neue Form deutschsprachiger Frauenliteratur auf. Eine große Zahl literarischer Texte von Frauen entstand in dieser Zeit, die in der Literaturgeschichte als Frauenliteratur bezeichnet wurden. Diese literarischen Produktionen von Frauen, vor allem Dichterinnen oder Autorinnen von Briefen und Romanen und seltener von Dramen oder Theaterstücken drücken das weibliche Selbstbewusstsein aus und auch ihren Wunsch nicht mehr Objekte im Leben der Männer zu sein. Einen großen Einfluss im Entstehungsprozess des weiblichen Selbstbewusstseins hatte der geschichtliche, soziale und kulturelle Kontext, der auch die literarischen Produktionen der Frauen beträchtlich prägten. Ein historischer, gesellschaftlicher Überblick der literarischen Epochen kann diesen Aspekt erläutern.

Die ersten Frauen begannen Mitte des 12. Jahrhunderts zu schreiben. Der Zeit entsprechend schrieben sie damals noch in Latein, aber ein Jahrhundert später, ab dem 13. Jahrhundert begannen die Frauen in der eigenen Landessprache zu schreiben. Sie schrieben an und für Gott, der sich ihnen in mythischen Erlebnissen unmittelbar offenbart hatte. Diese Schreibtendenz der Frauen lässt sich dadurch erklären, dass viele Frauen, aufgrund ihrer festgelegten Rolle in der Familie, keinen Zugang zu den öffentlichen Bildungsinstitutionen hatten. Der einzige Bildungsort, wo die Frauen auf die schriftliche Aktivität ausgebildet werden konnten, blieben die Klöster. Hier hatten sie die Möglichkeit umfassendes Wissen zu erwerben und es schriftstellerisch zu benutzen. Themen wie die Auseinandersetzungen mit den mystischen Fragen, mit Erlebnissen und Visionen fanden oft in den Schriften der religiösen Frauen ihren Ausdruck. Folglich entsteht in dieser Zeit ein Bild einer selbstbewussten Visionärin, die ihre erlebten Visionen in Literatur ausdrückt.

Die Epoche der Renaissance und des Humanismus, in der man einen großen Wert auf die Bedeutung des Bewusstseins für die menschliche Individualität legte, erkannte die beschränkte Bildungsmöglichkeit der Frauen und

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\* "Ovidius" Universität Constanța, [olga\\_kaiter@yahoo.com](mailto:olga_kaiter@yahoo.com)

gleichzeitig die Bildungsnotwendigkeit beider Geschlechter für eine ideale Ehe und Familie. So bekamen viele Frauen eine humanistische Bildung und versuchten literarisch produktiv zu sein, obwohl ihre Schriften von einigen Humanisten als unwissenschaftlich angesehen wurden. Von einem weiblichen Selbstbewusstsein konnte man in dieser Zeit, in der die Frauen große Identitätsprobleme hatten, überhaupt nicht reden.

In der Reformationszeit ändert sich die Stellung der Frau. Nach Luthers Bibelinterpretation hatten alle jungen Frauen die Pflicht, zu heiraten und Kinder zu gebären. Es gab kein Verständnis mehr für das Leben in den Klöstern und folglich auch keine Möglichkeit für die Frauen schriftstellerisch aktiv zu sein. In der Gesellschaft übernahm die Frau die Rolle als Hausfrau, Gattin und Mutter. Autorin zu sein, galt nun als Verstoß gegen die Bestimmung der Frau.

Das 17. Jahrhundert brachte eine Veränderung mit sich, im Sinne dass viele Dichterinnen zu bestimmten Anlässen, z. B. zu Hochzeiten, Taufen, Geburtstagen, verschiedenen Festen Gelegenheitsdichtungen schrieben. Da ihnen der Zugang zu öffentlichen Bildungsinstitutionen verboten wurde, begründeten sie ihre Schreibtätigkeit nicht aufgrund ihres Talents oder ihrer Berufung, sondern nur um die Zeit zu vertreiben. Die Frau beachtete ihre Rolle als Hausfrau, Gattin und Mutter, das Bewusstsein als Autorin fehlte völlig in dieser Zeit. Ausserdem wurden ihre Werke aufgrund ihrer Geschlechtszugehörigkeit oft kritisiert, so dass das Selbstbewusstsein als schreibende Frau sich nicht entwickeln konnte.

In der Romantik führten die Frauen rege Briefwechsel, die das gesellschaftliche Leben ihrer Zeit widerspiegelten. Der Brief war für die Frauen "die einzig erlaubte Form der Selbstaussprache in einem halböffentlichen, durch die gesellschaftliche Konvention geschützten Raum".<sup>1</sup> Die schriftstellerische Tätigkeit durften die Frauen nur mit der Bestimmung als Hausfrau und Gattin üben, Tatsache, die ihrer Schriftstellerei, wenn man ihre ehelichen und hausfraulichen Pflichten berücksichtigt, nur schaden sollten. Deshalb blieben viele Frauen eine Zeit lang völlig im Schatten ihrer Männer, wie die Frauen der Brüder Schlegel oder Mary Shelley, oder sie schrieben anonym oder unter einem männlichen Pseudonym. In Großbritannien und in Frankreich schrieben anonym oder unter einem männlichen Pseudonym George Eliot und George Sand. Zur Zeit des poetischen Realismus beobachtet man bei Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach trotz ihrer aristokratischen Herkunft eine gesellschaftliche, politische Kritik. Diese Situation führte allmählich zu Identitätskonflikten und bewirkte Klagen der Frauen über ihre Geschlechtszugehörigkeit und das Fehlen der Anerkennung ihrer Gleichwertigkeit im Literaturbetrieb. Auch keine Entwicklung des weiblichen Selbstbewusstseins war in dieser Zeit festzustellen.

Gegen Ende des 19. Jahrhunderts fand die Aktualisierung der Frauenproblematik statt und viele Autorinnen nahmen in ihren Büchern Stellung zur Rolle der Frau in der Gesellschaft. Es entstand eine politisch-sozial engagierte Lyrik, in der die Autorinnen die Arbeitswelt darstellten und die Verbesserung der weiblichen Arbeitsbedingungen und menschliche und politische Gleichberechtigung der Frau forderten. Es ist auffallend, dass neben der Zunahme frauenrechtlich engagierter Lyrik auch die Tendenz zur Autobiographie erscheint. Tagebücher, Familienchroniken, Memoiren, Ichromane aber auch briefliche

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<sup>1</sup> Wolfgang Beutin u.a., *Deutsche Literaturgeschichte von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart*, 5. überarb. Aufl. Metzler Verlag, Stuttgart 1994, S. 182.

Mitteilungen sind häufige Textsorten. Wenn man berücksichtigt, dass die Autobiographie im engen Zusammenhang mit der Darstellung des geistig-seelischen Entwicklungsprozesses des Individuums stand, so kann man bemerken, dass diese literarische Darstellung an der Vorstellung des Mannes orientiert war. Wenn die Schriftstellerinnen bis jetzt keine Autobiographien verfassen durften, konnten sie nun über ihre seelischen Zustände berichten.

Dadurch beabsichtigten sie "Selbstreflexionen bei den Leserinnen anzuregen und diese zur Nachahmung des eigenen Beispiels der Selbstfindung zu ermutigen".<sup>1</sup>

Eine aufmerksame Untersuchung der weiblichen und männlichen Autobiographien lie einige Unterschiede feststellen. Wenn in den männlichen Autobiographien die Beziehung zwischen dem Ich und der Welt im Vordergrund steht, dann befindet sich das Problem der Geschlechtsidentität in den weiblichen Autobiographien im Mittelpunkt. Das führt zum Gedanken, dass die Frauen über die Entwicklung eines neuen Selbstbewusstseins der Frau zum Schreiben und zur Veröffentlichung ihrer Biographie kamen. Viele berufstätige Frauen verfassten ihre Biographien, denn sie wollten durch ihre Erfahrungen ein Beispiel geben und die Frauen zu politischen Aktivitäten anregen.

Obwohl die neuen literarischen Produktionen der schreibenden Frauen die beruflichen Anforderungen brachten, orientierten sie sich weiterhin an traditionellen weiblichen Werten, wie Liebe, Hingabe, Fürsorge und Aufopferung.<sup>2</sup>

Die Zeit des Nationalsozialismus unterbrach das Bestreben schreibender Frauen, die Benachteiligung von Frauen aufgrund ihrer Geschlechtszugehörigkeit zu enthüllen. Die Frauenvereine wurden in der NS-Frauenschaft aufgelöst, weil sie sich um die Propaganda eines Frauenbilds bemühte, in dem das Dasein der Frau auf Privatheit, Mütterlichkeit und Familienleben reduziert wurde.

In den 50er und 60er Jahren tauchte eine Reihe von bekannten Autorinnen auf, zu denen Marie Luise Kaschnitz, Luise Rinser, Elisabeth Langgässer, später Ingeborg Bachmann, Christa Wolf u.a. gezählt werden. Die Thematik ihrer Werke umfasste Aspekte des alltäglichen Lebens, aber auch die Kritik an der sozialpolitischen Situation der Nachkriegsjahre.

In den 70er Jahren stellte man eine Tendenzwende zum Alltäglichen, Selbsterlebten und Intimen fest.<sup>3</sup> Es handelte sich nun zum großen Teil um Erfahrungsberichte aus dem weiblichen Alltag, in denen Gestalten, meistens Frauen auf der Suche ihrer Identität waren. Viele Autorinnen, darunter Karin Struck, Verena Stefan, Margot Schröder, Brigitte Schwaiger, Elfriede Jelinek, u.a. stellten in ihren Werken die Auseinandersetzung mit der Frauensituation und die Entwicklung der weiblichen Identität dar. Sie wehrten sich gegen die Diskriminierung der Frau und gegen Verschweigen weiblicher Sexualität. Die Grundstimmung war meist schwermütig, erwartungslos, oft waren

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<sup>1</sup> Gabrielle Schneider, „Arbeiten und nicht müde werden“. In Karin Tebben (Hrsg.): *Beruf: Schriftstellerin. Schreibende Frauen im 18. und 19. Jahrhundert*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998, S. 196.

<sup>2</sup> Heide Soltau, „Die Anstrengungen des Aufbruchs. Romanautorinnen und ihre Heldinnen in der Weimarer Zeit“. In: Gisela Brinker-Gabler (Hrsg.): *Deutsche Literatur von Frauen*, Bd II, München: Beck, 1988, S. 222 ff.

<sup>3</sup> Wolfgang Rath, „Romane und Erzählungen der siebziger bis neunziger Jahre (BRD)“. In: Horst A. Glaser (Hrsg.): *Deutsche Literatur zwischen 1945 und 1995*, Bern; Stuttgart; Wien: Verlag Paul Haupt, 1997, S. 309.

Verschweigerungen das Zentralthema der Bücher. Nur selten konnte man eine selbstbewusste, fröhliche Einstellung und das Streben nach der Freiheit bemerken. Die Literatur dieser Zeit wurde als Frauenliteratur bezeichnet und war im Kontext gesellschaftspolitischer Entwicklungen zu betrachten.

Eine wichtige Rolle im Entwicklungsprozess weiblichen Selbstbewusstseins spielte die Frauenbewegung Ende der 60er Jahre, die im Zusammenhang mit der Studentenbewegung entstand und an der sowohl männliche als auch weibliche Studenten ohne besondere Beachtung des Geschlechts teilnahmen. Die Studentenbewegung forderte die Abschaffung autoritärer Strukturen in der Gesellschaft und an den Universitäten eine Liberalisierung des Erziehungswesens. Auch die Frauenbewegung leistete einen wichtigen Beitrag im Kampf um die Emanzipation der Frauen. Die Diskriminierung der Frau, die sexuelle Ausbeutung, die Abtreibungsbeschränkungen sind Schlüsselwörter für die Frauenbewegung. Viele Frauen traten für die Abschaffung der Frauenunterdrückung in der Gesellschaft und ihre Anerkennung besonders in der Privatsphäre ein, wo sie oft mit der Entfremdung und der Unterdrückung konfrontiert waren. Die Frauenbewegung kämpfte einerseits um einen Strukturwandel in der Gesellschaft, der die Verbesserung der Lebensbedingungen und der menschlichen Beziehungen bringen sollte und andererseits trat sie für die Verbesserung der Situation relativ privilegierter Frauen ein. Man konnte in kurzer Zeit auch die Folgen dieser Zielsetzungen der Frauenbewegung spüren. Man stellte eine Zunahme der Bücher fest, in denen die Autorinnen zeigten, dass die weiblichen Bedürfnisse und Interesse in der vorhandenen Gesellschaft oft kaum erfüllt werden konnten und die Rollenbilder für junge Frauen eine Verhinderung in der Entfaltung ihrer Persönlichkeit bedeuteten. Simone de Beauvoirs *Das andere Geschlecht* (1949) vertritt zwei Theorien: "in einer patriarchalischen Gesellschaft sei die Frau das andere, der Mann aber das Maß aller Dinge; Weiblichkeit sei nicht angeboren, sondern werde gemacht."<sup>1</sup> Weitere Werke, die sich mit diesem Thema befassen, sind Germaine Greers *Der weibliche Eunuch* (1970), Kate Millets *Sexus und Herrschaft* (1971), Alice Schwarzers *Der kleine Unterschied* (1975) und Marie-Louise Janssen-Jurreits *Sexismus* (1976).

In der Frauenliteratur der 70er Jahre kann man von einer neuen "Gefühlskultur" sprechen, die deutliche Merkmale aufweist: Emotionalität, Subjektivität, Innerlichkeit, Sinnlichkeit und Natürlichkeit. Die Veränderung der gesellschaftlichen Lebensumstände beeinflusste die Entwicklung der weiblichen Persönlichkeit und somit trug sie zur Entstehung eines neuen Selbstbewusstseins der Frauen bei.

Eine wichtige Vertreterin der Frauenliteratur der 70er Jahre war Brigitte Schwaiger, deren Erstlingswerk *Wie kommt das Salz ins Meer* zu den meistverkauften und meistgelesenen Büchern im deutschsprachigen Raum gehört. Das Buch erschien 1977, als es mit der politischen Öffnung der Kreisky-Ära plötzlich möglich wurde, von Alltagswelten und Alltagserfahrungen mit emanzipatorischem Anspruch zu erzählen. Der Erfolg dieses Buchs ist auf die Behandlung der Frauenthematik zur Zeit des Feminismus in den 70er Jahren, aber auch auf die autobiographische und dokumentarische Form des Romans zurückzuführen. Eine gründliche Analyse des Buchs lässt zur Schlussfolgerung kommen, dass der Roman zahlreiche autobiographische Züge der Autorin enthält.

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<sup>1</sup> Simone de Beauvoir, *Das andere Geschlecht*, Rowohlt Verlag: Hamburg, 1951.

Brigitte Schwaiger erzählt in diesem Roman über das Scheitern ihrer Ehe und stellt eigene individuelle Sehnsüchte, Ängste und Enttäuschungen dar, mit denen junge Frauen täglich konfrontiert sind.

Obwohl die Autorin sich gegen die starren Normen wendet, die das Dasein des Individuums in der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft beschränken, beginnt sie den Roman mit dem Stichwort "Gutbürgerlich", um das Milieu des wohlhabenden Bürgertums zu veranschaulichen, wo die Handlung des Romans sich abspielt und die Ich-Erzählerin aufgewachsen ist. Für die ganze Familie ist eine "gutbürgerliche" Familie, die wichtigste Sache. Der Vater der Ich-Erzählerin war ein bekannter Arzt in der Kleinstadt und dadurch war auch die Familie sehr beliebt und angesehen. Ihre Mutter war Hausfrau. Immer wenn sie mit ihrer Mutter auf Besuch ging, wurden sie gut empfangen, weil sie zum Vater gehörten, der in der Stadt angesehen war: "Es waren ärmere Menschen, die sofort erkannten, dass es eine Ehre war, Mutter und mich empfangen zu dürfen, weil wir zu Vater gehörten und der Vater war der wichtigste Mann in der Stadt."<sup>1</sup>

Die Familie vermittelt der jungen Frau ein "typisch weibliches" Rollenbild. Der Grotmutter, einer konservativen und traditionsbewussten Frau ist der gute Ruf der Familie besonders wichtig. Sie ist der Meinung, dass eine anständige und vernünftige Frau die Führung eines starken Mannes benötigt. Auch die Mutter, die ihre Tochter nicht unterstützt, berücksichtigt die patriarchalischen gesellschaftlichen Normen: "Das gehört sich einfach so, und nicht anders!"<sup>2</sup>

Über den Namen und die gesellschaftliche Position des Vaters bekommt die junge Frau ihre Identität und ein Sicherheitsgefühl. Sie fühlt sich immer geschützt und in Geborgenheit.

In Wien, als Studentin leidet sie oft unter Identitätslosigkeit, weil der Vater fehlt und niemand ihren Vater kennt. In der Großstadt Wien fühlt sich die Ich-Erzählerin anonym, einsam und verloren: "Ich war nicht mehr ich, nur noch irgendeine, ich war eine unter so vielen, das schmerzte."<sup>3</sup> Dieser Satz beweist, dass die Identität der Ich-Erzählerin ganz von dem Namen ihres Vaters abhängig war.

Kurz vor der Heirat ist sie unsicher. Aber ihr zukünftiger Ehemann nimmt ihren Zweifel nicht ernst. Auch die Familie zwingt sie zu Heirat. Trotz Widerwillen heiratet sie Rolf, einen angesehenen Mann in der Gesellschaft. Er vertritt "gutbürgerliche" Werte, hat einen angesehenen Beruf, er ist Diplomingenieur und verspricht ein "gutbürgerliches" Leben. Weder vor der Heirat noch nach der Heirat hat die junge Frau keine Erwartungen von ihrem Leben. Sie kennt Rolf schon seit der Studienzeit. Bevor sie ihn heiratet, bricht sie ihr Studium (Germanistik) ab, um die neue Rolle als Ehefrau zu übernehmen. Bald stellt sie fest, dass eine andere Aufgabe in ihrer gutbürgerlichen Ehe auf sie wartet. Erst jetzt nimmt sie die traurige Realität wahr. Sie muss sich um ihren Mann und um den Haushalt kümmern, sie muss ihren Mann zu verschiedenen Anlässen begleiten und Kinder gebären.

Das Zusammenleben scheint von außen gesehen ziemlich harmonisch zu sein, doch in Wirklichkeit bleibt die Beziehung oberflächlich. Die Erwartungen und die Interessen der beiden Partner sind unterschiedlich. Sie bemüht sich eine

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<sup>1</sup> Brigitte Schwaiger, *Wie kommt das Salz ins Meer*, Rowohlt Verlag: Wien / Hamburg, 1977, S.30.

<sup>2</sup> Idem, S. 43.

<sup>3</sup> Idem, S. 31.

gute Hausfrau zu sein, doch sie fühlt sich einsam und unverstanden, ohne Identität. Oft weint sie und ist ganz unglücklich. In ihrem Pass steht kein Name, nur Hausfrau und einige Adjektive, die über ihre neue Identität sprechen: schlampig, ungerecht, undankbar, untüchtig, unrealistisch, unfroh, unzufrieden, faul, frech. Es sind Wörter, die eine negative Konnotation haben und die Unterschätzung der Frau von ihrem Mann ausdrücken.<sup>1</sup>

Nach der Heirat mit Rolf ist sie während der ganzen Geschichte auf der Suche nach sich selbst, nach einer eigenen Identität. Durch die Heirat mit Rolf bekommt sie eine neue Identität, weil er ihr den sozialen Status und Geborgenheit anbieten kann. Man kann feststellen, dass die Ich-Erzählerin ihre Identität durch männliche Zuweisung bekommt, zuerst als Tochter des bekannten Arztes und dann als Gattin des angesehenen Diplomingenieurs.

Obwohl die Ich-Erzählerin intelligent ist, kann sie in dieser Ehe keine gleichberechtigte Partnerin sein, solange der Mann die Rolle des Ernähers und Erziehers übernimmt: "Er hat recht, er bringt das Geld,"<sup>2</sup> oder "Denk nicht immer an deine blöde Kindheit, befa dich mit der Gegenwart, werde endlich erwachsen (...). Das bringe ich dir schon bei."<sup>3</sup> Die Ehe wird von der jungen Frau als die Fortsetzung des Verhältnisses Vater-Kind betrachtet. In der patriarchalisch orientierten Gesellschaft übernimmt die Frau eine untergeordnete Rolle und wird zu Objekt ihres Mannes reduziert. Dadurch stärkt der Mann seine Machtposition.<sup>4</sup>

Die Ich-Erzählerin darf ihre eigene Person nicht zeigen, denn ihr Mann schreibt ihr genau vor, wie sie sich in der Öffentlichkeit verhalten soll, was sie anziehen soll, wer ihre Freunde und Freundinnen sein dürfen: "(...) du sagst ja selbst, dass du dich langweilst, ruf Hilde an, sie soll dich beraten, Hilde wäre eine Freundin für dich, befreunde dich mit den Frauen meiner Freunde!"<sup>5</sup>

Rolf spielt den Mann im Haus, er hält sich fest an alle gesellschaftlichen Regeln. Er meint, die Frau braucht nicht zu arbeiten, wenn nur etwas Weibliches.<sup>6</sup> Die Ich-Erzählerin versucht Schreibmaschinenschreiben zu lernen und bewirbt sich als Sekretärin, doch Rolf ist dagegen. Die junge Frau fragt sich dann: "Was gibt es noch für Berufe, bei denen die Frau die Chance hat, ohne aufzuhören, eine richtige Frau zu sein?"<sup>7</sup>

Für ihn ist die Frau nur zum Kochen, zum Putzen und Ordnung halten. Sie muss wissen, was die Tomaten kosten, wann die Tomatenzeit ist, auf den Markt gehen und die Preise und Angebote vergleichen, das Geld wirtschaften lernen.<sup>8</sup>

Rolf fühlt sich viel intelligenter und gesellschaftlicher als die Ich-Erzählerin. Als Albert und Hilde zu Besuch waren, sagte er ihr später, was sie gut und was sie schlecht gemacht hat. Seine kritischen Bemerkungen lassen die junge Frau spüren, wie unperfekt sie im Vergleich zu ihrem Mann war.

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<sup>1</sup> Idem, S. 33.

<sup>2</sup> Idem, S. 34.

<sup>3</sup> Idem, S. 29.

<sup>4</sup> Ulla Grandell, *Mein Vater, mein Vater, warum hast du mich verlassen? Männergestalten in deutschsprachiger Frauenliteratur 1973-1982*. Stockholm: Almquist & Wirksell International, 1987, S. 57.

<sup>5</sup> Brigitte Schwaiger, *Wie kommt das Salz ins Meer*, Rowohlt Verlag: Wien / Hamburg, 1977, S. 34.

<sup>6</sup> Idem, S. 39.

<sup>7</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>8</sup> Idem, S. 33-34.



Die Anschaffung des Hundes von Rolf verstärkt weiter seine Rolle als Erzieher. Scheinbar ist der Hund Blitz nur ein Kinderersatz, der seiner Frau Freude bereiten soll. Man stellt aber fest, dass Rolf über beide herrscht und das Sagen hat. Niemand darf ihm Widerstand leisten, weil er sehr streng ist und ihn nichts von seinen Überzeugungen abbringen kann. Rolf benutzt seine Erziehungsmethoden, auch wenn sie manchmal zu streng sind. Er schlägt den Hund, bis er gehorsam wird. Für die junge Frau ist der Hund ihr Schicksalsgenosse, sie identifiziert sich mit ihm und nach seinem Tod fühlt sie sich so verzweifelt, dass sie Selbstmordgedanken hat.

Die Ich-Erzählerin fühlt sich unglücklich und ist mit ihrem Leben unzufrieden. Sie denkt oft an ihre Kindheit zurück und erinnert sich mit Sehnsucht an jene Zeit als sie ihre Eltern auf einem Italienurlaub fragte: "Wie kommt das Salz ins Meer?" und der Vater antwortete: "Die Fischer fahren hinaus (...), und sie haben Pakete, und sie streuen das Salz vorsichtig in die Wellen."<sup>1</sup> Diese Kindheitsgedanken beweisen, dass sie noch nicht unreif war. Ihr fehlte der geschützte Raum ihrer Kindheit, wo sie als Tochter des angesehenen Arztes verwöhnt war.

Die Ich-Erzählerin hat keine Bezugsperson mit der sie über ihre Probleme sprechen kann. Sie besucht oft Karl, einen Jugendfreund, der auch Anpassungsschwierigkeiten hat. Der kann ihr wegen seiner eigenen Probleme auch nicht helfen. Ihre Gespräche mit Karl haben als Schwerpunkt die Kritik an der verlogenen Gesellschaft, an den Missständen, die die Entfaltungsmöglichkeiten des Individuums beschränken. Die moderne Massengesellschaft bringt ein Schwinden des Persönlichen mit sich, das ein öffentliches und individuelles Bekennen von privaten Gefühlen verhindert. Sowohl Rolf als auch die Familie der Ich-Erzählerin wollen keine Beziehung zu Karl pflegen.

Die junge Frau vermisst bei ihrem Mann die Gefühle wie z.B.: die Nähe, die Wärme, die Zuneigung und die Liebe. Anstelle dieser Gefühle empfindet sie eine Zurückhaltung in den Äußerungen seiner Gefühle. Desillusioniert denkt sie oft an die Leidenschaftslosigkeit in ihrer Ehe und an ihre Einsamkeit und versteht, dass es keinen Ausweg gibt. Trotzdem beginnt sie das Verhältnis mit Albert. Aber der liebt sie auch nicht und ist auch nicht bereit seine Frau, Hilde zu verlassen. Trotzdem ändert sich das Verhalten der Ich-Erzählerin im Laufe des Verhältnisses. Sie wird freundlicher und Rolf ist froh über die positive Änderung seiner Frau. Bald wird diese enttäuscht und fühlt sich ausgenutzt, wenn Albert sie zu einer Abtreibung zwingt. Die junge Frau sieht die beiden Männer als Mörder ihres Kindes und ihres Hundes und beginnt Angst vor Menschen zu haben. Albert selbst nimmt die Abtreibung vor und tötet sein eigenes Kind und Rolf tötet den Hund, der nur mit einem Auge sehen konnte, nachdem er ihn einmal auf der Jagd versehentlich geschossen hatte. Schließlich gesteht sie ihrem Mann Rolf ihre Untreue. Scheinbar bleibt Rolf ruhig, während es seiner Frau nach dem medizinischen Eingriff psychisch immer schlechter wird und häufig an Selbstmord denkt. Sie entschließt sich von Rolf scheiden zu lassen, obwohl ihre Familie empört und enttäuscht darüber ist und sie letztendlich ein ganz vertrautes Liebesgefühl für Rolf spürt.

Unter Berücksichtigung der gesellschaftlichen Rollenfunktionen wird die bürgerliche Ehe fragwürdig. In der patriarchalisch orientierten Gesellschaft

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<sup>1</sup> Idem, S. 29.

entwickelt sich ein typisches Frauenbild. Die Frau bleibt dem Mann unterordnet und hat keine Möglichkeit ihre eigene Persönlichkeit zu entfalten und in der Ehe eine gleichberechtigte Partnerin zu werden. Die patriarchalische Institution der Ehe verhindert die individuelle Entwicklung und auch die menschlichen Gefühle. Infolge der Unterdrückung bleibt die Frau nur ein Objekt in den Händen des Mannes, die die Liebe, die Wärme und die Zuneigung nicht kennen und ausdrücken darf. In der patriarchalischen Gesellschaft sind die Geschlechterrollen klar definiert. Leider werden sowohl die Männer als auch die Frauen zu Opfer der gesellschaftlichen Zwänge, die sie von ihren Gefühlen entfremden und ihnen keine Identität mehr sichern.

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## **PERCEPTIONS AND REFLECTIONS OF AND ON WORLD WAR II IN PENELOPE LIVELY'S "MOON TIGER"**

**Amalia M R ESCU\***

***Abstract:** The paper explores the way in which World War II is perceived and reflected by some characters in Penelope Lively's novel "Moon Tiger". Thus, we analyse the perceptions of Claudia Hampton, a historian and war correspondent, and of Tom Southern, a tank officer, and the reflections of the same characters and of Jasper, a TV mogul at the time of the reflection. We shall point out the fact that similar positions engender similar perceptions and reflections.*

***Keywords:** perception, reflection, war.*

A historian turned into a novel writer, Penelope Lively deals in her works with human relations, but also with

the way the past affects both places and people in the present. By juxtaposing collective and individual memory – for instance by looking at history from different points of view – she shows the reader that history is not static but offers various possibilities of interpretation. (Colton-Sonnenberg, 2007: 8).

Awarded the Booker Prize in 1987, *Moon Tiger* is a historiographic metafiction, characterized as Penelope Lively's own "history of the world in a novel of 202 pages, not closely printed." (Oatley, 1992: 367) One of the historical events that is seen and interpreted in various ways in the novel is World War II, which "haunts her work as the decisive event in the lives of many of her characters and of their culture". (Davies, Davies, 2011) Thus, we get to know the way in which the war is perceived by the main character and at times narrator, Claudia Hampton, a historian turned into a war correspondent, and by her great love Tom Southern, a tank officer, therefore a direct participant in it. The perceptions are reflected by the same characters, but also by Jasper, Claudia's occasional partner and the father of her daughter, a TV mogul at the time of the reflection. Moreover, we shall also examine Claudia's reflections on war.

Claudia's perceptions of the war are those of a woman in her early thirties. She experiences the war as a member of the Press Corps in Egypt, in Cairo and its whereabouts between 1941 and 1944. She is stringer for a Sunday newspaper and correspondent for one of the weeklies. It is not an easy job for a woman, as it is predominantly a male occupation and Claudia has to face problems both with editors in London and with her male colleagues in the Press Corps. She is one of the few representatives of her sex employed to do it. But she is also the best looking and is willing to get her charms into play in order to get what she wants. She is determined to do a good job and is not afraid of going close to the battlefield, to obtain information that she can publish.

In wartime Egypt, life seems to unfold on two levels: on the one hand, there is the war; on the other hand, there is "normal" life. The war is fought somewhere far, in the desert. To those in the town, and for some time for Claudia

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\* University of Pitesti, [liviuvamalia@yahoo.com](mailto:liviuvamalia@yahoo.com)

herself, it is something distant and exterior, represented only with the help of a map on the wall of the Press Room and various objects placed on it standing for the people and things involved. The representation connotes the idea that the war is colourful, orderly and simple, quite the opposite of what it actually is.

The map on the wall of the Press Room is decked out with little flags: red, green, yellow, blue, brown, white. Brigades and divisions make gay patterns upon the contours. The Press Officer's pointer moves among them, reducing everything to orderliness and elegance. Noise, smoke, heat, dust, flesh, blood and metal are gone; it is really all quite simple, a child could grasp it, a question of dispositions and manoeuvres, flanks and pincer movements, lines and boxes. (Lively, 1988: 129)

"Normal" life as experienced by Claudia during World War II is lived in Cairo. It is a kind of life in which entertainment seems to counteract the danger and death lurking nearby. Claudia's perception of it is marked by the image of flowers, by scents and perfume, by swims taken in the swimming pool at Gezira Sporting Club and drinks savoured near the water. It is a frenzy that is provoked precisely by the awareness of the fact that life can end at any moment. Claudia sees herself laughing immoderately, dancing, drinking and meeting lots of people: members of the Press Corps, soldiers on leave, attachés at the Embassy, important army officials, and the inhabitants of Cairo, professional businessmen, bankers or English teachers.

Occasionally, the two kinds of lives intersect, as the military men come on leaves, or as Claudia herself goes close to the front. She sees soldiers flitting "like medieval barons between the battlefield and the sybaritic excesses of the city." (Lively, 1988: 91) and makes an analogy between them and the Crusaders, perceiving this war as an echo of the other.

The closest Claudia gets to the war and to the reality it actually represents is when she spends three days in the desert in order to get material for her articles. It is there and then that she gets acquainted not only to the ugly side of things, but also to Tom Southern, a man through which she will come to get a more profound view of the war. He is the one who will become the love of her life and, as he is a combatant, he will cause her to see the war no longer as an external fact, but as something that affects her directly. Up until then, the Front had appeared to Claudia as an "elusive shifting goal: a concept rather than a place." (Lively, 1988: 92) Afterwards,

The war, she realizes, has become something quite different. It is no longer prowling on the perimeter, like some large, unpredictable animal that she is safely watching from afar, whose doings are of scientific interest. It has come right up close and is howling at her bedroom door; the shiver it provokes is the atavistic shiver of childhood. She is afraid, not for herself but with that indistinct cosmic fear of long ago. (Lively, 1988: 117)

Accompanied by Tom, Claudia sees the war as a real thing, not merely a representation on a wall. And the real thing is not at all colourful, nice and orderly. The grimmest image of the war seen through Claudia's eyes, perceived by her directly does involve colour, but it is the colour of death. It is the image of the wreckage of a car that had hit a mine and of two wounded men. They are young. There is blood all over the place and insects everywhere.

The man is lying face down. His hair is fair. His tin hat lies beside him, part of his head is in black bloody shreds, the sand too is blackened, one leg has no foot. Flies crawl in glittery masses. As she looks at all this she hears from the other side of the smashed car a noise. She steps round to see and there is another shattered body, but this body moves. [...] One of his eyes is a purple pulpy mess, the sand under him is dark black, his trousers have been ripped half from him and in the flesh of one thigh is a red hole into which you could put your fist. From it there crawls a line of ants. (Lively, 1988: 98-99)

Though people fight over the desert, the desert remains immune to their struggles.

This is the area of last week's enemy advance and subsequent retreat. This thousand square miles of emptiness has been wrestled over for five days and nights; it has exacted the lives of several hundred men. And it is untouched, thinks Claudia. Already the sand is starting to digest the broken vehicles, the petrol cans, the tangles of wire; a few more storms and they will sink beneath it. In a few years' time they will have vanished. She watches Tom Southern pore over his maps; these scribbles too are arbitrary – the sand has no boundaries, no frontiers, no perimeters. (Lively, 1988: 96)

Equally immune to the war going on at their doorstep are the Egyptians. "Those of them with sufficient information, leisure and interest watched the progress of the desert war with detachment; when Rommel seemed unstoppable notices appeared in shop windows saying 'German officers welcome here'." (Lively, 1988: 116) Years later, Claudia reflects that "When Egyptians speak of the war they mean the Israeli war, not ours – which wasn't after all anything to do with them anyway." (*ibidem*) Egypt was at the time under British control, though independent, and it was invaded by the Italians in 1940 as a consequence of the attack of the English based in Egypt on the Italian positions in Libya. The Germans invaded it in 1941.

The desert appears as a "tract of sand that is both empty and populous" (Lively, 1988: 96). There are "scores of vehicles" (*ibidem*): motor-cycles, trucks, cars, lorries, tanks, ambulances, jeeps; shacks, shelters, holes in the ground in which men live; the place is full of flies. The images are visual (at night, Claudia sees the light of the stars, but also of searchlights and flames), but also auditory (in the Press Tent near the front line she hears the noise made by the typewriter). At one point she even gets to see the "enemy" – "a lot of down-and-out Italian waiters, average age about twenty-one." (*ibidem*) A Company Headquarters appears as the "centre of civilization" (Lively, 1988: 98).

At one point, they stop in what had been once a tiny seaside settlement. The houses, the café are ruined, but everywhere there are flowers that had sprung amid the tents and the air is fragrant. Nature has its own way, covering the disaster made by people.

After this experience and her meeting Tom, Claudia's life will again unfold on two levels: the days when he is on leave and comes to stay with her and the days that she spends alone, waiting to hear from him. The days she spends without him unfold in rumours, talks of pushes and retreats, arrivals of generals and diplomats. She hangs around in corridors waiting to get the chance to talk to various people or sits "with ears pricked" (Lively, 1988: 105) in various places in the hope of getting some useful information. They seem to be periods when she desperately looks for something to do, something to fill her time with until his return. At one point she tries to get herself another trip to the desert "not because I

would be anywhere near him but because I wanted to experience what it was he saw and heard and felt.” (Lively, 1988: 118) She does not manage, being told that the desert is no place for women. The days spent with Tom abound in colours and perfumes. They spend them at the Club, sitting beside the swimming pool savouring their drinks and the smell of Nivea sun cream, then swimming. In the evening they have dinner, then walk beside the Nile, or visit the Great Pyramid and the centre of commerce near it. They see the streets of old Cairo, full of the smell of animals, humans, kerosene, coffee, roast sweetcorn and frying oil. When she is with Tom, Egypt appears to her as a country of bright colours: gold, pink, turquoise (At night, the bridges on the Nile “wear necklaces of coloured lights” and the house-boats are “festooned with gold”. - Lively, 1988: 111); of pleasant sounds: ice clinking in glasses, the slap of the suffragis’ slippers on the stone of the hotel terrace; of heat and dust and smells. She experiences it both as herself and through his eyes, the eyes of a man who might see it for the last time. Her perceptions demonstrate Westphal’s concept of “polysensoriality”, the idea that space is not perceived only by vision, but by all senses. (apud Ager, 2014)

Tom’s perceptions of the war are those of a tank officer, a direct participant in it. His life unfolds on two levels as well: the war and the time spent with Claudia in Cairo. Obviously, he experiences the war in a different manner than Claudia. When she asks him what it is like out there he answers by offering a mixture of impressions, like when brainstorming, that suggest the idea that he has not given much thought to it. His actual perceptions will be given to her later, after the war is over and he is no longer alive, under the form of a diary kept by him and sent to his sister, and will be read by Claudia even much later, while she is on her own deathbed.

Tom’s perceptions seem to be a reflection of Claudia’s. Tom also perceives the war visually (the desert lifts around as a mine explodes), and auditorily (the squadron roars away; headphones whistle and crackle; there is the noise of the battle preparations, followed by the silence of getting no news and no orders; the noise of the repairs and of the enemy ammunition; the “battle noise that reverberates in the head long after it has ceased” - Lively, 1988: 197); the voices transmitting orders in a coded language, like a “ghost chorus” - *ibidem*).

The feeling he experiences most acutely is fear, more acute before the battle, not during it. The fear of being paralyzed with fear and of not being able to act properly, the “atavistic, primitive” (Lively, 1988: 201), impossible to control fear felt when the enemy gets nearer, the sick feeling experienced when the enemy thought dead comes to life and starts firing. On the other hand and at the other extreme, fear is counteracted by the equally irrational exhilaration felt when they have to pursue retreating enemies.

Sleep is also given attention in his diary: sleep in the middle of all the noise or after being in action, coming either as “a black pit of extinction” or as a slipping “just below the level of consciousness” (Lively, 1988: 197) with wild surrealistic dreams that exorcise the hell they went through.

In a manner similar to Claudia’s, Tom also notices the indifference of nature to their struggles, the neutrality of the desert that lives a life of its own nearby and the icy glitter of the stars on the night sky above.

Tom’s thinking also unfolds on two levels: the present, “with the tank, the men, the equipment, the CO, with what this man has said and that one has done, with the way a brother officer eats with his mouth open (and how in the middle of

all this one can be irritated by someone's table manners God only knows)" and the future, "all the things I intend to do still" (Lively, 1988: 204) together with the one he refers to in the diary as "C."

On the other hand, to Tom, Cairo is like "some sort of mad fairyland". (Lively, 1988: 107) While on the battlefield he had almost fought with a boy for a last can of water, now, at the Zoo, he sees gardeners watering the flowers and feels the smell of damp earth. Still, we do not have much of his perceptions of Cairo. We see him only very eager to spend his days there, with Claudia.

The reflections of and on the war appear when everything is over, when those involved in it, whether directly or indirectly, take their time to both reflect on what had happened and reflect it, i.e. show it to others. Though this would be the normal chronology – first the perceptions, then the reflections – , things are not recorded like this in the novel. The reflections do not follow the perceptions, as it would be logical in a chronological narration, but are mixed up with them. Actually, they are also difficult to separate. Still, we have been able to distinguish and will comment on several instances of such reflections.

Claudia's occur at the end of her life, as she awaits her death on a hospital bed. She considers then writing a history of the world, but what unfolds in her mind (as she is in no condition of writing) is actually a history of herself in which World War II seems to occupy an important place, as she returns to it constantly. That it actually occupies the most important place is not obvious until close to the end of the novel.

At the end of the war, she returns home and is waited for by her brother Gordon at the railway station. She is glowing. She wears an orange coat, a little feathered hat, expensive perfume. It is as if she were trying to hide her scars (she had lost Tom and their unborn child) behind a glamorous appearance. She manages to do that. Gordon considers her unscarred by the war. She does not contradict him and will never tell anybody what happened.

Looking back at the war, she comments:

I arrived in Egypt alone in 1940; I was alone when I left in 1944. When I look at those years I look at them alone. What happened there happens now only inside my head – no one else sees the same landscape, hears the same sounds, knows the sequence of events. There is another voice, but it is one that only I hear. Mine – ours – is the only evidence.

The only private evidence, that is. So far as public matters go – history – there is plenty. Most of it is in print now; all those accounts of which general comes out of it best, who had how many tanks, who advanced where at which point and why. I've read them all; they seem to have little to do with anything I remember. From time to time I quarrel with a fact – a name or a date; mostly they just don't seem relevant. [...] I was interested enough in relevance at the time – I had to get a story to file. (Lively, 1988: 70)

The first paragraph of the quotation is filled with regret, the regret of her being the only member of the couple who survived the war. The repetition of alone stresses the feeling. Besides, the paragraph advances the idea that, though the war was a public event, in the sense that it affected so many people, it was at the same time personal, in the sense that each person experienced it in his/ her own way. Claudia suggests that she herself had somebody with whom to share the experience, but that person is no longer here. Probably in an attempt to recover the

past, we may infer, she has read much about the war. But public history differs from personal one. She does not remember all facts – read or otherwise experienced – as she no longer considers them relevant. What she remembers are feelings, sensations, fragments of experiences that were important for them personally. She admits, however, that at the moment of the war she had a different view on things. The same idea appears in the following quotation:

Wars are fought by children. Conceived by their mad demonic elders and fought by boys. I say that now, caught out in surprise at how young people are, forgetting that it is not they who are young but I who am old. [...] The rest of us grow old and tell each other what really happened; they, of course, will never know, just as they never knew at the time. The files of newspaper libraries are stuffed with these baby-faces, grinning cheerfully from the decks of troop-ships, from train windows, from stretchers. In pursuit of truth and facts, in the exercise of my craft, I have looked at them and thought of the slipperiness of whatever fact or truth it is that makes these faces change with the eyes that view them. It was not boys I saw in 1941.

Nor the grey of old newsprint. In the mind's eye is the blazing technicolour of a hot country, so that I seem to see it still squinting against the glare, dazzled by that relentless sun, moving in landscapes that shimmered in the heat haze. (Lively, 1988: 104)

As we can notice, her perception has changed with the passage of time. The soldiers whom she had seen as men appear to her now as mere boys. Moreover, she also sees them now as the pawns of the elders, their tools only. Everything appears as a black and white picture, as were the photographs taken at the time. Still, back in the 1940's, things were not perceived in grey, as the colour of the faded ink, but in blazing colours.

Claudia also reflects on the language of war, on the words that mirror the reality of those days. On the one hand, the numbers representing the cruel facts behind the term “war”:

the million dead of Leningrad, the three million labour slaves from Belorussia and the Ukraine, the two million prisoners of Kiev, the quarter million maimed by frostbite [...] the twenty degrees below zero temperatures of the winter of 1941; [...] the thirty destroyed cities, the seven million slaughtered horses, the seventeen million cattle, the twenty million pigs (Lively, 1988: 66- 67),

the fate of the animals paralleling that of men. On the other hand, another type of language, “that lunatic language that lays a smokescreen of fantasy” (Lively, 1988: 67), the language of the code names:

Operations Snowdrop, Hyacinth, Daffodil and Tulip dancing feyly towards Tobruk. [...] the laconic chat about Matildas and Honeys, coy disguise for several tons of mobile death-dealing metal, and the amiable euphemism whereby such things when hit did not explode (roasting alive their crew) but ‘brewed up’. (Lively, 1988: 67)

The raw reality evident from the numbers is euphemized in these code names. They are suggestive of nice, delicate things (flowers, women), not normally associated with wars. They too seemed normal to Claudia at that time, though now they appear eccentric.

Tom reflects the war and on it in the answer given to Claudia:



It's so many different things. Boring, uncomfortable, terrifying, exhilarating. In rapid succession. Pretty well impossible to convey. [...] It's like the whole of life in a single appalling concentration. It does lunatic things with time. An hour can seem like a day or a day like an hour. When you're flung from one state of mind to another with such speed the physical world takes on an extraordinary clarity. [...] An astonishing amount of piety goes on out here, you'd be surprised. The Lord is frequently invoked. He's on our side, by the way, you'll be glad to hear – or at least it's taken for granted that he is. (Lively, 1988: 101-102)

He assumes that they are going to win the war

Not because of the Lord's intervention or because justice will prevail but because in the last resort we have greater resources. Wars have little to do with justice. Or valour or sacrifice or the other things traditionally associated with them. That's one thing I hadn't quite realized. War has been much misrepresented, believe me. It's had a disgracefully good press. I hope you and your friends are doing something to put that right. (Lively, 1988: 102-103)

But as he imagines her unsatisfied with this description, he starts keeping the diary, which can also be seen as his reflection of the war. As far as his reflections on the war are concerned, he intends to do that later, after the war is over, starting from the diary and with Claudia's help. Thus, he hopes to make sense of it some day. He does not get to do it, however, as the war claims his life. Claudia herself, though she has reflected a lot on the war, cannot make sense of it either. But reading Tom's diary, she understands her need of being connected with other people, instead of being an isolated independent self as she has tried to all her life. Only after this, can she die in peace.

As far as the representation of war is concerned, Tom makes the distinction between chroniclers and reporters. The chroniclers are not in the middle of it, therefore they concentrate on big words only, like justice or valour. And on statistics, a word that includes those who fight in the war, a position in which he sees himself as well. Another distinction that he makes is between reading history and being part of it. While he and Claudia can be included among the reporters and, unfortunately, statistics, Jasper belongs to the other side, being what Tom called a "chronicler".

Jasper "had a brilliant war as the youngest member of Churchill's staff, and emerged from it ambitious, well-connected and opportunist." (Lively, 1988: 10) His view is not that of an (ex-) combatant, but that of a spectator and potential beneficiary. At the time of his reflection, Jasper is a TV mogul and the reflection itself is a lavish series presenting a dramatized history of World War II. "A fictional figure, a young officer, was followed in progress through various theatres of war, from the Balkans to the Far East, against a background of enacted scenes of history – Churchill's War Cabinet, D-Day, Yalta ..." (Lively, 1988: 49). The story is both a private and a public one, a mixture of fiction (filmed in colours) and reality (filmed in black and white). The fiction is produced with professional actors, while the reality is represented by clips of film shot during the war. What is paradoxical, however, is that it is the latter that looks unreal. The series is a much praised and discussed enterprise, the first of many projected similar productions, but Claudia dislikes it because it turns history into entertainment. Still, she herself

had no problem in doing the same, writing a book later turned into a film about people who had no personal connection to her, however, the Spaniards and the Aztecs.

It is a fact that different people have different perceptions of the same event. Still, Claudia's and Tom's perceptions of World War II do not differ much from one another. It is as if the two were a single person, with more or less a single mind. The differences in what concerns the reflections can be explained by the fact that one has come to live longer and to have more time to meditate on it than the other. Jasper, on the other hand, opposes them in his view of the war. Still, his reflection of it mirrors and is mirrored by Claudia's reflection of the war between the Spaniards and the Aztecs. Public history is seen in the same manner by the two "chroniclers". But when what is public history for some is private history for others there appear differences in both perceptions and reflections.

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## **WRITING OFF HORROR - FROM SENSATION AND PERCEPTION TO REFLECTION IN JODI PICOULT'S "THE STORYTELLER"**

**Cristina Mihaela NISTOR\***

***Abstract:** The paper represents an attempt to analyse and understand the mechanisms by which a text – in this case, Jodi Picoult's 2013 novel *The Storyteller* – has succeeded in capturing its readers, while discussing a topic that, for many, has become obsolete: the Holocaust. With all the TV documentaries talking about it and showing explicit pictures or footage, one would think that nothing new may be said about the subject of the Jews that were killed during the Second World War. Actually, it is quite interesting to notice that, in *The Storyteller*, the novelist tells the reader a (hi)story with at least one moral twist: can one forgive a killer on behalf of the victim? Is it possible to perceive life/ survival as punishment for one's war crimes? Page by page, *The Storyteller* becomes a way of self-purification and reflection for the many narrators in the novel; hoping to find their own happy ending, the narrators/ characters try to understand many sensations and perceptions about the self and the world – and not all are pleasant or good. That is why, having to analyse and make sense of all those issues, the paper cannot end with a definite conclusion; instead, it suggests the possibility of accepting reflection and the gesture of writing stories as an imperfect, but viable solution to horror.*

***Keywords:** horror, sensation, reflection.*

### **Introduction**

In literature, sensation, perception and reflection are instruments that help writers construct a world that challenges reality for readers who, in their turn, will resort to those same instruments in an effort to decode and reconstruct that special fictional world. Page by page and word by word, the text will (ideally, if well-constructed), lead readers to a dénouement that will satisfy all their artistic needs: they will be able to perceive the sentences that form the story, understand the meaning hidden behind the words, and, eventually, reflect upon the messages conveyed by the narrator.

In Jodi Picoult's novel *The Storyteller*, the writer ticks all the boxes with regard to artistic needs: she enables her readers to sense (even taste, sometimes) the words on almost all pages, to vividly perceive both the stories told by the multiple narrators of the novel and the history that is presented at a personal level, and, on top of all that, to reflect upon the solutions to the characters' problems. Whether describing a piece of pastry or a rancid vegetables soup, Picoult's writing gift makes her readers taste exactly that which is presented in the words of the text. That is why *The Storyteller* is such a rewarding read: no readers are left without their due portion of sensation or reflection, once they have fully perceived the text.

With all that in mind, I will try to touch upon the main points suggested by such a generous theme as the one presented in *The Storyteller*, the Holocaust, and demonstrate, in my paper, that the combination of sensations and perceptions one gets at a certain point will lead to choices that, when reflected upon later, seem

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\* Politehnica University of Bucharest, [cristinamnistor@yahoo.com](mailto:cristinamnistor@yahoo.com)

debatable or morally dubious. Baking, eating, writing, loving, punishing and killing people, dying – all these activities are as many reasons to make the narrator(s) and the readers ponder and wonder at humans' capacity to survive, love and hate.

### **Story, history, narrative**

The novel under scrutiny here is full of twists and turns, reminding readers that all things in life are multifaceted and debatable; although the main story-line seems simple enough for everybody to follow and understand, there are elements that contribute to *The Storyteller's* becoming a page-turner. In the analysis of the type of narrative, I have resorted to the theory proposed by Gerard Genette, whose definition takes into account the variables 'narrative level' and 'story'. He states that

If in every narrative we define the narrator's status both by its narrative level (extra- or intradiegetic) and by its relationship to the story (hetero- or intradiegetic), we can represent the four basic types of narrator's status as follows: (1) extradiegetic – heterodiegetic – paradigm: Homer, a narrator in the first degree who tells a story he is absent from; (2) extradiegetic – homodiegetic paradigm: Gil Blas, a narrator in the first degree who tells his own story; (3) intradiegetic – heterodiegetic – paradigm: Scheherazade, a narrator in the second degree who tells stories she is on the whole absent from; (4) intradiegetic – homodiegetic paradigm: Ulysses in Books IX-XII, a narrator in the second degree who tells his own story. (Genette, 1983: 248)

If we consider the types of the narrators' status in Picoult's novel, we will find *The Storyteller* very challenging, indeed; first of all, we have here a multitude of narrators who tell their own stories, in their own, particular ways and styles. Secondly, there are whole pages (or, sporadically, one page only) representing excerpts from a story written by one of the characters, and which is entirely fictional. All these texts are intertwined in the body of a narrative that pulsates with life and gives readers the impression of authentic feeling and drama. And, here, an introduction to the main story is in order.

In the small town of Westerbrook, 25-year-old Sage Singer works irregular, antisocial hours, for two reasons: she is a baker and she has a facial scar she is trying to hide. She goes to a grief group, in an effort to atone for her mortal sin: three years earlier, she had lost her mother<sup>1</sup> due to complications after a car accident that Sage herself had caused on the night of her graduation. That is the reason why she perceives her scar as "a map of where my life went wrong" (Picoult, 2013: 10), and why she tells everybody that her mother died of cancer. Another choice she feels was dictated by the scar and the guilt of having inadvertently killed her mother is that of her lover – a married man called Adam, whom she met at the funeral, in his capacity as the person in charge with burying her mother. Since she considers herself damaged goods, because of her scar and her life history, when she agrees to an affair with Adam, she keeps hearing the

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<sup>1</sup> Sage's father died when she was 19, leading to Sage's loss of interest in university studies; that is why Sage's mother moved in with her and helped her step by step, till she graduated, at 22.

“quiet whisper in her head: *Beggars can't be choosers; take what you can get; who else would ever love someone like you?*” (*ibidem*: 27).

At the group therapy, Sage befriends a nonagenarian, Josef Weber, who also goes to the bakery to have coffee and a roll; on one of these occasions, he leaves his “little black book” (*ibidem*: 24) behind, so Sage runs out into the storm to give it back to him; Sage wonders if that is his ‘Great American Novel’, but Josef looks startled at the idea of having it published. Instead, he remarks that “this is just a place to keep my thoughts. They get away from me, otherwise.”(Picoult, *op. cit.*: 24). Before getting on the bus, he “pats his pocket. “It’s important to remember,” he says” (*ibidem*: 25).

In a sense, we may say that *The Storyteller* is all about remembering and/ or letting go, punishment and/ or forgiveness, sin and/ or absolution, death and/ or survival. Mary DeAngelis, Sage’s employer and a former nun, describes Josef in warm colors, as “everyone’s adoptive, cuddly grandfather” (*ibidem*: 22), and “as close you can get to being canonized while you’re still alive” (*ibidem*: 22); still, she ironically adds a comment that will turn true in the end: “The worst he could do is talk you to death.” (*ibidem*: 22). And so it happens, shockingly, as Josef confesses something that will kill something in Sage – her innocence. Thus, readers find out soon enough that Josef is not what he seems, when he, all of a sudden, makes a strange request: that Sage help him die. After becoming fast friends and telling each other (as much as possible from) the stories of their lives, Sage and Josef come to this crucial point where he needs to persuade her to kill him, as he finds himself in the impossibility to die.

What is interesting is that Picoult thinks of a time and place that make that strange request even more challenging; thus, by accident, Sage bakes a loaf of bread that resembles Jesus, which brings the whole town and local television to Our Holy Bread, Mary’s bakery. Trying to find a quiet spot to avoid the crowd that marvel at the Jesus Loaf, Sage faces Josef on the stairs to the Monet garden, a place full of beautiful – and some poisonous – flowers. It is there that Josef makes his strange request while everyone is marveling about the Jesus Loaf: “I would like you to help me die” (*ibidem*: 50). Apparently, he cannot die – as if he were a vampire or a werewolf, or some other similar mythical creature, instead of a mere human being. He is trying to explain the difficulty he finds in dying: “This is God’s joke on me. He makes me so strong that I cannot die even when I want to.” (*ibidem*: 50). When Sage wonders at the – apparently insane – wish to take his own life, Josef admits the truth, “I *should* be dead, Sage. It’s what I deserve.” (*ibidem*: 51). While confessing to his crimes, Josef presses a picture in Sage’s palm: “in the picture, I see a man with the same widow’s peak, the same hooked nose, a ghosting of his features. He is dressed in the uniform of an SS guard, and he is smiling.” (*ibidem*: 51). When Sage protests at the strange request, “I don’t go around committing murder” (*ibidem*: 51), Josef makes a comment, revealing the truth, “Perhaps not [...] But I did.”(*ibidem*: 51).

What comes after that confession is the actual story which, in a few words, goes like that: Sage is horrified by the idea of having befriended a Nazi, as well as by that of ever contributing to his death, so she calls the police and is referred to the office of Human Rights and Special Prosecutions, where she meets Leo Stein. With his help, she unravels the mystery, discovers Josef Weber’s true identity as Reiner Hartmann, gets his confession on tape, and reconnects with her grandmother Minka. All that happens because Josef wishes not only to be killed/

helped to die by Sage Singer, but also to be forgiven by her. The answer to the question “why her?” is that she is a Jew – and the granddaughter of a Holocaust survivor. Picoult cannot resist the temptation to have Leo and Sage – both Jewish, by the way – fall in love with each other, while working the case against Josef. In the process of discovering the true story, both Josef and Minka, Sage’s grandmother, tell their versions of experiencing the war, and reflect on the way history influences people’s lives. Both war survivors die, in the end, and the dénouement is somewhat disappointing, with Sage fulfilling Josef’s wish, only to find out that she had killed the wrong Hartmann brother – Franz, not Reiner.

### **Families and their perceptions of life**

In the Acknowledgements to *The Storyteller*, Jodi Picoult thanks her Jewish parents for their help with the book, especially her mother, who found some Holocaust survivors within a day, and thus “paved the way for this book” (Picoult, *op. cit.*: xi). In fact, many of Picoult’s books are about families and crises within them, about members of one’s family who come to terms and find ways to communicate, in spite of their differences of opinion.

In the novel, readers find many families who shape their children’s behavior according to their own standards and social realities, taking into account factors such as social and financial status, nationality, health, and character. I will introduce you, very briefly, to the main two families in the novel, and their ideas about life.

In the Hartmanns’ family, as well as in most German families at that time, the perception of life is that of unfairness: in spite of saving up for so long, inflation ruined them all. In Germans’ view, the Jews, who invested well, were to be blamed for everything – so Hitler’s anti-Semitic seeds fell on fertile soil and gave fruit. In her book about abjection, Julia Kristeva writes about the hatred against Jews:

Anti-Semitism, for which there thus exists an object as phantasmatic and ambivalent as the Jew, is a kind of parareligious formation; it is the sociological thrill, flush with history, that believers and nonbelievers alike seek in order to experience abjection. One may suppose, consequently, that anti-Semitism will be the more violent as the social and/or symbolic code is found wanting in the face of developing abjection. That, at any rate, is the situation in our contemporary world [...] (Kristeva, 1982: 180)

Brutality is needed in order to uproot evil, so the perception of violence as a viable solution to poverty grows stronger in Hitler’s Germany. At one of the Hitler-Jugend meetings, the two Hartmann brothers fight against each other; after beating his own brother to a bloody pulp, Reiner is seen as the embodiment of the German future: “this is the face of bravery. This is what the future of Germany looks like.” (Picoult, *op. cit.*: 128). Reflecting upon the idea of brutality, Josef admits to have consciously signed a pact with the devil for the privileged position it offered: “I always knew what I was doing, and to whom I was doing it. I knew, very well. Because in those terrible, wonderful moments, I was the person everyone wanted to be.” (*ibidem*: 129)

The two German brothers seem to be very different from each other: Reiner is a brute, Franz an intellectual who helps his Jewish friend Arthur

Goldman with books, and carves a chess set with “pawns shaped like tiny unicorns, rooks fashioned into centaurs, a pair of Pegasus knights.” (*ibidem*: 41). When Sage sees the set, she notices that “the queen’s mermaid tail curls around its base; the head of the vampire king is tossed back, fangs bared.” (*ibidem*: 41); noticing her surprise, Josef (who, at the time, pretends to have been Reiner), chooses to remark, “My brother believed in all sorts of mythical creatures: pixies, dragons, werewolves, *honest men*.” (*ibidem*: 42). What is most interesting is that, because of Franz’s love of mythical creatures, Sage’s grandmother Minka, who writes a story about an *upior* (a Polish type of vampire) is saved by him from Auschwitz – “Anus Mundi – Asshole of the World” (*ibidem*: 179).

At this point, we need to learn about Minka’s family history and the connection she has with the Hartmanns. Pressured by Sage and Leo to tell her story, this Holocaust survivor introduces her audience to a world that senses and perceives reality in terms of food, love, hatred and blood – and hope. It is her words that help Sage imagine what it was like to be a Jew or a prisoner in the Second World War. Minka takes her audience back in time, in Poland, to her father’s bakery, where she spent her spare hours writing her story about an *upior* – a vampire that fed on parts of his victims – or daydreaming with Darija.

Because of her feelings for Her Bauer, a German native who taught at her school, she becomes proficient in German and, by the time she, her family and friends are relocated in the ghetto, cut from school and civilization, she is able to read, write and speak like a native. That is why she becomes a secretary for Herr Fassbinder, a German officer who, widowed and unable to have children of his own by the time of his wife’s death, called his young workers “*meine Kleiner*” – my little ones” (Picoult, *op. cit.*: 269) and tried to hire and save as many mothers with children as possible, once he learned about authorities’ plans to kill them. The perception Minka gets is that of a man who sees the person behind their nationality or race:

As I left that night, I started to cry [...] because when we were locking up the factory office in the dark, where no one else could see us, Herr Fassbinder had held the door open for me, as if I was still a young lady, and not just a Jew. (*ibidem*: 273)

Minka’s father tells her once that her name is short for Wilhelmina, “chosen protection” (*ibidem*: 232), which seems, somehow, to help her survive. Even though soldiers who “smelled like hatred.” (*ibidem*: 225) beat everybody in the café Minka and her date have met, she manages to escape. The same happens when she works for Herr Fassbinder, or when she finally gets deported to Auschwitz – but, those times, she is saved by her ability to speak and write in German.

In the end, everybody she loves dies, but she survives to tell her stories – one which has turned into history, the story of her survival, and the other, which is the story she had been writing since her happier days, in her father’s bakery, and which arouses the interest of the Auschwitz *Hauptscharführer*, Franz Hartmann. He takes Minka as his secretary, and gives her a pen and a leather notebook where she is required to write ten pages of her story every night. Since “a disciplined body is the prerequisite of an efficient gesture” (Foucault, 1991: 152), at Auschwitz, prisoners are disciplined by people, according to their rank – the element that dominates all others:

In discipline, the elements are interchangeable, since each is defined by the place it occupies in a series, and by the gap that separates it from the others. The unit is, therefore, neither the territory (unit of domination), nor the place (unit of residence), but the *rank* [...]. Discipline is an art of rank, a technique for the transformation of arrangements. (*ibidem*, 1991: 145-6)

In that awful place, Franz Hartmann is outranked by his brother, Reiner, now a *Schutzhaftlagerführer* – which will lead to Darija’s death and Minka’s being sent to another prisoner camp, Gross-Rosen. When, in the absence of her boss, Minka takes Darija to the *Hauptscharführer*’s office to get warm, they bump into the *Schutzhaftlagerführer*, who was stealing money from the safe. Caught in the act, Reiner shoots and kills Darija, but Minka is saved by the lucky arrival at the scene of the crime of the good brother, Franz. Still, outranked, the latter has to give the girl a severe beating and, afterwards, sends her away, saving her life a second time<sup>1</sup>.

### **Hunger, horror and death in real life and fiction**

In *The Storyteller*, everything may be judged and valued in terms of hunger; at some point, grandma Minka remarks that “there was a time when I could see God in a single crumb.” (Picoult, *op. cit.*: 71), then she tells her audience that, during the time spent in the ghetto, one boy who fancied her, Aron, once, gave Minka “a bit of his bread ration during lunch at school, which Darija said was virtually a proposal of marriage in these times.” (*ibidem*: 263). At one point in the history of her life, when she sees a piece of bread and jam on an officer’s plate, she touches it, sticks her finger in her mouth and starts thinking of all the things she and her family have loved and lost. More than that, she reflects on the meaning of the jam, which tops the sensorial and goes into the philosophical, “That jam tasted like a lazy summer day. Like freedom.” (*ibidem*: 267).

It is interesting to ponder on the choice of the names given to Minka’s granddaughters, since they are all names of spices: Pepper, Saffron, and Sage; in the latter’s case, her name proves to evoke both an herb that has medicinal powers and the idea of wisdom. Even though, understandably, during the war, people had a certain perception of life, in terms of the food they managed to get and eat, in Minka’s fiction, the *upior*’s hunger is a force that drives him mad. Still, as one of the characters says, “Hunger [...] has nothing to do with the belly and everything to do with the mind. (*ibidem*: 17); Minka reflects on the hunger theme herself, and comes to an amazing conclusion:

I had come to see, too, that all my characters and I were motivated by the same inspiration. Whether it was power they sought, or revenge, or love – well, those were all just different forms of hunger. The bigger the hole inside you, the more desperate you became to fill it. (*ibidem*: 248)

When describing horrors, the Holocaust survivor proves painfully aware of the fact that it is not the senses that are offended by the blood and gore perceived, but the heart and soul; thus, after seeing three people hanged from gallows for criticizing

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<sup>1</sup>The first time, hearing that secretaries and other privileged members of the personnel are to be removed and killed, Franz sends Minka to the hospital, though she is not ill, and takes her back after the danger has passed



Germans, she compares reality to the fiction she herself writes and declares herself defeated:

I thought of all the blood and guts in the horror story I was writing, of the *upior* eating the heart of a victim, and realized that none of it mattered. The shock value was not in the gore. It was the fact that a minute ago, this man was alive, and now, he wasn't. (*ibidem*: 236)

Actually, the French theorist Michel Foucault comes to the same conclusion in his study *Discipline and Punish*:

In the ceremonies of public execution, the main character was the people, whose real and immediate presence was required for the performance. [...] The aim was to make an example, not only by making people aware that the slightest offence was likely to be punished, but by arousing feelings of terror by the spectacle of power letting its anger fall upon the guilty person. (Foucault, *op. cit.*: 57-8)

The whole book – especially the part told by Minka – abounds in thoughts about horror and, death, guilt and survival. Coming to terms with horror is one of the prerequisites for survival, but the survivor knows from her own experience that “you could stop expecting the most awful thing to happen, because it already had.” (Picoult, *op. cit.*: 283).

In the face of real horror, Minka begins to unravel her own vampire story, as a means to help prisoners focus on something better than the world they perceive through their five senses; somehow, playing Scheherazade for the block becomes a reason to stick around for everyone. Fiction is worth surviving, the fictional storyteller believes, for the simple fact that, “sometimes all you need to live one more day is a reason to stick around” (Picoult, *op. cit.*: 330). Telling the story of the undying monster that falls in love with a mortal – and writing the mandatory ten pages a night for the *Hauptscharführer* – makes Minka a storyteller in her own right – that, and her own admission, “When I wrote, I felt untethered, impossibly free.” (*ibidem*: 324). Even if hope was slim, the girl who faced death in Auschwitz confesses to have believed in survival, in spite of the horror movie around her:

I was delusional enough to convince myself that as long as my story continued, so would my life. Yet even Scheherazade had run out of stories, after 1001 nights. [...] I only wanted the Allies to show up before I ran out of plot twists. (*ibidem*: 362)

There is a sentence that goes through all Minka's stories – real and fictional – as a mantra, gluing both (hi)stories, “My father trusted me with the details of his death, but in the end, I couldn't manage a single one.” (*ibidem*: 136). That turns true in both cases: Ania, the female character in Minka's fiction, is not able to prevent the *upior* from killing her father, no more than Minka can change the order that her father go left (to the gas chambers) instead of right (to work) when they arrive at Auschwitz.

Writing about the terrible wounds inflicted by mythical beasts, Minka tries to write off horror; mythical beasts<sup>1</sup> may take their toll, as long as humans

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<sup>1</sup> Minka calls Franz Hartmann) “Herr Dybbuk”, which is a mythical beast, as well. That is “a human man too weak to force out the evil that had taken residence in him.” (*ibidem*: 312)

may hope for a good ending – survival. A writer herself, A. S. Byatt reflects on the secret that lies behind the power of a myth, and states that “A myth derives its force from its endless repeatability.” (Byatt, 2001: 132).

The former Nazi, Josef Weber/ Franz Hartmann, who pretends to be his brother, Reiner, persuades Sage to kill him, in the end, but not to forgive him, as well; maybe, due to her feelings for her own grandmother, recently deceased, Sage cannot tell the difference between them until it is too late. In Byatt’s words, we may find an excuse for Sage, as

We cannot know the past, we are told – what we think we know is only our own projection of our own needs and preoccupations onto what we read and reconstruct. Ideology blinds. All interpretations are provisional, therefore any interpretation is as good as any other – truth is a meaningless concept, and all narratives select and distort. (*ibidem*: 10-11)

Before eating the perfect roll filled with chopped monkshood (food being the baker’s weapon of choice), Josef confesses to Sage his only crime: he did not help his brother, while he was choking on sour cherries. Actually, ironically, after killing Josef, Sage comes to realize she had killed the wrong brother: it was not Reiner who had told her the story of his murderous past, but Franz, who had lived with the guilt of not giving his brother the Heimlich maneuver.

With his dying breath, Josef asks Sage, “how does it end?” – thus betraying his identity as Franz, the *Hauptscharführer*, instead of Reiner, the *Schutzhaftlagerführer*. Sage comes to an understanding of Josef’s actions at last, but too late for her to remedy anything: interpreting facts depends on how and what Sage chooses to read her grandmother’s fiction:

Now I realize he lied twice to me yesterday: he knew who my grandmother was. Maybe he had hoped I’d lead him to her. Not to kill her, as Leo has suspected, but for closure. The monster and the girl who could rescue him: obviously, he was reading his life story in her fiction. It was why he had saved her years ago; it was why, now, he needed to know if he would be redeemed or condemned.” (Picoult, *op. cit.*: 506-7)

Minka was never able to forgive either brothers for their crimes; in Jews’ views, a person may be forgiven only by the one he has wronged – so Reiner could only be forgiven by Darija, who was dead. As for Franz, he could not be forgiven by Sage, as she was not the one he had wronged. Minka, in whom Franz had killed the capacity to trust people, never finished her story for poetic and philosophical reasons; her granddaughter gives us a very credible and beautiful explanation to that, inviting all of us to reflect on the role of fiction and art, and where the readers may fit in the writer’s/ storyteller’s equation:

She had left it blank on purpose, like a postmodern canvas. If you end your story, it’s a static work of art, a finite circle. But if you don’t, it belongs to anyone’s imagination. It stays alive forever.” (*ibidem*: 507)

In fact, that is the role of fiction, especially if it is about life and death issues, imagined and shaped by a tragedy survivor: to invite to reflection and to give hope for the generations to come, that they will also find their voice and

strength to tell their own stories, to make their own decisions. What better ending to a paper on the power of words than those of its own storyteller:

I know how powerful a story can be. It can change the course of history. It can save a life. But it can also be a sinkhole, a quicksand in which you become stuck, unable to write yourself free. (*ibidem*: 395)

The question is: which one do we choose?

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## **DEATH AND DEHUMANIZATION IN “FOR WHOM THE BELL TOLLS”**

**Irina SIMANSCHI\***

***Abstract:** Exploiting the much representative triad of concepts for Hemingway's prose, *For Whom the Bell Tolls* becomes another crucial writing in deciphering the author's moral evolution, along with his inner turmoils. The impetuous need to defend one's own principles and values freezes any extrinsic movement and time. Such poignant matter had war been, that it had followed Hemingway disregarding time. There is no other man-made happening to equal war in terms of dehumanization and corrosion of the self. The novel also unveils the attempt of love to become disentangled from this wretched entity.*

***Keywords:** war, loss, love.*

Hemingway's predisposition to relate to death had always been present in his writings, in his behaviour, and even in his thoughts. The ubiquitous element which fascinated him in such manner could be represented as a governing leitmotiv of his whole existence. From the early years of his childhood, perhaps unwillingly, fulfilling the role of an autodidact, he taught himself to have an equal regard to death as to that of life. There were perpetual and consistent feelings of love and appreciation he had for his father, the man who taught him how to handle guns, and he thought of him as “a great hunter and fisherman and he had wonderful eyes” (Hemingway, E, 1997: 13). His suicidal death haunted Ernest for the rest of his life, hardening his hatred towards his mother. The heterotopic entanglement of two unique spaces, that of the home and of the subconscious cemetery, as his father had killed himself in their house, made Hemingway perfectly aware of the closeness and immanency of death. It was undoubtedly going to be the most unsettling event in the latter's life for quite a long period of time. There is no other writing in which Hemingway lets himself be governed by his intrinsic emotions, as when Robert Jordan recounts the remembrances of his father and grandfather, it is actually Hemingway who is openly relieved from the burden he had been carrying: “He was just a coward and that was the worst luck any man could have. But if he wasn't a coward he would have stood up to that woman and not let her bully him. [...] Maybe the bully in her helped to supply what was missing in the other.” (Hemingway, E, 1994: 361)

As young Hemingway's life unveiled throughout the passage of time, death seemed to follow him, disregarding his relocation or his reasons. What is more, he no longer feared it, but rather showed a defying and controlling attitude towards this intermission within the cyclic time. It was Clarence who had bequeathed and endowed him with such abilities. That is, both Hemingway and the characters he continuously projects upon enterprise in perilous adventures, while being iconic code heroes at the same time. *The Sun Also Rises*, as many other Spain related writings, centres onto the figure of the matador and that of the bull, who become a unique being and transform the act of bullfighting into art, while having the matadors' life under constant threat. Frederick Henry, in *A Farewell to Arms*, is wounded in war, as Jake Barnes had been, tasting the sour flavour of pain

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\* University of Craiova; [anirisi@yahoo.com](mailto:anirisi@yahoo.com)

and death on their very own. At the moment of the precipitated interaction of the two realms, so to speak, the chronotope is rendered ignorant, as its constitutive counterparts dilute one another, yet growing apart, only to clash again, allowing the protagonist to spring back to life and take possession of his evanescent body. The frailty of life and death surrounds the characters, no matter where they travel and act, be it France, Spain, or the primeval continent of Africa.

The growing threat of fascism in the 1930s was chief among the factors that had endangered Hemingway's new values: this was something wholly evil, and the solidarity to defeat it acquired the status of a virtue. The writer himself took part in the International Brigade in the Spanish Civil war. He even addressed the Writer's Congress in New York, speaking against the fascists who had taken over Spain: "There is only one form of government that cannot produce good writers, and that system is fascism. For fascism is a lie told by bullies. A writer who will not lie cannot live and work under fascism" (Hemingway, E, 1986: 193). It is said that strong evidence has been found so as to support the idea of Hemingway's taking part in a clandestine guerrilla operation, blowing up a bridge in northern Spain. *For Whom the Bell Tolls* reflects this faith while exploiting an incident of that war. Love ceases to be entirely personal, as it is more than just dedicating yourself to one person. Published in 1941, the extended novel displays the dehumanization of the anthropological element, regarding the latter's freedom of thought and act and the perpetual fighting against those who mean to deprive humanity of its rights. The intensity of the thoughts and of the political conflagrations he brings into discussion constitutes another of Hemingway's reasons to be considered one of the most complex figures of the American literature. Still, it could not be appropriate to consider the matter of an American's penetrating interest and implication in the political situation of a land so distant from his/her own. Neglecting the Spanish predisposition towards an open-minded attitude and a welcoming behaviour towards any foreigner, there have been some who regarded his probably too serious involvement more as a threat than as anything else, as the leader of the Republican movement, Pablo, wonders "'What right have you, a foreigner, to come to me and tell me what I must do?'" The retort is at the very least, surprising and essential for the narrative that is yet to unfold: "'That I am a foreigner is not my fault. I would rather have been born here.'" (Hemingway, E, *op. cit.*: 16)

It is as if *For Whom the Bell Tolls* constitutes another cleansing of the inner self, as through the transfer of mental and physical turmoil onto the characters, and implicitly, onto the readers, the creator reaches peacefulness and completion. Intellectual catharsis can be attained solely by a handful of writers, who develop a more cavernous bond with the writing. That is, it could be considered that beyond the simultaneity of the post-partum depression sensed by the now hollow metaphysical womb, or even better said, by the core, and the accomplishment of the creator when his/her sibling is concluded, there is the fulfilling emotion of having produced a worthy piece of inheritance for society to build upon, to flourish upon. A more than fruitful exchange could be established between literature and being-toward-death, as the latter is able to fulfil his/her troubled intrinsic voices and wishes by achieving the transference onto a part of literature, with its didactic, cultural, philosophical and cultural purposes. Therefore, the purposes tend to acquire a larger panoply of directions than that acquired by a human being. Nonetheless, in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Hegel

provides a dissonant perspective upon the work and the purposes it serves after having been separated from its author. Losing the bond with the nourishing core, it is given signification only through the granting of the others. Instead of coming up with a manifest of individualism, Hegel states that what it achieves is exactly the opposite: “Thus the work is, in general, something perishable, which is obliterated by the counter-action of other forces and interests, and really exhibits the reality of the individuality as vanishing rather than as achieved.” (Hegel, G.W.F., 1997: 243-244)

*For Whom the Bell Tolls* comes to display Hemingway’s purposes, in a variety of forms. It is more than certain that he wished to achieve a thorough portrayal of the “carnival of treachery and rotten-ness” of the war, which he had beautifully accomplished, but also to surpass the element of a simple, apparently objective narration of facts. His desire to become a creator of a masterpiece, to successfully place the innocent love of an American intellectual and a Spanish local on the background of the war has been turned into reality. The realism of the novel is somewhat intertwined with momentous episodes of naturalistic representation, amplifying the truthfulness of the rendered facts. For endowing the reader to plunge into the heartlessness of any kind of war stands for a mastery of the self, of the thought, and of the facts in such an outstanding manner, that there is no competing element to surpass or to rise above it.

The thematic triad – death, love, and war is undoubtedly dealt with in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. This comes to reinforce the idea of the inability of separating the three and their outstanding embroidery upon each single narrative. Disregarding how they may be concealed within multifarious patterns, they are still to be found imprinted in the narrative. For instance, the war in *The Sun Also Rises* is a pervasive torment, which virtually shadows Jake’s smallest attempt of physically fulfilling both the act of love and himself as a mature individual. Therefore, love and death fuse in the timeless present. Maria, the epitomizing figure of Spain, which is, at the moment, convalescent and emotionally crippled by the fascists, becomes indistinguishable from Robert, whose empathy, utter appreciation and reflection into the surrounding scenery, make it indisputably acceptable for an American to become one with a Spaniard. They are metamorphosed into only one being, one who is ready to face any horrendous repercussions of the civil war. The life of both is always “Now, ahora, maintenant, heute [...] Esta noche, tonight, ce soir, heute abend. Life and Wife, Vie and Mari.” (Hemingway, E, *op. cit.*: 179), as it is transferred into a perpetual present, in which the moment of speaking becomes diluted. The present created by this double coordinate devours all memory and circumstance. Their two beings pour into one another until becoming one who is ready to face any ironical glance, any interference of life and any doom of what is yet to come, as they “make an alliance against death” (*ibidem*: 282). What is more, the narrator even comes to identify love and death, according to their resembling intensity and the nature of the feelings arisen within the cores of the participants, when Robert Jordan once again declares his love to Maria “I love thee as I love all we have fought for. I love thee as I love liberty and dignity and the rights of all men to work and not be hungry.” (*ibidem*: 371)

As Alphonso Lingis puts it, death becomes, from a law of nature, a categorical impediment which precedes the veridical approximation. He also asserts that there are two different sides of death, that is, the one corresponding to

the passing of time, and death itself, towards which every living creature is headed, hence, the imminent death. Death can also be perceived not as an annihilating moment of the self, but as a passage, as a thorough and ultimate fulfilment of the cycle of life. Nonetheless, the linear time which ends in death at the end of the horizontal axis of life may be the one to scatter misery and wretchedness amongst those who witness it, and even from this standpoint the traditional perspective can be overturned and hence, regarded as an evidence of the cyclicity of life. Furthermore, on the vertical axis, what is handed down through the various encompassing experiences during the earthly life is much too precious to be devoured by the closeness of death. What is more, he even asserts that “The world is not a shelter from death; on the contrary death is everywhere in the world, is the world itself” (Lingis, A, 1989: 123). Then again, from a dreaded, and yet irrefutable event within the human life, death comes to be transposed into the definition of existence itself. It could be rendered as the bias of life, its background, its topos.

Sharing the existentialist views of Heidegger on death, who claimed that death could be defined as nothingness, Hemingway also asserts through one of his characters that “To die is nothing” (*ibidem*: 119). He is proven to be a fierce adept of the belief that the human individual stands at the very core of every philosophical thinking, and therefore willingly bestowing upon the so very feared natural course of events a trivial veil, once again, turning it into an event of high importance, one of closure. Focusing on the human subject as the main nucleus of rational thinking, it emphasizes the importance of the individual in every aspect pertaining to his existence. Heidegger also claims that our existence and its nature projects itself onto its death, that is, life in itself follows a cyclic trajectory of the unfolding of events, until reaching its starting point. Henceforth, death should be depicted as an oxymoronic component of existence. The idea that death is nothing is constantly rendered throughout the novel, as a leitmotiv that chants Hemingway’s principles. Nonetheless, no matter how present, accurate or thrilling death may be, there is always its so-called nemesis, life, that lures the human beings into not yielding and into utterly seizing it for as much as they can, as it “was a hawk in the sky. Living was an earthen jar of water in the dust of the threshing with the grain flailed out and the chaff blowing. Living was a horse between your legs and a carbine under one leg.” (Hemingway, E, *op. cit.*: 332)

Hemingway found consistency in the Spanish perspective upon death, as for a man who had seen and almost experienced it, it would have been impossible to return to the previous ignorant thought of his fellow English speakers. The apprehension of death is a stimulus to living, with the sole purpose of reaching a better stage of comprehension towards human life. Even by the constant remembrance of the bustling, vivacious act of bullfighting which is so characteristic to the iberic topos, there is a mingling of violence and death that ardently needs to be portrayed, and that is actually rendered as mundane. The portrayal of one of Pilar’s lovers is expansive and vividly depicted, and yet, the rendering was a matter of current affairs, as every matador was meant to deal with such happenings:

She saw him stand, now, facing the five-year-old bull, facing the horns that had lifted the horses high, the great neck thrusting the horse up, up, as the rider poked into that neck with the spiked pole, thrusting up and up until the horse went over with a crash and the rider fell against the wooden fence and,

with the bull's legs thrusting him forward, the big neck swung the horns that searched the horse for the life that was in him. She saw him, Finito, the not-so-good matador, now standing in front of the bull and turning sideways toward him. She saw him now clearly as he furled the heavy flannel cloth around the stick; the flannel hanging blood-heavy from the passes where it had swept over the bull's head and shoulder and the wet streaming shine of his withers and on down and over his back as the bull raised into the air and the banderillas clattered. (*ibidem*: 196)

The variety of deaths one could live is outstanding in the novel. The presence of death is cast onto every character, at every step they may take, and beneath every line. If Heidegger annihilated the future into becoming one with death, Hemingway interpenetrates the past, the present and what is yet to come within one being who is on the brink of achieving a human countenance. According to Pilar, the most masculine embodiment of a female, as she mentions "I saw death there as plainly as though it were sitting on his shoulder. And what is more he [Kashkin] smelt of death" (*ibidem*: 268), there is a certain fragrance of death that announces its presence that makes it more bearable, or, at least, contributes to the outlining of the feeling of anticipation. As Heidegger put it, the anticipation of dying is rehearsed in the anxiety found in conscience. In fact, the anticipation of death is already a dying. For every reiteration of the act of dying of others gradually reaches the self, withstanding its every item. What is more, its perpetual closeness to the living has made it overcome its status as a unique moment in time, and has borrowed the olfactory aspect from life. Pilar portrays a heterogeneous olfactory portrayal of death, strengthening the concept of death as divided into numerous, small, and yet incredible powerful beings:

part of it is the smell that comes when, on a ship, there is a storm and the portholes are closed up. Put your nose against the brass handle of screwed-tight porthole on a rolling ship that is swaying under you so you are faint and hollow in the stomach and you have a part of that smell [...] After that of the ship you must go down the fill in Madrid to the Puente de Toledo early in the morning to the *matadero* and stand there on the wet paving when there is a fog from the Manzanares and wait for the old women who go before daylight to drink the blood of the beasts that are slaughtered. When such an old woman comes out of the *matadero*, holding her shawl around her, with her face gray and her eyes hollow, and the whiskers of age on her chin, and on her cheeks, set in the waxen white of her face as the sprouts grow from the sea of a bean, not bristles, but pale sprouts in the death of her face; put your arms tight around her, *Inglés*, and hold her to you and kiss her on the mouth and you will know the second part that odor is made of [...] with his in thy nostrils, walk back up into the city and when thou sees a refuse pail with dead flowers in it plunge thy nose deep into it and inhale so that scent mixes with those thou hast already in thy nasal passages [...] thou shouldst continue to walk through the city and down to Calle de Salud smelling what thou wilt smell where they are sweeping out *casas de putas* and emptying the slop jars into the drains and, with this odor of love's labor lost mixed sweetly with soapy water and cigarette butts only faintly reaching thy nostrils, thou shouldst go on to the Jardín Botánico where at night those girls who can no longer work in the houses do their work against the iron gates of the park and the iron picketed fences and upon the sidewalks. It is there in the shadow of the trees against the iron railings that they will perform all that a man wishes; from the simplest requests at a



remuneration of ten centimos up to a peseta for that great act that we are born to and there, on a dead flower bed that has not yet been plucked out and replanted, and so serves to soften the earth that is so much softer than the sidewalk, thou wilt find an abandoned gunny sack with the odor of the wet earth, the dead flowers, and the doings of that night. In that sack will be contained the essence of it all, both the dead earth and the dead stalks of the flowers and their rotted blooms and the smell that is both the death and birth of a man. [...] Thou wilt wrap this sack around thy head and try to breathe and then, if thou hast not lost any of the previous odors, when thou inhaled deeply, thou wilt smell the odor of death-to-come as we know it. (Hemingway, E, *op. cit.*: 271-274)

There is a mentioning of the moment of a mutual ground between the death and the birth of a man, hinting towards the same origin of life, when dealing with a symbolical death of the man, as he sheds his masculinity when becoming one with his counterpart. It has already been shown that death and life are intertwined, in the end, confusing one another. The sexual connotations of the smell endow the others with their own semantic contamination. Probably the most anthropological of all the senses, the smell can be easily engraved onto the memory of the male characters, who, affected by the scarcity of diversity in life, are more prone to engulfing themselves onto Pilar's lurid and striking depiction.

Then, there is the death found within love, which endows the partakers to die several times before reaching their final death. They are all based on the dissolution of the self within the other and of the other within the self, that is, a yielding in favour of a thorough completion. On the one hand, there is the sexual act which is based on the union between two distinct elements within one being, as though a magnetic force would lead both onto a transient mingling of selves, only to throw them apart. The two lovers become increasingly aware of the looming sight of death, despite its representation under a much too desirable form, as they wonder: "I feel as though I wanted to die when I am loving thee." 'Oh', she said. 'I die each time. Do you not die?'" (Hemingway, E, *op. cit.*: 172). Renouncing to one's individuality in favour of the other does not only display a mere tendency towards self-gifting or lack of selfishness, but also, a clash of two identities within one. Love dissipates the individual and promotes the central figure of the common core. It is another union-related aspect that governs the novel, as bewildering and complex their coming together may be. With every reaffirmation of their love "neither one can tell that one of us is one and not the other" (*ibidem*: 280), it becomes increasingly intricate to withdraw oneself from it. However, Robert Jordan's inner pragmatism comes to surface and takes control, when it is time to prioritize accordingly: "Say that you love me" 'No. Not now.' 'Not love me now?' 'Déjamos. Get thee back. One does not do that and love all the same moment.'" (*ibidem*: 288). This demonstration of masculinity maintains the idea of the female weakness, as the latter utterly loses her emotions and her sensibility within the troubled sea of feelings, deviating from the main aim, that of winning the war. Notwithstanding, from the feminist standpoint, Robert Jordan's decision could make him less of a man, as Maria is not entirely separated from the war, but not actually involved in it, either. She seems to be drifting among the reality of her own existence, her love for *Inglés* being the only connection to the shore. In every relationship she has, she appears to be submissive, as within her friendship with Pilar, it is outstandingly clear that the latter is dominant, whereas in the

relationship with Robert Jordan, she acts as to constantly please her beloved: “‘Is there not some other thing that I can do for thee?’” (*ibidem*: 365), “‘I would do anything for thee that thou should wish’” (*ibidem*: 373). Maria is the perfect embodiment of a spouse who is obedient and entirely devoted to him, displaying Hemingway’s wish to be dominant in the couple, to save and look after the women who could not save themselves. At a subconscious level, the Oedipus complex is fulfilled, as Hemingway’s desire to stand up and be superior to his counterparts finds its origins within his family. Replacing his father’s figure, he manages to prevent his mother from bullying him and from turning him into a coward. Therefore, the choice of his demeanour is motivated by his tormented childhood and adolescence.

Maria is, still, the living representation of the result of men’s dehumanization of war, as she had been objectified, mistreated and taken into possession against her will “‘Where things were done to me I fought until I could not see. I fought until-until-until one sat upon my head-and I bit him-and then they tied my mouth and held my arms behind my head-and others did things to me’” (*ibidem*: 75). Maria was put through extreme suffering because of the mere fact that she was the mayor’s daughter, and even so, she was the living portrayal of a form of politics, even though she may not have shared the same political inclinations as her father. Her mistreatment symbolizes the Spaniards’ developing oblivion of the values they once believed in, and the utter dehumanization of the anthropological element within a modern society. In contrast with the principles that should at least be cast upon the contemporaneity and then slowly evolved, it seems that society is returning to its old self, to its primeval and cruel temperaments, which were governed only by the wish to quench their thirst of blood, vengeance, and apparent justice. What is more, Maria could also embody the current state of Spain, as it is described in Hemingway’s novel, as governed by frailty, destruction and perversity, which is slowly rejuvenating and returning to its old self. After having overcome the recovering time and gradually recuperating her old self, she is now willing to get involved in the combat, without having forgotten what had happened to her. The hair that is still growing is a constant remembrance of what her fellow men were capable of achieving and how the bustling of her land had been turned against it. She also seeks for the cleansing of her soul, especially in the eyes of her beloved, Robert Jordan, willingly putting herself to suffering for the completion of the act of love. Maria also stands for the embodiment of the modern society, found in a despondent state, as with the preminent development of the technological and warfare related processes, the involution of the human ethics conceptualizes the reverse proportionality of the two. Decrepitude is to be found at any step, both regarding the surrounding landscape, that was once flourishing, and also within every contender of the war.

The death also comes by choice, as the fighters of the Republic decide to fight for their values on their own, aiming to be at ease with themselves, despite being forced to kill other men. Being the actant of the lack of physical existence, so to speak, enriches the feeling of guilt and revives consciousness. Dealing with the unsolved reiteration of being the provider of the other’s death is a constant, apparently never-ending matter, consistently rotting the psyche from the inside. There is the figure of the protagonist, of the American power, cruel man, who finds his motivation in his aim, reaching even a state of likelihood towards the act, as Robert Jordan makes himself reveal: “‘admit that you have liked to kill as all who

are soldiers by choice have enjoyed it at some time whether they lie about it or not.” (Hemingway, E, *op. cit.*: 306). The Republic and the end of the war develop a deeper significance for Robert Jordan than for any other character of the novel. Feeling deprived of the land he has chosen to become his own by others who would prohibit him from living in its most bare meaning, the protagonist finds pleasure in accumulating deaths as small victories of his own. Man returns to his role as a warrior, more likely, as a defender of his territory, which is threatened and visibly destroyed. His strong motivations are different from the ones Anselmo possesses, as the latter confesses to himself: “I hope I am not for the killing [...] If we no longer have religion after the war I think there must be some form of civic penance organized that all may be cleansed from the killing or else we will never have a true and human basis for living. The killing is necessary, I know [...]” (*ibidem*: 211-212)

Anselmo differs greatly from Robert Jordan, as his soliloquy turned into prayer is meant for all his fellow Spanish inhabitants, and his desire stands for an achievement of a better life for the Spanish people, more than Jordan’s does. The synthezizing of a great conflict to the self comes as an important evidence of individualism. The latter projects himself onto the figure of another comrade, who shares a different outlook on the war, while Anselmo, the sagacious gypsy, projects himself onto the others, reaching out towards a collective consciousness. This attitude of his led Robert Jordan into treating him with superiority, and yet, he manages to find the strength to restrain himself from conducting in a different manner, as he uncovers himself “Anselmo does not like to kill because he is a hunter, not a soldier. Don’t idealize him, either. Hunters kill animals and soldiers kill men. [...] And do not think against Anselmo either. He is a Christian. Something very rare in Catholic countries” (Hemingway, E, *op. cit.*: 306). Robert Jordan’s restraint, however, shows a more eloquent manner of behaving than that of the Spaniards, being a proof of his pride and intellectuality, which, however, he does not render obvious to the others. As many other values have been dismembered and destroyed by the civil war, so has religion. It seems that no moral value is still standing, but that of fighting for the Republic. Nevertheless, the necessity of choosing one side, as there is no mutual ground between the two, may have annulled one’s dreams and principles, turning them into blind fighters for the cause. Upon Jordan’s arrival, the Spanish civil war had already turned its population against themselves, to begin with, and against their own. The war is reduced to a difference in pride, level of acceptance and incongruous outlooks on life and on the governing of a society.

But in spite of its amplitude of character, of incident, despite its earthly setting and available reference, the novel clings to Hemingway’s original vision. In comparison to other typical Hemingway protagonists, Robert Jordan is the sole being that can act, as he is able to befriend death and cast it upon other humans who fight to gain his beloved territory of Spain, as “There are no other countries like Spain” (*ibidem*: 89). The protagonist’s complexity of character undoubtedly mirrors that of Hemingway, as he stands for another example supporting the idea that the latter projects himself onto every male character. He manages to tear tiny pieces of himself and metamorphose them into successful novels. Inglés, as he is called, despite his American origins, is a moral man, one of action, who is meant to follow the orders disregarding any turning of events. He lives, he loves, he allows himself to be absorbed by the feminine element, but not as much as to transform

him into the prisoner of an emotion. He is perfectly aware that the sweet making believe of the future is not perpetual and that there is a strong likelihood for death to come at dawn. Robert Jordan is introspective, and yet never absent, and he shows a great restraint from anger and careless replies or reactions.

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## **A REPRESENTATION OF SOCIAL INJUSTICE IN VICTORIAN ENGLAND: CHARLES DICKENS'S "OLIVER TWIST"**

**Valentina STÎNG** \*

*Abstract:* Throughout his novels, the Victorian novelist Charles Dickens tried to draw the reader's attention to the drawbacks and evils that resulted from the social transformation of his contemporary society, i.e. Victorian England. In many of his novels, the author focuses on the idea of social injustice, a social disease that is many-sided and has terrible consequences on the inner structure of the individuals living within the boundaries of such a world. Dickens's preoccupation with this issue is most relevant in the novel *Oliver Twist*, which contains a harsh critique of Victorian society and its prejudices.

**Keywords:** poor, poverty, workhouse, middle class.

The story of *Oliver Twist* is legendary in British and perhaps universal culture; many people have heard of the orphan workhouse boy in need of nourishment who dared to utter the words "Please, I want more" in front of the authorities. Due to its author's unique talent of reflecting social issues in literature, the novel that presents his story, entitled *Oliver Twist; or the Parish Boy's Progress* (published as a serial between 1837-1839), has enjoyed great success from the moment its serialization started (it is noted that Queen Victoria read it as soon as she came to the throne) and right up to our times. It is the title of the novel, that reminds the readers of John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* (1678-1884), that somehow explains this enduring fame of the novel, *The Pilgrim's Progress* being, in fact, the most popular account in English literature of "how a struggle against temptation and evil wins at last a secure reward" (Preface to the Oxford Edition, p. 5)

The novel *Oliver Twist; or the Parish Boy's Progress* is appreciated for its detailed presentation of nineteenth-century Victorian society, in all its intricate mechanisms and complicated structure. Undoubtedly, the novelist's fundamental aim was to expose the social defects in his time and the vices that afflicted the essence of society in that particular age. In conventional terms, the age is associated with industrialization and great progress in almost every area of human life, but Charles Dickens's view mainly suggests that industrialisation and the development it brought along generated significant social problems that were worth being revealed.

The Victorian period was a long period of peace, generally associated with such words as stability, prosperity, progress, reform and Imperialism, during which the citizens' grounds for satisfaction were rooted in the abundant evidence of great economic development and technical progress of the nation. It was a time of major changes and breakthroughs in almost every sphere of human existence – from advances in scientific, medical and technological knowledge (for instance, increased specialisation and developments in surgery, anaesthetics and antiseptics, the national railway network) to significant changes in population growth and shifts in people's mentalities. It was a long period of prosperity for the British

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\* University of Pitești, [valentina.stinga@upit.ro](mailto:valentina.stinga@upit.ro)

people, since the profits gained from the overseas British Empire, as well as from major industrial improvements at home, allowed the development of a large, educated middle class.

Yet, while from many points of view the Victorian age is identified as England's pinnacle of power and prestige (according to Galea 2), the other side of the coin was represented by the widespread poverty, miserable slums and poor working conditions that existed in many industries of Victorian England. Moreover, as time passed by, the rapid transformation deeply affected the country's state of mind: an era that had begun with a confidence and optimism that resulted in economic development and prosperity eventually gave in to uncertainty and doubt arising from "vast social and intellectual change" (Moran 2).

It is from this latter outlook on Victorian society that the story of *Oliver Twist* emerges, defined by Charles Dickens himself as very similar to "all good murderous melodramas, to present the tragic and the comic scenes, in as regular alternation, as the layers of red and white in a side of streaky bacon" (*OT*, p. 106). Overall, the plot of the novel "opposes innocence and corruption, good and bad characters, middle-class and underclass cultures, country and city settings" (Westland, Ella, Introduction to the Wordsworth Classics Edition of *OT*, page XII) in its attempt to depict "a full, true, and particular account of the life and adventures of *Oliver Twist*?" (*OT*, p. 89), starting with the moment of his birth in a workhouse, presented as follows:

"Among other public buildings in a certain town, which for many reasons it will be prudent to refrain from mentioning, and to which I will assign no fictitious name, there is one anciently common to most towns, great or small: to wit, a workhouse; and in this workhouse was born; on a day and date which I need not trouble myself to repeat, inasmuch as it can be of no possible consequence to the reader, in this stage of the business at all events; the item of mortality whose name is prefixed to the head of this chapter" (*OT*, p. 3).

The future condition of the new-born child is consecrated from this initial moment, when, after his mother's death, he was

"enveloped in the old calico robes which had grown yellow in the same service, he was badged and ticketed, and fell into his place at once- a parish child- the orphan of a workhouse- the humble, half-starved drudge- to be cuffed and buffeted through the world- despised by all, and pitied by none" (*OT*, p. 5).

Life is cruel for little Oliver, who, "for the next eight or ten months, (...) was the victim of a systematic course of treachery and deception. He was brought up by hand" (*OT*, p. 5). The hungry and destitute situation of the infant orphan was duly reported by the workhouse authorities to the parish authorities", who decided that Oliver should be "farmed," or, in other words, that he should be despatched to a branch-workhouse some three miles off, where twenty or thirty other juvenile offenders against the poor-laws, rolled about the floor all day, without the inconvenience of too much food or too much clothing, under the parental superintendence of an elderly female" (*OT*, p. 5).

From this moment on, Dickens shows how the poor orphan, Oliver, is a victim of social corruption. Brought up in that children's farm managed by Mrs. Mann, he reaches his ninth birthday as "a pale thin child, somewhat diminutive in

stature, and decidedly small in circumference" (*OT*, p. 6). All the poor children housed in that shelter lived in terrible conditions, deprived of food, money and, most of all affection; in fact, Mrs Mann has made it a habit for her to steal the money allotted for the purpose of feeding the children. After his ninth anniversary, Oliver was

"led away by Mr. Bumble from the wretched home where one kind word or look had never lighted the gloom of his infant years. And yet he burst into an agony of childish grief, as the cottage-gate closed after him. Wretched as were the little companions in misery he was leaving behind, they were the only friends he had ever known; and a sense of his loneliness in the great wide world, sank into the child's heart for the first time". (*OT*, p. 9)

In the workhouse, Dickens portrays with great detail the terrible conditions in which the poor, and most especially poor orphans, were leading their lives - lives of sheer deprivation and constant fear, where physical abuse, insufficient nourishment and regular painful punishments were the norm. In such places, married couples were separated, children were taken away from their parents and the poor were starved to death. By portraying with such care the constant deprivation that was marking the poor's lives, Charles Dickens intends to verbalise in an obvious manner social injustice and to criticize his society which considered poverty a crime.

"They established the rule, that all poor people should have the alternative (for they would compel nobody, not they), of being starved by a gradual process in the house, or by a quick one out of it. With this view, they contracted with the water-works to lay on an unlimited supply of water; and with a corn-factor to supply periodically small quantities of oatmeal; and issued three meals of thin gruel a day, with an onion twice a week, and half a roll on Sundays. They made a great many other wise and humane regulations, having reference to the ladies, which it is not necessary to repeat; kindly undertook to divorce poor married people, in consequence of the great expense of a suit in Doctors' Commons; and, instead of compelling a man to support his family, as they had theretofore done, took his family away from him, and made him a bachelor!" (*OT*, p. 11)

After three months of starvation, which made one of the children "hint darkly to his companions, that unless he had another basin of gruel (r)per diem, he was afraid he might some night happen to eat the boy who slept next him, who happened to be a weakly youth of tender age" (*OT*, p. 12), "a council was held; lots were cast who should walk up to the master after supper that evening, and ask for more; and it fell to Oliver Twist" (*OT*, p. 12). Though he was a child, he was desperate with hunger and misery. "He rose from the table; and advancing to the master, basin and spoon in hand, said: somewhat alarmed at his own temerity: 'Please, sir, I want some more'." (*OT*, p. 12) Oliver's action is so unexpected that the reaction it causes is described by Dickens as follows:

"The master was a fat, healthy man; but he turned very pale. He gazed in stupefied astonishment on the small rebel for some seconds; and then clung for support to the copper. The assistants were paralysed with wonder, the boys with fear" (*OT*, p. 12).

As a consequence of his request, Oliver is promptly sold to an undertaker, whose wife locks him up among the coffins as a punishment. At the beginning of Chapter VIII, young Oliver manages to escape his oppressors and flees to London, an action he undertakes because he had heard older men in the workhouse say “there are ways of living in that vast city, which those who had been bred in country parts had no idea of” (*OT*, p. 14). Oliver’s intention to discover what these “ways of living” were represents an important part of his progress, and “from the moment he falls in with Artful Dodger what is at risk is Oliver’s soul” (*Preface to the Oxford Edition of Oliver Twist*, p. 6). At this point, “what began as a topical satire on the workhouse system and the role of the 1834 New Poor Law in fostering criminality, marked by a heavily ironic narrative voice, became a moral fable about the survival of good, a romance in which a cheated orphan is restored to his inheritance” (*Preface to the Oxford Edition of Oliver Twist*, p. 7). The Artful Dodger (Jack) introduces Oliver into a gang of pickpockets and thieves, administered by a criminal mastermind called Fagin (the name of one of Dickens’s companions at the blacking factory). “In the social system of the novel, Fagin stands for foreignness and decadence” (Westland, Ella, Introduction to the Wordsworth Classics Edition of *OT*, p. XIII), whose dens are “places of evil, but also of high spirits, strong emotions, clashes of temperament and partnerships in crime” (Westland, Ella, Introduction to the Wordsworth Classics Edition of *OT*, p. XIII).

Though surrounded by evil, the young boy manages to keep away from the usual business of the gang and is temporarily saved from their hands by Mr. Brownlow, a very respectable-looking elderly gentleman who takes a liking to Oliver, even if the latter was (wrongfully) suspected of having stolen the man’s handkerchief. Oliver is very happy with Mr. Brownlow, but Fagin and his co-conspirators are not happy to have lost Oliver, who may give away their hiding place. So one day, when Mr. Brownlow entrusts Oliver to return some books to the bookseller for him, Oliver is kidnapped and taken back to Fagin. Afterwards, he is forced to participate in a house-breaking action, but it fails and Oliver ends up shot by one of the servants of the house. The woman whose house had been broken into by Oliver turns out to be his aunt. Good eventually defeats evil: Oliver inherits a decent sum of money and thereafter lives a respectable life.

The impact of the novel is very much related to the setting in which the action of *Oliver Twist* is projected. Oliver’s boyhood adventures in the countryside (more precisely, near a small town) do not promote the notion of an idealized rural setting. “Dickens’s unequivocal message is that poverty and institutionalized bullying in the rural parishes of England cause as much misery as any urban squalor” (Westland, Ella, Introduction to the Wordsworth Classics Edition of *OT*, p. XVI). However, from the viewpoint of the individual born and raised in the countryside, the city might seem a much more dangerous place. To illustrate that, Dickens reproduces a dialogue between Mrs Mann and Mr Bumble, in which the latter informs the former of his intention of going to London by coach, in view of a “legal action... about a settlement” (*OT*, p. 108):

“ ‘Mrs Mann, I am a-going to London.’  
 ‘Lauk, Mr Bumble! cried Mrs Mann, starting back’ ” (*OT*, p. 108)



London's chaotic underworld makes it hard for Oliver himself to adapt to its harsh realities. The young boy never identifies with the city, which remains a place of terror and "epitomizes an urban environment almost beyond social control" (Westland, Ella, Introduction to the Wordsworth Classics Edition of *OT*, p. XVI). The streets, even those from respectable neighbourhoods, are far from being a secure place: they are populated by pickpockets and danger seems to be present at each and every corner of the city.

With its presentation of the characters and the setting, *Oliver Twist* is a powerful satire on the inhuman cruelties of the New Poor Laws of 1834, which stipulated that society's jobless and desperate should be virtually imprisoned in harsh institutions known as workhouses. "The Poor Laws came as a result of Britain's beliefs about the poor. Because of their rigid social structure, the middle class wanted to distinguish themselves from the lower classes as much as possible, and the poor became stereotyped as lazy and born of bad blood" (Preface to the Oxford Edition of *Oliver Twist*, p. 20). This perspective is often identified in *Oliver Twist* as Oliver is assumed throughout the work to be evil merely because he is a poor orphan; this is the same sort of prejudice that Dickens himself bore when he was temporarily an orphan. In the alteration of the state of the poor an important role was played by Christianity as well. The English bourgeoisie firmly believed that God rewarded the virtuous with wealth and worldly goods, therefore the middle class was inherently good, whereas the poor, lower class was evil. This is the conception held by Mr. Bumble, whose attitude towards the work house paupers is one of contempt. For him, the death of a woman in the parish is nothing more than an irritation. He condemns the ingratitude of the paupers and criticizes the rudeness of the dead woman's husband who has refused to take an improper medicine sent to his wife by the parish. He fails to recognize that the parish actually contributed to the poor woman's demise and overlooks the fact that the woman died of hunger and neglect.

The novelist attempts to challenge such a misconception by creating characters, such as Monks, Oliver's half-brother, that are wealthy, but vicious and corrupt. As a counterpoint, he also created poor characters that are good and innocent, in spite of their low social status. Therefore, what Charles Dickens aims to demonstrate in this novel is that some people are inherently good, whilst others are inherently bad, but that does not depend on the social class the respective people belong to.

Through the novel that has been under analysis, Charles Dickens attempted to approach the social misconceptions and treatment of the poorer classes of Victorian London. In order to achieve the purpose of demonstrating how badly poor people were treated in society at that time and how they were forced to stay in such a misery because of the laws set in place, he resorted to autobiographical elements and to his rich journalistic experience (Cf. Morris 3), the result being a powerful novel with a strong impact of the consciousness of readers in all times.

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## **POÉTIQUE DE LA FORME BRÈVE DANS EN SABOTS D'ANDRÉ BAILLON**

**Carmen ANDREI\***

***Abstract :** My paper (partially) tackles an atypical autobiographical novel written by the Belgian author André Baillon, *En Sabots*, which is not yet permeated by his great obsessions such as madness, prostitution or love-related anxieties. It actually consists in several short stories about the social and cultural realities of Campine and about identity search. A painful alternative is to be found here: saving oneself from alienation by becoming a monk or a writer. We may discover a poetics of the fragmented discourse and of the detail (with disconnected anecdotes), in a noun-dominated style (the core of the sentence is not the verb but only one noun). This concise style illustrates the author's metaphysical concept about the force of the simple word which conveys perception and locks the moment in eternity. A game of mirrors in 103 short forms (ana), biographemes which make up a harmonious ensemble, with humour, rhythm and balance.*

***Keywords:** discontinuous, noun-dominated style, short forms/stories.*

### **Préambule**

Le premier qui a affirmé qu'*En sabots* n'était pas un roman a été Roger de Lannay. Et, en effet, Baillon n'a jamais mis le mot *roman* comme sous-titre de son livre, ni sur la première version, *Moi quelque part* (mots sur lesquels se ferme le livre), ni sur l'édition Rieder et C<sup>ie</sup>. La mention *roman* apparaît plus tard, dans des bibliographies (J. M. Culot) et des rééditions (L'Ether vague). En fait, ce texte n'est pas un roman dans le sens établi par les canons littéraires : il n'y a pas de discours fictionnel obéissant aux lois du récit classique unidimensionnel, qui exige une logique fonctionnelle, une narration qui se dirige progressivement vers le dénouement de l'action, il ne développe pas une intrigue, il n'y rien de ce que G. Genette appelle « une détermination rétrograde » (Otten, 1984 : 21). Il convient de mentionner aussi que c'est un texte qui n'est pas encore traversé par les grandes obsessions de Baillon, telle que la folie, la prostitution, le dérèglement amoureux (Dufays, 1989 : 61)<sup>1</sup>. Il traite des sujets paisibles. Le thème central du texte est la vie simple de la campagne, dans le village campinois de Westmalle où André Baillon s'est retiré avec sa femme Marie pour vivre tranquillement. Il trouve sa paix dans l'élevage de ses deux cents poules. L'œuvre a un caractère ouvertement autobiographique : auteur, narrateur et personnage se confondent sous les désignateurs pronominaux André et M. Baillon. Le livre se ferme sur la prise de conscience de l'inadéquation entre le perfectionnement de son âme, possible s'il devient moine chez les Trappistes, et l'exercice de son métier d'écrivain, considéré par ceux-ci comme une « occupation inutile, souvent dangereuse ».

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\* Université « Dunrea de Jos » de Galați, [carmen.andrei@ugal.ro](mailto:carmen.andrei@ugal.ro)

<sup>1</sup> J.-L. Dufays analyse ce texte à partir de la structure bipolaire *bien / mal, nature / artifice*. L'auteur montre l'adhésion totale de Baillon, par projet déterminé, à l'idéal littéraire du mimologisme (conçu comme une coïncidence parfaite entre les mots et les choses).

### Précis de poésie romanesque baillonnaise – le style substantif

Comme Ulrich, « l'homme sans qualités », Baillon ne croit plus au récit unidimensionnel que l'on fait de sa vie d'où la modernité d'*En sabot* (Otten, 1984 : 31). C'est au lecteur que revient la tâche de construire ce « roman » qui ne l'est point, de donner un sens à cette poésie du discontinu, de s'associer au geste créateur de l'auteur et de le prolonger. C'est pourquoi Baillon a choisi de pratiquer une esthétique romanesque du fragment et du détail, formes rejetées par la pensée classique dans le but déclaré de (faire) voir juste. Son texte est un foisonnement d'anecdotes disparates mais non contradictoires, rassemblant les fantasmes obsédants d'un personnage à identité assez floue. Le projet est ambitieux : la peinture des autres, observés de l'extérieur, comme une caméra objective, se conjugue avec la peinture du *moi*, scruté de l'intérieur, en focalisation interne.

Le style dépouillé d'ornements rhétoriques de Baillon sert d'appui à la poésie de la forme brève<sup>1</sup>. L'écrivain utilise souvent des phrases brèves, voire très brèves, construites sur le schéma *sujet + verbe*. Il affirme d'ailleurs être soucieux de rendre la nuance exacte des mots, vus comme des organismes vivants, et donne même des conseils en ce sens :

Il n'y a pas de mots nobles : il y a le mot juste. Un homme qui pisse, - pisse. A moins que ce ne soit un hydropique : celui-là se vide la vessie... car il y a la nuance. Je veux que la phrase suive la pensée ; qu'elle ne plonge pas un poignard dans le sein, pour m'expliquer, après coup, ce que ce poignard sortait d'une gaine et que cette gaine était rouge.

Pesez chaque mot et le placez juste où il faut. Avant, il n'a pas encore de force ; après, il arrive trop tard, et s'essouffle, inutile. Tel a déjà sorti de sa pensée au complet, qui en est seulement à la moitié de ses mots.

Je veux ma phrase sans artifice, mais nue et vivante, debout sur ses pieds, le visage à sa place, avec des seins qui bougent, des muscles qui jouent, et même, mon Dieu oui, un trou de cul, puisqu'il en fait (Baillon, 1989 :142).

De surcroît, le texte d'*En sabots* s'inscrit dans un projet plus particulier encore. La visée de l'auteur était de rendre directement le perçu, dans ce qu'il a d'instantané, de véritable, de sensoriel. Dans ce sens, le livre est un *recueil de tableaux* pour moitié dont le but moralisateur est évident et quasi évangélique : « Je crie très haut ces histoires. Que ceux qui le doivent, l'entendent » (p. 74). André Baillon a consciencieusement ébauché quelques précis de poésie romanesque, reproduits sous le titre *Traité de littérature*, repris dans *Textyles*. Ce dessein de rendre d'un mot le foyer de concentration et de rencontre entre la pensée et son objet se résume comme suit : « Ne pas peindre : faire voir. Souvent un mot suffit » (*ibidem*, 141-143).

Ces phrases rejoignent ce qu'affirment ailleurs d'autres penseurs qui ont des conceptions linguistiques atomistes et qui ont prouvé que la brièveté est liée à la poésie du mot :

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<sup>1</sup> Pour une taxinomie des formes brèves, voir A. Montandon, *Les formes brèves*, Paris, Hatier, coll. « Contours littéraires », 1992. L'auteur explique lumineusement toutes ces formes brèves, injustement considérée comme futiles, en montrant leur importance, leur richesse et leur fécondité.

Les mots, lorsqu'ils sont bien choisis, sont des abrégés de phrases. (Joubert)  
Les mots sont des étiquettes. Et c'est en les cherchant que les choses se trouvent  
(*ibidem*).

Ce qui est isolé se voit mieux (cité par Montandon, 1992 : 11 et 14)  
En morceau. En petits morceaux. En tous petits morceaux. En tous petits morceaux.  
(J. Renard) (*ibidem* : 5)

On a affaire ici à une conception métaphysique de la force du mot, susceptible de saisir l'instant dans son éternité et l'expérience dans son extension spatiale et temporelle, bref, de rendre le perçu, conception retrouvable également chez Baillon :

Des images ? Elles sont dans ce bois où vous êtes passé ; là dans ce coin de ciel que vous donne la fenêtre ; plus près de votre chambre ; plus près encore, sous votre chemise, dans votre propre chair (Baillon, 1989 : 142).

Le narrateur devient modèle pour Pol, son ami, le peintre, comme les autres le sont pour lui dans la fiction. Les deux artistes travaillent à petites touches, ne vont pas vite et, à force de ne pas aller vite, ils peuvent ainsi tout voir (*Modèle*, pp. 128-131). Le narrateur d'*En sabots* pourrait apprendre des éléments de poésie du récit qu'un paysan de la Campine lui donne en passant. Il lui enseigne notamment que la parole paysanne est économe, laconique, fait recours à l'ellipse, ce qui rejoint le credo esthétique de Baillon :

Le paysan qui vous rencontre vous saluera, suivant l'heure : « Jour, Midi ou Soir ». Pas besoin qu'il précise : Bonjour, Bonsoir. Puisqu'il vous le souhaite, cela va de soi, et c'est un mot de gagné. Leçon de style. (Baillon, 1992 : 68)

André Baillon a ce qu'on peut appeler *un style substantif* où la base de la phrase n'est plus un verbe, mais un substantif et même parfois un substantif seul. Les phrases nominales l'emportent sur les phrases verbales qui, lorsqu'elles apparaissent, sont élémentaires, le verbe étant « faible » : *il y a* (récurrent dans la description de Westmalle, pp. 11-12 ou de la table des Baerkalens, p. 40), *c'est*, *voici*, toujours dans le but de montrer, de décrire, de *faire voir*. Le narrateur fait des clins d'œil discrets au lecteur afin de renforcer le pacte de lecture sous le sceau du secret : « Il ne faudrait pas le dire » (p 39).

Pour noter le silence, Baillon utilise seulement le substantif, comme dans les didascalies théâtrales :

Un grand silence. (p. 137)  
Petit silence. (p. 105)  
Nouveau silence (*ibidem*, au sujet du couple au lit)

Comment interpréter alors ce refus de la phrase avec verbe ?

Pour décrire une chaussée, Baillon utilise les mêmes procédés elliptiques. Le dépouillement d'ornements rhétoriques met en valeur d'autant plus la simplicité du style :

La chaussée vide ! (p. 174)  
Sale chaussée ! Heureusement que je la connais, cette garce de route ! (p. 81, quand le narrateur s'y perd)  
Tout à coup, grand vacarme sur la chaussée. (commentaire relatif aux promeneurs du dimanche)

Le temps est lui aussi noté sommairement : « Un soir de petite pluie ». (p. 80)

Tout à coup l'averse (p. 89)

Un long cri de cuivre (*ibidem*)

André Baillon n'utilise *que* des formes brèves, à savoir *des descriptions et des anecdotes, donc des bribes romanesques*.

S'il s'agit de caractériser un personnage représentatif de la vie quotidienne (avec ou sans intention didactique), les portraits d'*En sabots* sont des anecdotes juxtaposées qui montrent l'intérêt psychologique ponctuel du narrateur pour tel ou tel personnage, en assurant ainsi la fonction de témoignage immanente au genre. Il offre au lecteur friand des détails minuscules de la vie privée de ses proches. Mélanie et Fons font l'objet de quelques portraits remarquables, avec métaphores et comparaisons livresques tirés de l'histoire antique (Tibère et Néron).

L'art du portrait, des Anversois par exemple, s'accompagne du commentaire informationnel : le narrateur exprime directement ses préférences (pp. 223-224). Obéissant à la poétique de la forme brève qui impose des contraintes formelles et stylistiques, il relate des faits courts, saillants, authentiques, remarquables, souvent paradoxaux, sans développement ultérieur (Montandon, 1992 : 100). L'unicité événementielle et le manque de répétition thématique sont des traits également valables dans ce texte. Toute une galerie de portraits des frères est exposée dans le grand chapitre *Les Trappistes*. Le narrateur se détache de ses projections fictionnelles et devient personnage de son propre récit. L'image relève de la pratique de l'ego-centrisme :

Seul, au centre d'un tableau, et me détache en grand sur le clocher des Trappistes, les champs des Trappistes, les bois des Trappistes, accessoires minuscules pour mettre en relief l'important personnage qu'est mon « Je ». (p. 217)

Les caractéristiques des formes brèves sont la concision et la discontinuité. Elles ne réclament pas une lecture oisive et non participative, mais un effort pour suivre le fil conducteur. L'engouement pour le discontinu s'explique par une certaine attraction pour le marginal, le *presque rien* (*ibidem* : 13). C'est bien le cas dans *En sabots* où certaines anecdotes sont des jets d'émotion, des télégrammes de l'âme, des esquisses de rêve<sup>1</sup>. Baillon pratique ces formes brèves, ne résistant pas à la séduction irrésistible qu'exerce le petit, le minuscule, le microcosme, la miniature. Pour qu'il y ait une anecdote, dans *En sabots*, Baillon respecte autant les lois du narratif (l'authenticité présumée des faits, la représentativité, la brièveté de la forme et l'effet qui donne à penser, *ibidem* : 100) qui exige une pointe finale (vue comme une sentence brève et brillante) ou un renversement, comme dans le cas du mot d'esprit.

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<sup>1</sup> Le terme *anecdote* désigne aujourd'hui moins un contenu qu'une technique de publication dans le sens de l'inédit. *Anekdotos* signifiait étymologiquement « qui n'a pas été publié », renvoyait à une particularité historique, peu connue, secrète, dont le récit est révélateur. À présent, l'anecdote garde sa portée croustillante, sulfureuse et calomnieuse, ouvre un vaste champ à la curiosité, au désir de savoir irrésistible, et à ce qui est secondaire et marginal. Le sens actuel qui s'est imposé est plutôt de détail intéressant et inconnu ou d'extrait d'un ouvrage. L'art de l'anecdotier consiste essentiellement dans le choix de l'histoire, dans le savoir de choisir dans le continu de l'expérience le fait ou l'événement à mettre en évidence, à rendre singulier et piquant. *Apud*. A. Montandon, *op. cit.*, pp. 98-112.

Les anecdotes d'*En sabots* sont des mini-récits qui varient d'un à plusieurs paragraphes, orchestrés afin de peindre la réalité socio-culturelle de la Campine : *Le couvent des Trappistes, La maison communale, L'école, La poste, La gare, La chaussé* (pp. 15-17). Un autre parle de l'aide d'un fugitif traqué par les gendarmes (*L'évadé*). Le narrateur porte un regard d'esthète et d'ethnologue sur les mœurs des villageois, de ses voisins et de ses amis. Il fait parler les animaux : le chien Spitz, le chat Pouce et le cochon Woutte<sup>1</sup>. Les conversations des poules sont transcrites dans une vraie symphonie d'onomatopées.

De petits récits comme *Les grandes aventures, La dernière leçon de Mélanie, Quelques-uns (Somptions respectueuses, Le meurtrier, La soupe aux raisins)* sont des histoires vécues par le narrateur. Les voisins et les aubergistes du village jouissent de longues descriptions ou de sommaires narratifs à veine réaliste : *Ma propriétaire, La centenaire, Les Baerkaelens, Benooi*). D'autres histoires sont rapportées par celui-ci : (*Eloquence*, dans *Quelques-uns*, pp. 178-180). Les gens simples sont mis en valeur de manière simple, et il arrive rarement que les commentaires à leur sujet soient légèrement ironiques.

Dans *Entre nous*, tout est minutieusement exposé : la vie du couple André-Marie, le partage des tâches domestiques, mais aussi les moments de simple félicité (*Les crêpes*). Ces anecdotes relèvent du biographème. En apothegme en action<sup>2</sup>, *En sabots* présentent formes narratives simples qui surprennent des faits épinglés, comme les journées à la campagne remplies de besognes ménagères. *En Sabots* sont également des Ana, des formes narratives privilégiées de la biographie manquée, une sorte de recueil d'anecdotes, traits d'esprit, fragments inédits, des pensées détachées parfois, des fragments de certaines conversations<sup>3</sup>.

Nous citons par la suite deux exemples illustratifs de descriptions en style pointilliste, concis. La condensation dans les dialogues se fait en raison de l'économie du travail psychique déployé. Un premier est un trajet en vicinal, *Westmalle-Anvers*, où les substantifs jalonnent ponctuellement le déroulement de l'histoire. La description avance par groupes nominaux (substantifs + adjectifs qualificatifs), ayant tous des emplois métaphoriques :

[...] Puis, halte :  
*Sint-Antonus !*  
 Encore un peu Westmalle. Un couvent des Sœurs Noires. La chapelle paroissiale ;  
 la hutte de Sus Verhœven, le charpentier. [...]  
 ... Des arbres, une charrette ; devant son puits, le fessard d'une fermière :  
 Beau temps, hé ! Monsieur. [...]  
 Encore une halte :  
*Ploeg !*  
 Une auberge. [...]

<sup>1</sup> Les chers animaux du narrateur sont personnifiés. Par exemple, Spitz, son chien berger, répond gentiment aux questions de son maître. Lorsqu'il trépassé, Baillon rend un hommage émouvant à la brave bête : « Timide, obscur, effacé, en sabots, je suis simplement le maître du chien de M. Baillon. » (p. 82)

<sup>2</sup> *Apud* A. Montandon, *op. cit.*, p. 100 et suiv. Dans *En Sabots*, le biographème remplit plusieurs fonctions : moins la fonction exemplaire, mais plus la fonction rhétorique (à valeur d'exemple ou d'illustration pour renforcer l'autorité du discours), la fonction de caractérisation (d'un milieu social) et la fonction dialogique (le caractère aléatoire ou l'information directe).

<sup>3</sup> Pour une définition des Ana, voir A. Montandon, *op. cit.*, p. 104.

Tiens ! quelle belle mare ! et ces petits bois ! Et ces fermes à chignon rouge et paupières vertes ! [...]  
À droite, un hôtel pour les gens de la ville ; [...] puis la prison communale. [...]  
Des champs : des blés plus gras, entre moins de bruyère adieu la Campine ! Une ferme avec des volets bruns et blancs ; une deuxième ferme avec des volets bruns et blancs ; une troisième ... Les couleurs du propriétaire. [...] (pp. 159-160)

Un second exemple est le mini-récit *La ville d'Anvers* : peinture de la ville dans sa citadinité et dans sa modernité, mais, paradoxalement, sans un inventaire quelque bref qu'il soit, des éléments architecturaux qui la caractérisent et l'ont rendue célèbre. De brèves mentions se succèdent

[...] de veilles maisons, des auberges simplement auberges ; des boutiques [...] (p. 162)

Une auto. Deux autos. Cinq autos. Des livres : « Succès du jour », bast ! « La dernière mode », zut ! (p. 163)

### **L'art du dialogue**

*En Sabots* ne présente pas d'histoire rectiligne, mais des détours conversationnels, des lignes courbes, régies par l'implicite. Le dialogue dans ce texte a une progression logique qui n'exclut pas l'implicite, avec ses composantes, le présupposé et le sous-entendu.

*Le village dans la bruyère* s'ouvre justement par le dialogue afin d'offrir au lecteur une esquisse d'autoportrait du narrateur par le détour d'un questionneur dont on ne connaît pas l'identité, mais qui provoque subrepticement la confession. A la question explicite *Ce que j'étais*, la réponse est « brève » : « Un Monsieur de la ville. » (p. 9). La séquence est construite sur la technique du ricochet. La conversation est inachevée et éminemment fragmentaire. Les citations suivantes sont à l'appui de ce constat :

Jeune ?  
On l'est toujours.  
Au physique ?  
Les genoux trop gros. Des pieds de timide qui s'appuient sur le bord et tournent un peu vers l'intérieur.  
Marie ?  
Oui. [...]  
Votre moral ?  
Un estomac de mufle. Aussi des nerfs de mufle.  
Et puis ?  
Comme tout le monde, vaniteux ; hypocrite comme tout le monde ; égoïste comme tout le monde. (pp. 10-11)

Le jeu de la question-réponse peut apparaître sans sous-entendus comme dans l'anecdote *Ma Confession* (pp. 221-228).

Un échange dialogal apparemment banal et simple rend deux points de vue différents sur la même réalité dans *La cuisine* :

Regarde, dit Marie, ces cendres sur le pavé ; c'est sale.  
On a fait un grand feu, Marie.  
Et sur les chaises, tous ces sacs de farine...



Benooi va cuire le pain, Marie.  
Il y fait noir.  
C'est la faute à l'auvent qui chipe le jour de la fenêtre. (pp. 37-38)

Nous retrouvons un autre exemple de croisement de points de vue différents, voire contradictoires dans *Woutte*, le cochon-ami :

Un cochon, déclare cet ami, est une sale bête.  
Le sanglier n'était pas laid, mon ami.  
Cet œil qu'on voit à peine...  
Il voyait tout, mon ami.  
Ce groin dans cette auge.  
... n'avait pas besoin d'auge.  
Et quel lourdaud !  
On l'engraisse.  
Il ne pense qu'à manger.  
Mais non : il dort.  
Un paresseux.  
Libre, il courrait. [...] (p 115)

À la quête de son identité, le narrateur rend visite aux moines, à la Trappe. Dans l'échange suivant, la question se heurte à une certitude absolue, exprimée seulement, sans aucune autre démonstration :

La vie monastique est très belle, n'est-ce pas mon Père ?  
Oui, mon enfant, très belle.  
Moins belle, cependant ...  
Plus, mon enfant. (pp. 214-215)

### **Humour, rythme et équilibre**

Dans le fragment *La langue*, la description d'une petite montagne sur la butte de laquelle gisent trois arbres morts finit en pointe qui a une valeur de réflexion philosophique (maxime) : « Dans ce pays, tout est en forêts et en plaines, on est plus facilement montagne que grand arbre. » (p. 14)

Le narrateur livre d'autres maximes concernant le rythme social : tout amour réciproque est basé sur le profit (*Ce qu'elles disent, Les poules*, pp. 86-87). L'ouverture morale, voire philosophique est spécifique de la forme brève. Nous retrouvons aussi un épisode d'imagination débridée dans *Symphonie* (p. 88) qui s'oppose à un autre *Agonies* [des poules] écrit dans une tonalité dramatique.

L'humour transparait à travers les petites remarques anodines comme dans *L'église* : « L'église et le château se tournent le dos. Ils sont brouillés. On ne le dit pas, mais je crois qu'ils n'ont jamais pu s'entendre : qui des deux avait la plus grosse tour. » (p. 15)

Sa maison est l'objet d'un commentaire vaguement ironique. L'humour n'est jamais noir ou iconoclaste. Il relève du genre d'humour laconique issu d'une lucidité sans complaisance, euphémistique par ailleurs :

On voit tout de suite qu'elle [la maison] a été bâtie pour la commodité des bêtes : les gens s'arrangent. (p. 19)  
Sur cette [glace] de droite, deux amours nues se sucuent les lèvres. L'un est une petite fille, l'autre très visiblement le contraire (p. 50).

Les hommes [bohémiens] s'habillent comme tout le monde, en plus sale, avec un grand luxe de trous et de déchirure. Il n'y a qu'une chose : pour être tout à fait beau, le pantalon doit s'évaser par le bas. Ils travaillent de préférence à ne rien faire. (p. 54)

Les poules, ça mange et ça fait le contraire. (p. 59)

L'humour tourne en trivialité lorsqu'il fait des commentaires relatifs au métier de sa voisine, Phrasie (*Mes voisins*, p. 24). Le même sous-entendu humoristique se trouve dans le discours direct de la vieille voisine veuve depuis vingt ans, possesseur de trois poules, qui conclut laconiquement : « Il faudrait un coq et mon mari est mort » (p. 44).

### **En guise de conclusion**

*En Sabots* n'est qu'un jeu de miroirs à double reflet qui porte autant sur le narrateur de l'histoire que le sujet de l'histoire même. Le texte réussit à séduire le lecteur par un recours systématique à de savoureuses « formes brèves » telles que des anecdotes, des mini-récits, des portraits, des descriptions, des mots que nous avons mis en évidence avec insistance ou en passant. Le texte comporte cent trois de ces formes brèves, par rapport à un autre texte, moins connu, *Par fil spécial*, qui en comporte soixante-dix-huit. Ces fragments ont été très courts concentrés dans quelques lignes, des croquis rapides, ou plus longs s'étendant sur plusieurs pages. Notre dessein principal a été de montrer comment tous ces fragments forment un ensemble plus ou moins harmonieux en imposant au texte humour, rythme et équilibre.

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## **AUTOFICTION ET DOUBLE CULTURE CHEZ NINA BOURAOUI**

**Mohamed BOUDJADJA \***

**Abstract:** *Nina Bouraoui (born 1967) relates in his works a childhood torn between two countries, two cultures, and a mixed marriage (French mother and Algerian father). It presents the France and Algeria's childhood as the source of his writing and was torn between two conflicting cultures, Eastern culture and Western culture. This double culture makes me problematic and engaged bouraouiienne writing in an anguished quest for the past that involves imagination and is based on a set of associations of images and language giving the work the form of a fiction. Facing a decomposed Me, Nina Bouraoui proceeded to an unveiling of its intimacy where experience blends with fantasies creating art from his fears and built a world hidden, open to all those who dare to look it up. Is this world a reflection of his imagination? How literature can be a space where the intimate, the body, the raw sensations denuded and violent are revealed?*

**Keywords:** *Autofiction, culture, children, fantasies, sensations.*

### **Introduction**

Il est des discours qui restent souvent problématiques. Celui de l'identité, comme celui de la différence, en est particulier lorsqu'il se met en scène dans un contexte de conflits symboliques. Il existe aussi des textes autobiographiques qui se comprennent avant tout comme des témoignages véridiques.

Dans les littératures postcoloniales, l'écriture autobiographique s'avère être un lieu d'énonciation essentielle où l'hybridité des genres rencontre la problématique de l'hybridité d'un sujet qui écrit à partir d'une position située entre plusieurs cultures. La traversée du Moi qui est élaborée dans un texte devient le lieu d'entrecroisements culturels multiples et suscite différentes interrogations.

Il existe enfin dans la littérature algérienne de langue française des écrivaines qui ont marqué l'histoire littéraire par leur thématique, leur style, leur engagement mais Nina Bouraoui<sup>1</sup> est celle qui s'est distinguée par une écriture duelle, du défi et « iconoclaste »<sup>2</sup>. C'est un pur produit littéraire de la mixité ayant choisi la France comme pays d'adoption et sa langue comme véhicule d'énonciation. Dans ses œuvres, marquées par les traces d'une enfance déchirée entre deux pays, deux cultures, elle présente la France et l'Algérie de l'enfance comme la source même de son écriture. Elle se dit tiraillée entre deux cultures antagoniques, la culture de la rive sud et la culture de la rive nord. Cette double culture rend le moi problématique et engage l'écriture bouraouiienne dans une quête angoissée du passé qui fait intervenir l'imaginaire et repose sur un jeu

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\*Mohamed Boudjadja, Université de Sétif 2 (ALGERIE), [boudja192003@yahoo.fr](mailto:boudja192003@yahoo.fr)

<sup>1</sup> Née le 31 juillet 1967 à Rennes, d'un père algérien et d'une mère française, Nina Bouraoui est l'auteure de plusieurs œuvres. En 1991, elle a reçu le Prix Livre Inter pour *La voyeuse interdite*. Quatorze ans plus tard, son neuvième roman, *Mes mauvaises pensées*, est récompensé par le Renaudot. Son nom est significatif : Le prénom Nina est le diminutif de Yasmîna alors que le nom Bouraoui (mot arabe) signifie celui qui raconte.

<sup>2</sup> Lebdaï, B., « Nina Bouraoui ou l'écriture iconoclaste », in CRASC (Ed.), *Ecriture féminine : réception, discours et représentations*, ENAG, 2010, p.207.

d'associations d'images et de langage donnant à l'œuvre la forme d'une autofiction. Elle s'est trouvée confrontée à une espèce d'affaiblissement de l'être « *qui l'a incité à un glissement vers une problématique plus personnelle du Moi* »<sup>1</sup> dira Marc Gontard. Face à un Moi décomposé, Nina Bouraoui procède à un dévoilement de son intimité où le vécu se mêle aux fantasmes créant de l'art à partir de ses peurs et construit un monde caché, ouvert à tous ceux qui osent le chercher.

Ce monde est-il le reflet de son imagination? Comment la littérature peut-elle constituer un espace où l'intime, le corporel, les sensations brutes, dénudées et violentes se dévoilent ?

### **1-L'autofiction: la liberté dans l'écriture**

Il n'est pas toujours aisé de discourir sur la question du moi en littérature car loin de faire l'unanimité, elle reste, toutefois, un concept en mouvement, un lieu privilégié de la création. Et la voie que suivent particulièrement les écrivains dans leurs quêtes et enquêtes sur soi est bien la fiction. Ils optent souvent pour les écritures autofictionnelles qui tendent à leur montrer les multiples perceptions d'eux-mêmes. Ces écritures permettent la manifestation du moi profond qui se fictionnalise en se projetant dans des personnages imaginaires. Combinant le contrat autobiographique et les stratégies propres au roman, l'autofiction instaure un pacte entre l'auteur et son lecteur, lequel est invité à parcourir un récit où se mêlent la fiction et la réalité.

De ce fait, l'auteur se révèle à lui-même, aux autres et à tous ses « moi » si bien qu'il devient « *en son texte, lui-même et un autre, le lecteur et le scripteur de sa propre vie* »<sup>2</sup>.

Dans l'œuvre de Nina Bouraoui, l'écriture du moi est un jeu fondamental, voire une représentation subversive puisque ce genre de texte offre une façon de « *constituer un sujet féminin subversif qui s'affirme face à une société patriarcale* »<sup>3</sup> affirme Trudy Agar-Mendousse.

L'auteure a opté, non sans justification, pour l'autofiction qui est, en fait, liée à la problématique de l'identité, une question fondamentale dans la littérature maghrébine.

Ses textes sont pour la plupart des récits autofictionnels écrits à la première personne. Ils incorporent plusieurs traits caractéristiques de l'autofiction, comme la fragmentation et la fictionnalisation de soi. L'accent sur le « *je* » est omniprésent dans son écriture, la subjectivité joue un rôle primordial dans son œuvre, médiation du soi textuel et sexuel. Le pronom *je* correspond aussi bien au sujet de l'énoncé, l'enfant que l'on a été, qu'au sujet de l'énonciation, en d'autres termes, le narrateur qui relate son enfance. La volonté de Bouraoui d'insérer sa vie personnelle dans ses récits est indiquée par les dédicaces très personnelles, à ses parents, sa sœur, ses ami(e)s, ses grands-parents.

Son œuvre *Age Blessé* évoque également diverses époques de la vie : l'enfance, l'adolescence, l'âge adulte et la vieillesse. Cette autofiction forme une

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<sup>1</sup> Gontard, M., (1983), *Le Moi étrange, littérature marocaine de langue française*, L'Harmattan, Paris, p.8.

<sup>2</sup> Hubier, S., *Littératures intimes: les expressions du moi, de l'autobiographie à l'autofiction*, Armand Colin, coll. « U », Paris, 2003, p. 127.

<sup>3</sup> Mendousse, T. A., *Violence et créativité de l'écriture algérienne au féminin*. L'Harmattan, Paris, 2006, p. 13.

trilogie avec *Poing Mort* et *Le Bal des Murènes*. Les trois titres se distinguent par l'évacuation du thème de l'Algérie coloniale et postcoloniale pour établir un espace-temps « indéfini » et une thématique de la douleur et de la mémoire.

Dans *Appelez-moi par mon prénom*, Bouraoui utilise la stratégie du dialogue, prônée par S.Dobrovsky<sup>1</sup>, entre autres, pour « référentialiser » la fiction. Elle voit dans l'histoire de P, « une façon de fixer son histoire, de mélanger la réalité à la fiction, refusant de séparer les choses ». (Bouraoui, 2008 : 79)

Un autre trait typique de l'autofiction caractérise ses textes est celui de la relation entre l'écriture et la psychanalyse. En effet, depuis S. Freud<sup>2</sup>, il est bien admis que l'œuvre a pour fonction la décharge d'un affect en mettant en mouvement le refoulé. La littérature a pour S.Freud une fonction cathartique. Les exemples sont nombreux dans toutes les littératures. Marcel Proust, Benjamin Constant, J.P Sartre, Rachid Boudjedra, à titre illustratif, ont connu des blessures indélébiles dans leur enfance, mais qui seront, d'ailleurs, à l'origine de leurs créations.

Dans les autofictions de Bouraoui, les fantasmes jalonnent son écriture. Le lecteur apprend dans *Mes Mauvais pensées* que sa relation avec sa mère est vitale. Son véritable amour est et reste sa mère. Un amour qui confirmerait le complexe d'Oedipe décalé : « [...] je pense que je suis dans un cercle amoureux dont ma mère occupe le centre » (Bouraoui, 2005 :32). Et c'est entre une mère et son enfant que se meut l'autre autofiction *l'âge blessé*.

L'écrivain engage, donc, sa propre activité inconsciente dans son écriture. Le rêve, pierre angulaire dans la théorie freudienne, est la base même de la psychanalyse. Il se présente dans les œuvres de Bouraoui parfois comme moyen de survie, et des fois comme un moyen de promouvoir sa propre indépendance, sa liberté personnelle en passant par une vraie découverte de soi. Le rêve de la narratrice de *l'âge blessé* est présenté comme une fantaisie pure : « je pénètre une réalité invalide, fabriquée, cousue, une fantasmagorie » (Bouraoui, 1998: 83-84).

L'écrivaine rêve de reconstituer son vécu personnel. Elle invente un prénom, un corps masculin pour être homme, enfin, pour réaliser son rêve :

Je prends un autre prénom, Ahmed. Je jette mes robes. Je coupe mes cheveux. Je me fais disparaître. J'intègre le pays des hommes. Je suis effrontée. Je soutiens leur regard. Je vole leurs manières. J'apprends vite. Je casse ma voix. ((Bouraoui, 2000:15)

Aussi, pour les critiques, le lecteur de ses textes a une place privilégiée puisque l'une des stratégies autofictionnelles est la séduction du lecteur. Bouraoui réussit, effectivement, à partager sa vision déviée du monde et, à travers la reconstruction de ses souvenirs, à mettre à nu « sa conscience réelle-fictionnelle ».

Dans *Garçon Manqué*, Nina Bouraoui passe du vécu à la fiction grâce à l'emploi d'une écriture thérapeutique psychanalytique expliquant ses troubles psychiques et ses souffrances. Les mots vont servir à la narratrice dans *La voyeuse interdite* d'échapper au monde étouffant, une façon comme une autre de sublimer

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<sup>1</sup> Serge Dobrovsky est un professeur, critique et romancier. Il a créé à la fin des années 1970 le terme d'autofiction, qui est apparu en 4ème de couverture de son roman, *Fils* (1977).

<sup>2</sup> Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) a inventé la psychanalyse et théorisé les notions de conscient, d'inconscient, de rêve, de refoulement, de transfert ou encore de complexe d'Œdipe.

cette difficulté d'être qui s'exorcise aussi dans *Mes mauvaises pensées* par la possibilité de s'inventer, d'échapper à soi pour d'autres espaces identitaires.

Enfin, en optant pour la dimension autofictionnelle, l'auteure s'offre plus de liberté. Elle donne libre cours à l'invention : « *J'invente un autre monde* » (*Ibidem* : 28), affirme Nina. Elle se donne la liberté de relater des événements qui peuvent exister dans la vie réelle et qui ont une relation avec l'univers de la France et celui de l'Algérie.

Ainsi, partant de l'idée de Serge Doubrovsky, selon laquelle l'auteur utilise l'écriture autofictionnelle pour rendre sa vie parfaite et typique aux yeux des lecteurs, nous pouvons affirmer que l'autofiction semble qualifier plus précisément l'écriture de Nina Bouraoui qui est un être fractionné, déconstruit mais qui se découvre dans l'écriture et qui s'interroge pour ne pas s'affirmer, elle est une pluralité, elle n'est jamais une.

Pour raconter l'auto-fiction que Milan Kundera appelle « l'ego expérimental »<sup>1</sup>, Bouraoui plonge dans les méandres de son enfance, le gouffre de ses désirs refoulés, de ses fractures qui se dévoilent dans l'écrit autofictionnel. Celui-ci devient, alors, le moyen propice pour l'écrivaine pour se mettre elle-même en question et revendiquer son identité fracturée, comme l'affirme Arnaud Genon dans son article intitulé « Note sur l'autofiction et la question du sujet »<sup>2</sup>.

## 2-Secrets et souvenirs d'enfance

La réception critique, universitaire ou journalistique, a noté avec intérêt la récurrence de certains thèmes chez Nina Bouraoui. Celui qui revient particulièrement, mais non gratuitement, dans ses écrits autofictionnels est l'enfance qui est le ciment de la vie. Les souvenirs, devenus secrets, les mémoires enfantines sont multiples. Ils nourrissent, alimentent et donnent de l'énergie à la partie fictionnelle de la narratrice. Tous parcourent sa production autofictionnelle. Tirés du silence et de l'oubli, les secrets des narratrices prennent place comme le véritable sujet de son œuvre.

Ainsi, dans *Jour de Séisme*, le texte qui ressemblerait au tremblement d'une terre ravagée par la guerre et la violence se concentre sur les paysages de son enfance algérienne.

De son côté, placée devant un mur - son miroir-, la narratrice de *Mes mauvaises pensées* voit passer, une à une, les images oubliées, puis retrouvées d'un kaléidoscope familial allant de son enfance jusqu'au moment de raconter.

L'enfance est aussi fortement liée à l'espace topographique dans les textes autofictionnels bouraouins. Des villes de deux pays (L'Algérie et la France) reviennent dans les récits : Alger et Rennes ou Alger et Paris. En revanche, un troisième espace ou «The Third space » est représenté par Tivoli (Italie). Chacun de ces espaces renvoie à une étape dans l'apprentissage de son identité.

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<sup>1</sup> Pour Milan Kundera, l'ego expérimental, étant une projection possible de soi dans le monde de la fiction, nous permet de comprendre le va-et-vient entre réalité vécue et création romanesque, donc imaginaire.

<sup>2</sup> Genon, A., « Note sur l'autofiction et la question du sujet », janvier 2007, La Revue des Ressources, [www.larevuedesressources.org/article](http://www.larevuedesressources.org/article).

Nina Bouraoui affirme qu'elle a vécue en Algérie une enfance difficile si bien qu'elle a influencé son œuvre. D'ailleurs, elle se nourrit de ses souvenirs d'enfant pour créer la ville d'Alger:

[...] l'Algérie qui revient par superposition d'images : la mer, la baie, les palmiers, les jeunes garçons qui sifflent sur la Promenade, ces yeux, les yeux de mon enfance. J'ai retrouvé mon paradis [...] et j'ai retrouvé mon enfer. (Bouraoui, 2005 : 13)

Thématisée dans ses liens à l'enfance et à l'identité dans *Le jour du séisme* et *Garçon manqué*, l'Algérie est le pays de son enfance, le souvenir d'un temps heureux, d'innocence, séparé de la violence décrite dans les romans précédents, dont les récits font valoir le renforcement de l'existence de ses désirs constructifs. C'est le « lieu silencieux que je tiens secret » (Ibidem : 13), confie la narratrice de *Mes mauvaises pensées*.

Elle se remémore des événements qui l'ont marquée telle la visite au cinéma avec sa mère ou encore le personnage Zhor, à qui elle s'identifiera, la femme qui garde Nina et sa sœur pour une nuit quand leurs parents sont conviés à un mariage. Elle se souvient, néanmoins, avec un sentiment différent des paysages dévorants comme « *le soleil mangeait nos visages* » (Bouraoui, 2010, p. 30), ou encore « *Le ciment mangeait tout, la peau de nos codes et de nos genoux.* » (Ibidem : 39).

De plus, ses souvenirs la forcent à faire face à et à revivre des réalités douloureuses. Les accidents sont autant d'événements marquants de l'enfance de la narratrice, comme la tentative d'enlèvement dont elle est victime et qu'elle devra payer ensuite à sa sœur qui l'a sauvée :

Tu ne sais pas, Amine, qu'un homme a voulu m'enlever? Tu ne sais pas, Amine, tous les enfants qui disparaissent en Algérie ? Tu ne sais pas, Amine, l'intelligence de ma sœur, sa rapidité ? Tu ne sais pas, Amine, qu'elle m'a sauvée, avec sa force d'enfant ? (Bouraoui, 2000 :45)

L'autre exemple regrettable est celui de la noyade de l'Amie, celle de l'enfant dont elle est témoin en Algérie (Bouraoui, 2005 :135). Désignée tant au propre qu'au figuré, la noyade devient l'occasion d'une métaphore du mouvement de la narratrice qui tombe en elle, qui glisse sous la surface du monde.

Enfin, la mémoire, corporelle chez Bouraoui, pénètre le temps, rassemblant le passé et le présent dans un réseau d'images de violence et de peur qui trouve son origine dans les mémoires d'une enfance extravagante.

L'enfance est, alors, un espace intimement connecté à la sauvagerie, à la violence, à la sensualité, mais encore à l'amour et au bonheur. Les évocations des accidents évités de peu, du pays perdu, de l'amour sont les secrets Bouraouiens qui font écrire, toutefois, la mort demeure au secret. Dans ses textes, les exemples fusent comme la mort frôlée dans l'enfance lors d'un choc toxique, la mort comme une répétition chaque fois que la mère « étouffe », l'agonie de la grand-mère.

Un passage dans *L'âge Blessé* nous montre que l'enfance est surtout une étape de la vie qui prend fin et que l'écrivaine utilise comme tremplin pour arriver à d'autres échelles de sa vie :

Je devenais mon propre témoin, et par un effort réflexif, je me regardais éteindre l'aventure. Les objets avaient revêtu le voile de la mort, avant l'heure, j'assistais et participais à de joyeuses funérailles : les miennes. J'enterrais mon enfance pour aller vivre au-delà d'elle, de moi et du connu (Bouraoui, 1998: 124)

Il s'avère, alors, que la quête de la narratrice adulte par sa tentative de trouver dans ses souvenirs la chaleur d'une enfance sécurisée change et se

métamorphose. Elle est transformée en une quête frénétique d'expériences bouleversantes à la base de la condition d'exil ressentie par la narratrice. S'arrêtant peu devant les moments idylliques de l'enfance, l'auteure souligne notamment la perte identitaire, la fracture qui s'opère une fois l'enfance terminée. Dans *Mes mauvaises pensées*, le souvenir de l'Algérie revient pour se rendre à l'écriture, coupable d'une déchirure de soi qui constituera l'œuvre de Bouraoui. C'est le témoin de la faille géographique, familiale et identitaire d'un sujet écartelé entre Rennes (La France) et Alger (L'Algérie).

### 3-Double culture et l'identité fracturée

Il n'est pas loisible de constater une idée bien confirmée, celle de l'intérêt des écrivains postcoloniaux de la question de l'identité. Et Nina Bouraoui, à l'instar des écrivains maghrébins consacrés, rend compte à son tour dans ses textes de la problématique question de l'identité culturelle et littéraire.

Elle décrit la complexité de son identité, composée de deux exils, entre deux terres, deux langues, deux cultures. Le voyage qu'elle accomplit par l'écriture la transporte à l'intérieur d'elle-même, au cœur de son identité hybride. Elle construit son œuvre à partir de cette identité plurielle. Elle n'est plus le produit de la décolonisation. Nina Bouraoui, écartelée entre deux cultures, vit et exprime dans ses écrits autofictionnels un mal être identitaire.

Issue d'un mariage mixte, comme l'écrivaine, la narratrice de *Garçon manqué*, appartient aux deux pays de ses parents mais elle est en même temps exilée ou étrangère dans ces pays.

Elle se sent toujours «*hors contexte* » (Bouraoui, 2000 : 121), elle reste en clivage par rapport à son appartenance. « *La France m'oublie. L'Algérie ne me reconnaît pas. Ici l'identité se fait. Elle est double et brisée* » (*Ibidem*: 29), clame-t-elle.

Yasmina ou Nina n'est ni tout à fait Française, ni Algérienne. En Algérie, elle est considérée Française ; en France, elle devient Algérienne. Les Algériens la considèrent comme française alors que les Français la voient comme une fille des «*pièdes-noirs de la deuxième génération* » (*Ibidem*: 74). La protagoniste-narratrice se sent française en Algérie et algérienne en France. Elle vit un mal être identitaire, étouffant et dur à supporter. Ballotée entre les deux rives, elle doit vivre un exil forcé. Mais vivre entre deux cultures implique nécessairement «*porter une identité de fracture* » (*Ibidem*: 19).

C'est aussi le cas de Fikria<sup>1</sup>, la narratrice de *La voyeuse interdite*, qui souffre d'une crise de repères due à l'absence d'identification aux images de ses deux parents. Le père, odieux, reste muet alors que la mère, indifférente, lui tourne le dos. C'est une vision métaphorique de la déchirure et de l'absence de points de repères de la romancière elle-même.

De plus, ses personnages errent en quête de repères. La perte de soi, la double vie, le double parcours, la double culture rendent compte non seulement d'un mal être identitaire mais également d'un déracinement. Le lecteur de *Mes mauvaises pensées* remarquera, sans difficultés, que ce malaise identitaire est accompagné du sentiment de déracinement. L'arrivée à Paris du protagoniste est liée à une date symbolique, c'est «*le cinq octobre mille neuf cent quatre-vingt-un*

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<sup>1</sup> Le prénom Fikria est un lexème arabe qui signifie l'intellectuelle.



»<sup>1</sup> ( Bouraoui, 2005 :100). Elle n'est pas exilée, mais « déracinée ». Son arrivée à Paris correspond à une perte de soi, réelle métamorphose qui inaugure l'autre, l'étrangère à elle-même qui oublie l'Algérie.

Et devant les difficultés de conciliation entre les deux cultures, cette crise identitaire, due à un exil complexe et ambigu, aura sans doute des conséquences douloureuses : en plus du sentiment de peur et de tristesse qui domine ses nuits, c'est, notamment, la confusion, autrement dit, l'insécurité qui meuble ses journées. En Algérie, où l'ambiance est celle de la guerre, tendue, hostile et dangereuse, Nina paraît française. Or, durant ses vacances en France, où le temps est celui est du plaisir, de l'abondance et de l'amour, elle est confrontée à une autre culture, elle se sent étrangère, les gens la trouvent différente et exotique. Toute tentative d'appartenance identitaire semble vouée à l'échec. La situation ressemblerait à une plaie bien cicatrisée. J.Kristeva voit dans la double identité « *la marque ambiguë d'une cicatrice* »<sup>2</sup>.

Dans *Garçon manqué*, les paroles de Nina évoquent tout son désespoir : apatride, porteuse d'une identité que Bouraoui définit « *double et brisée* » (Bouraoui, 2000 : 29), le personnage ne réussit pas à être ni algérien ni français entièrement. L'identité des protagonistes est donc fracturée, fragmentée.

La confusion chez la narratrice de Bouraoui est aggravée par le fait qu'elle refuse d'accepter son identité de fille, que l'entourage lui impose. La remise en question de son identité nationale est doublée de son identité sexuelle. Nina se cache derrière une nouvelle identité masculine et devient Ahmed. L'enfant est obligée de vivre dans le mensonge et dans la solitude.

Je passe de Yasmina à Nina. De Nina à Ahmed. D'Ahmed à Brio. C'est un assassinat. C'est un infanticide. C'est un suicide. Je ne sais pas qui je suis. Une et multiple. Menteuse et vraie. Forte et fragile. Fille et garçon. (*Ibidem*: 60)

Nina exprime de façon claire l'éclatement de son identité dans le passage suivant :

Je ne sais plus qui je suis au jardin de Maurepas. Une fille ? Un garçon ? L'arrière-petite-fille de Marie ? La petite-fille de Rabiâ ? L'enfant de Méré ? Le fils de Rachid ? Qui ? La Française ? L'Algérienne ? L'Algéro-Française ? De quel côté de la barrière ? (*Ibidem* : 145)

Ses différentes quêtes l'amèneront vers une conviction : celle du retour à l'Histoire. En effet, c'est dans l'Histoire qu'elle trouvera l'origine de la violence : les souvenirs de la guerre de libération reviennent souvent dans les textes.

Dans *Garçon manqué*, les sociétés algérienne et française, sont hantées par la période coloniale, et sont marquées par les souvenirs d'une guerre sanginaire. Ceci est exemplifié par la violence verbale et le sentiment de haine et de mépris qui s'en dégage. L'étranger, en France, est désigné par des termes de valeur dépréciative, dédaigneuse comme : « *Raton, youpin, négro, pédé, melon* » (*Ibidem*: 122). Et cela se manifeste principalement lors de la rencontre entre des groupes où règne le manque, voire l'absence, de tolérance ce qui crée des fossés entre les gens et entraîne des fractures symboliques. Celles-ci sont inscrites sur le

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<sup>1</sup> Le 5 octobre 1981 correspond à la date du séisme de la ville d'El Asnam, appelé de nos jours Chlef.

<sup>2</sup> Kristeva, J., *Étrangers à nous-mêmes*, Fayard, Paris, 1988, p.13.

terrain des déchirements, en l'occurrence, le corps de la narratrice. « *Je suis dans la guerre d'Algérie. Je porte le conflit* » (*Ibidem*: 31) dit Nina.

Cependant, contre les discours et les histoires de haine et d'intolérance, Bouraoui fait de la résistance aux violences et aux silences qui ont produit ses fractures. Son histoire met en question les frontières entre l'Algérie et la France et entre filles et garçons (au moins dans *Garçon manqué*).

Son récit est une manière de résister à la volonté de la société de catégoriser et au racisme sous-jacent. Pour cela, la démarche qu'elle choisira est l'écriture : « *C'est mieux, ça, la haine de l'autre écrite et révélée dans un livre* » (Bouraoui, 2000 : 132).

De ce fait, l'écriture devient la porte qui conduit Bouraoui à son enfance, à sa jeunesse, à sa condition sexuelle. Ce ne sera, qu'à travers elle, que l'auteur nous montrera son « moi » le plus profond, le plus personnel. L'écriture, cicatrice et réparation, devient également une arme de guérison, voire de vengeance : « *je veux une arme pour me défendre (...)* » (*Ibidem*: 7) dit Nina.

En fait, Nina Bouraoui ne rejette pas sa double culture, mais se réinvente une nouvelle identité grâce à l'écriture qui se veut réconciliation, une cohabitation des deux familles, des deux cultures.

### **Conclusion**

Il nous est permis de dire en conclusion que Nina Bouraoui, à partir de ses écrits autofictionnels, est animée d'un réel désir de s'exprimer et d'écrire pour panser ses blessures par la possibilité de s'inventer, d'échapper à soi pour d'autres espaces identitaires. Elle est aussi armée de la volonté de créer son propre univers où les pas de ses narratrices ravivent les plaies béantes de l'enfance blessée et tirent, ainsi, leur identité de ce qu'ils ressentent comme déchirure. Elle est, enfin, prise par le projet de raconter son histoire pour sortir de sa crise identitaire, pour vivre la joie de la liberté du mouvement dans un espace neutre qui n'est ni l'Algérie de son enfance, ni la France, son pays d'accueil.

Ainsi, Nina arrive à accepter son identité hybride pour dépasser les frontières et les conflits. Elle construit à partir de sa mixité féconde un univers romanesque pour donner libre cours à une autofiction « fictive ». Un univers où deux vies, deux cultures se rencontrent, se perdent, mais se chevauchent en une seule personne, réunissant tous les fragments de ses identités en une seule (Nina Bouraoui l'écrivaine). Elle se libère, en conséquence, des contraintes de la fiction pour relater et partager son enfance blessée, son déracinement, son déchirement et ses ruptures. C'est son écriture, sa dérobade, qui contribue à dire la fracture, la séparation et qui lui ouvre, également, la voie pour une nouvelle vie, une renaissance, afin de s'ouvrir à la vie et de se réconcilier avec soi et avec les autres. Alors, cette écriture, pleine d'audace, est singulière, c'est ce qui la distingue notamment des autres écrivaines algériennes.

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## **HISTOIRE ET DESTIN INDIVIDUEL DANS L'ŒUVRE DE MARIN PREDA**

**Raluca Cristina DRAGOMIR\***

***Résumé:** If the history of the last century was marked by violence, terror and lack of human solidarity, Marin Preda is deeply interested in the individual destiny. He considers that, as a writer, he belongs to his time and that his duty is to assume the responsibility of the human condition in history. All his characters fight against the vicissitudes of their time. Love, one of the most privileged topics in his novels, becomes a way of perfecting the human being and a possibility to lucidly and impartially explore this individual time.*

***Mots-clés :** history, destiny, Marin Preda.*

L'image du XXe siècle apparaît sombre, accablée par les bouleversements sanglants des deux conflagrations mondiales. Philosophes, écrivains et artistes concordent dans la conviction que le siècle passé est défini par la violence, la terreur et le manque de solidarité entre les gens. Tous les échecs de l'humanité se cachent à l'ombre des « idées maudites », qui mènent à ce que « nous nous éloignons de nous-mêmes ». (Preda, 1980 : 136)

Contre une telle idée, absolutisée par les idéologues du temps, Marin Preda se prononce fermement, en faisant sienne la position de celui qui est pleinement conscient de l'unicité de l'être humain :

L'écrivain est intéressé par le destin des gens. L'histoire s'impose comme une idée, comme une nécessité. Cela n'est pas abyssal et nous ne pouvons pas nous en contenter. Il est très facile pour un écrivain de se cacher derrière la nécessité historique et de s'y esquiver, de se demander non combien de nécessité contient l'histoire, mais quel est le destin de chacun, étant conscient du fait que l'homme n'a qu'une vie, tandis que l'histoire est lente et indifférente. (Preda, 2004 : 37)

A côté de la nécessité historique, nous retrouvons aussi la peur de quelques inconscients du moment de ne pas participer pleinement aux événements, de rester en-dehors des événements historiques :

Il y a eu des désespérés qui disaient que la Roumanie ne faisait pas d'histoire. En fait, tous les gens font l'histoire. Leur erreur fondamentale est qu'ils refusent souvent de voir que l'histoire coule dans de longues spirales, alors qu'ils aimeraient que ces spirales soient courtes et qu'ils aient le rôle principal. Dans les grandes spirales il n'y a pas de rôle principal, ni rôle secondaire. Tout le monde est pris dans le vertige. » (Preda, 1989 : 473)

L'écrivain suit les réactions des gens menacés par les vicissitudes de l'histoire ; les menaces qui viennent au monde sont nombreuses et diverses, à partir de la perte des valeurs matérielles, moins importantes, jusqu'à la destruction de

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\* Université "Dunrea de Jos" de Galați, [raluca.dragomir@ugal.ro](mailto:raluca.dragomir@ugal.ro)

l'essence humaine, par l'aliénation de ses valeurs morales fondamentales, annulées par une histoire malade :

Je relis les notes de Preda sur l'art et j'observe deux types d'obsessions : l'une qui se réfère à la possibilité de l'œuvre de récupérer entièrement l'être humain, alors que l'autre prend l'acte de création tel qu'il est. Pour lui, comme pour Sartre, écrire signifie découvrir le sens de la plénitude et de la totalité de l'homme, faire que l'individu se sente essentiel par rapport à l'univers. Preda n'est pas l'homme à envisager un fragment de la vie, il est l'homme de la totalité, comme Malraux, Camus et, encore une fois, comme Sartre. (Simion, 1985 : 303)

La conscience est soumise à des transformations douloureuses, qui éloignent l'homme de son essence. Dans *Convorbiri cu Marin Preda*, nous surprenons la perplexité et la douleur de l'écrivain qui réfléchit à la destruction progressive de la personnalité humaine : après avoir dépassé le besoin de se sentir à l'abri, loin du froid et de la famine :

L'homme [...] devrait lever ses yeux vers quelque chose de profond et vivre sans inquiétude, sans peur, sans être obsédé par la démolition de ce qui fut accompli. [...] Est-il possible d'imaginer que les gens qui ont remporté de telles victoires voudraient reculer à l'époque de l'orang-outang ? Se seraient-ils égarés, dans leur frénésie, et ne pouvaient-ils plus retrouver leur âme perdue ? (Mugur, 1973 : 223)

Humiliés et martyrisés, les gens humilient et martyrisent à leur tour et le processus de deshumanisation se poursuit, jusqu'à ce que, par l'acceptation coupable, les anciennes valeurs disparaissent. Les vainqueurs dans ce processus dramatique détruisent surtout la solidarité humaine, la confiance dans les autres, sans laquelle rien ne peut exister ; les gens sont ainsi atteints dans l'intimité de leur esprit, dans l'espace sécurisant de leur conscience, où chacun se sentait libre.

Quelle est la raison essentielle de ce renversement des valeurs ? Comment est-il possible que des individus obscurs occupent la scène de l'histoire et décident du destin des peuples ? Marin Preda ne la nomme pas, mais dans ses romans manque une entité, dont l'absence implique l'avalanche des non-valeurs au monde : la Divinité. C'est l'absence de la force coordonnatrice de la réalité qui permet à l'irréel de jaillir : les actions humaines perdent leur justification, le bien ne se distingue plus du mal, la perspective humaine égoïste domine à défaut d'une perspective transcendante, ordonnatrice, de l'univers.

Au fil du temps, tous les philosophes ont exprimé des doutes sur l'existence de la Divinité mais le temps l'a transformée en certitude ; une des idées de Platon gagne une valeur d'axiome pour Victor Petrini, personnage soumis de manière arbitraire aux échecs perpétuels : « Si la mort était la fin de tout, les plus favorisés seraient les salauds, la mort les délivrerait de leur corps et de leur âme et de leurs péchés... et le silence sur leurs tombeaux serait pareil au silence tombé sur les vertueux. » (Preda, 1980 : 11)

Le doute ne se manifeste pas seulement pour le protagoniste du roman *Cel mai iubit dintre p mânteni* mais aussi pour Călin Surupceanu, le prototype de l'innocent de *Intrusul* ; ce doute se fait sentir surtout dans les situations limite,

lorsque le personnage devient la victime des circonstances absurdes, qui l'impliquent sans qu'il ait aucune faute apparente :

Comment était-il possible ? En vain ai-je passé des nuits et des jours entiers au bord de l'océan, la réponse ne venait pas. Mais il se fit un silence étrange où les questions, sans avoir eu une réponse, ne se posaient plus. Et bientôt, mon imagination s'éteignit, elle aussi, et je revins au présent d'où je m'étais évadé. J'avais plongé dans les abîmes les plus insondables de l'espoir et je n'avais plus avancé. Maintenant je devais y renoncer. (Preda, 2008 : 298)

Par ses personnages, le prosateur réitère la thèse de Lucian Blaga, conformément à laquelle, dans l'éternité, Dieu et Satan seraient frères, l'un au service de l'autre. Notre existence serait alors seulement le jeu du hasard, à la bonne volonté d'un destin médiocre « où tu seras obligé de détruire, bien que ton destin soit de bâtir ». (Preda, 2008 : 292)

Par ses personnages, Marin Preda réfléchit que Dieu a abandonné ce monde ; « l'œil omniscient » ne veille plus, alors que les signes saints des coins du triangle sont remplacés par la brutalité, l'ignorance et la méchanceté. Sous ce signe, l'univers tout entier paraît dépourvu de toute signification et l'individu n'est qu'une présence à peine saisissable, un ombre. Pourtant, la pensée de l'écrivain ne peut pas s'arrêter à une conception si sombre et déçue sur la condition humaine. « L'homme n'est pas fait pour être vaincu ! » (Preda, 1989 : 322) s'exclame-t-il par la voix de Ilie Moromete, le personnage pivot de son œuvre. La présence de la Divinité se fait sentir dans les grands cycles de la nature et dans la vie des gens qui ne sont jamais totalement vaincus et peuvent se sauver de l'abjection de la réalité – soit par la contemplation, comme Ilie Moromete, soit par l'amour, comme Niculae ou par la création, comme Victor Petrini. Bien que vivante et visible, la Lumière ne se laisse pas étudier, nous dit Marin Preda. C'est là le même doute exprimé par Tudor Arghezi dans ses *Psalmi* :

Cela voudrait signifier que dans ce jeu de cache-cache avec la Lumière, rien ne se passe dans la nature sans que Quelqu'un le sache ? Ou, plus précisément, sans l'intervention d'une Conscience ? Jusque-là, nous avons considéré la Lumière comme la douce onde venue du soleil pour chauffer nos visages et germer les graines. Et, tout d'un coup, nous apprenons... (Preda, 1980 : 370)

Pourquoi Dieu s'est-il retiré et ne guide plus la vie des gens ? D'où vient la sensation de cette terrible solitude de l'être, « dans un monde où Dieu vieilli ne peut plus éloigner sa solitude terrible devant un univers de poix, qui paraît absurde, si c'est nous-mêmes cet univers ? ». (Preda, 1980 : 445)

Dans son œuvre, Preda laisse planer une culpabilité complexe, « l'homme a dévoilé tout ce qu'il avait de plus laid » et a créé « des structures sociales et des normes [...] qui ont fait que les gens changent et prennent des apparences monstrueuses » (Preda, 1989 : 287). Ces structures sociales apparaissent suite à l'acceptation lâche et à l'abdication de la dignité humaine. Les premiers signes apparaissent dans le monde paysan : l'instauration du pouvoir légionnaire est marquée dans Silistea par l'assassinat de Dumitru lui Nae, auquel les gens assistent sans réagir aucunement, complices par leur silence.

Dans le monde citadin, l'acceptation se manifeste de manière beaucoup plus complexe, doublée, le plus souvent, du désir d'accéder au pouvoir. Les « gaspilleurs » sont coupables : ils n'ont pas de raison pratique, ni de pouvoir de discerner entre la vie des idées et la vie réelle. Ils s'engagent dans le combat mais sont perdants à cause de la pureté morale. À leur tour, les vrais intellectuels quittent la dispute entre la vérité et l'idée et perdent ainsi la chance de trouver des solutions aux « questions insolubles ».

L'image du pouvoir change aussi, la démocratie parlementaire est insuffisante pour la soif de pouvoir absolu manifestée par les « représentants des masses ». Pour l'homme ordinaire, le pouvoir ne signifie pas représenter les autres mais disposer du destin des autres. Les gens sont bourreaux ou victimes : les bourreaux ont délibérément choisi de châtier leurs victimes innocentes, mais rien ne pouvait se passer sans la complicité lâche des autres. Lors des épurations dans les facultés, les jeunes font le jeu des maîtres du jour, sans se rendre compte que l'hypostase de témoin à un crime peut toujours changer avec celle de victime ; les valeurs au nom desquelles les étudiants sacrifient, sans scrupules, leurs collègues sont arbitraires, la culpabilité qui découle de la lâcheté de leur attitude est d'autant plus grave : « entre professeur et maçon y-a-t-il vraiment une si grande différence que se trouver de l'autre côté signifierait le plus grand malheur, pire que de perdre son âme ? Car, c'est une illusion de se considérer le même après avoir donné son accord pour un acte ignoble. » (Preda, 1980 : 95)

Dans ce monde sombre, Marin Preda observe que la délation, la haine et la violence fleurissent ; à l'époque, la haine devient un principe universel alors que la violence surgit du pouvoir exercé par des gens ordinaires irresponsables. L'écrivain refuse d'attribuer à une force divine ces bouleversements catastrophiques de l'ordre humain : dans le volume *Creare i moral*, il polémique avec la conception de Tolstoï, considérant que les peuples sont les seuls coupables pour les tourments qui les ont emportés.

Y-at-il encore de l'espoir dans cet univers sombre, un salut pour l'individu confronté à toutes les adversités de l'histoire ? Avec toute son œuvre, Marin Preda nous assure que le sens du devenir humain est ascendant, que la condition humaine reste, fondamentalement, la même, sensible aux principes créateurs du bien et du beau, même si, à certaines époques, ils sont accablés par les fausses valeurs. Dans *Cel mai iubit dintre p mânteni*, l'auteur établit une analogie révélatrice entre l'homme ordinaire et le grain de sable, porté de manière aléatoire par le vent et les vagues.

Tous les romans de Marin Preda mettent en exergue l'idée de la victoire de l'homme par l'idée. La pensée, la seule faculté qui distingue l'homme des êtres qui l'entourent, le fait de triompher de l'histoire et des questions sans réponse. Le philosophe Petrini conçoit une nouvelle gnose, qui puisse rétablir l'harmonie de la conscience humaine scindée et assure le triomphe des vraies valeurs anciennes authentiques de l'humanité. C'est aussi un appel adressé à l'humanité de faire front par la pensée aux tempêtes qui bouleversent l'histoire de l'humanité.

C'est aussi par la pensée que l'échec peut devenir la prémisse d'une vraie victoire : l'échec dans l'ordre quotidien du monde est devenu pour Victor Petrini la prémisse de la victoire dans l'esprit. Ainsi que par la connaissance, la rescousse de l'homme peut se faire par l'amour, sentiment auquel Marin Preda dédie des réflexions profondes, concernant non seulement le sentiment érotique ou religieux,

mais aussi le principe universel de l'amour plus fort que la haine et, par cela, créateur de valeurs.

L'amour n'est pas seulement un des thèmes privilégiés du dernier roman du prosateur, il unit l'œuvre dans une aspiration vers le perfectionnement de l'être humain : dans *Morome ii*, l'amour du fils pour son père facilite la perpétuation des valeurs du village traditionnel ; dans *Marele singuratic*, l'amour donne du sens à la création artistique ; dans *Delirul*, l'amour aide Paul tefan à garder son intégrité morale lors du désastre de la guerre. Meme dans *Risipitorii* ou *Intrusul*, romans de l'échec de l'amour, les personnages rêvent à une humanité guidée par l'amour.

Pour l'écrivain, la recherche de l'amour devient une possibilité d'explorer de manière lucide et impartiale l'histoire de son temps. Nous considérons que c'est la grande nouveauté par laquelle l'œuvre de Marin Preda a été publiée, dans une époque où la censure était si stricte. Se référant à *Romeo et Juliette*, l'écrivain observe que le dramaturge, préoccupé par le malheur des deux amoureux, ne prête pas du tout attention à la peste qui avait empêché le moine Lorenzo d'arriver à temps, évitant ainsi la fin funeste. C'est le point de départ pour l'écrivain qui se déclare le partisan de « l'histoire qualitative », suggérant que, dans son œuvre, il décrira non seulement l'amour mais aussi la peste, l'époquerévolue dont l'histoire terrorisante a fait tant de victimes. À la recherche de l'amour, le bonheur le plus accessible aux mortels, les personnages de Marin Preda rencontrent la violence, l'abjection, la dissolution de la solidarité, la lâcheté et la méfiance. Par la trahison ou la mort, presque aucun personnage n'atteint son idéalérotique ; l'impossibilité de toucher au bonheur par l'intermédiaire de l'amour impose la conclusion de l'impossibilité d'atteindre les cimes de la croyance humaine, dans un monde figé dans une histoire malade, où l'homme est seul et les valeurs humaines pérennesannihilées.

Comment être à la hauteur de son destin ? Quel est le but de la vie ? Combien est-on coupable si on déserte la vérité ? Ce sont des questions que l'écrivain adresse au monde, à tous ses personnages et à sa propre biographie, tout comme Albert Camus dans son essai *Le Mythe de Sisyphe*. Si dans chacun de nous il y a un univers en herbe, alors l'œuvre de Marin Preda met l'accent sur l'apport de l'homme au destin du monde. « La Voie royale » du destin individuel, malgré toutes les vicissitudes de l'histoire est celle suggérée par Ilie Moromete : « Voilà ce que signifie, pour moi, un roi : un homme qui ne veut être ailleurs que là où il se trouve. » (Preda, 2009 : 118) Cela signifie être le maître de son propre destin. Il imagine que

L'harmonie pourrait aussi régner en dehors de soi, dans un monde chaotique, un monde qui ne permet nullement d'être soumis à la raison. Finalement, ce personnage si intelligent est naïf. Un enfant. Ce que Moromete ignore, Marin Preda en est pleinement conscient ; il ne se fait pas d'illusions. Encore plus, Moromete ne sent pas le besoin de méditer à sa sérénité. Ses soucis sont tout à fait différents. Alors que, pour l'écrivain, la sérénité est, lorsqu'elle se fait sentir, quelque chose de très précieux, un gain et une conclusion, qu'il doit défendre. Et qu'il défend, pleinement conscient. (Mugur, 1973 : 19)

Par l'exemple personnel et ses écrits, Marin Preda a représenté, dans une époque dominée par les fausses valeurs, l'opposition par la littérature. Florin Mugur observe également que le drame du vieux paysan est aussi le drame de la



famille. Presque tous les héros cherchent de former et de conserver une famille unie. Mais ils sont solitaires et l'abolition de la solitude n'est possible, de leur point de vue, qu'à travers une famille. Le personnage Niculae essaie d'échapper à la solitude par la participation à un effort commun, mais sans résultat.

Profondément lié au présent historique et à son impact sur l'être humain, l'écrivain a justifié toute son existence par l'aspiration vers la vraie littérature : « Le grand écrivain d'une époque est celui qui se confronte aux questions les plus graves de son temps et reprend les obsessions les plus profondes de son époque ». (Mugur, 1973 : 25) Marin Preda est, de ce point de vue, très proche de la conception de Jean-Paul Sartre, car l'écrivain se trouve dans son époque, il est un exposant de l'histoire et s'assume la responsabilité de l'homme dans l'histoire.

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## **LE REGARD CHEZ ROBBE-GRILLET - UNE MANIÈRE DE CONSTRUIRE LA RÉALITÉ**

**Corina-Amelia GEORGESCU\***

*Abstract: Acknowledged as one of the masterpieces of the XX<sup>th</sup> century French literature, the novel *Les Gommès* succeeds in showing how reality is first built by means of perception, being afterwards used to serve the purpose the narrator. Thus, the beginning of the Prologue of the novel includes each and one motifs and themes are later developed in the following chapters. Our paper aims at presenting the means by which space and events are blurred at the level of perception and how they become meaningful later on, in the book.*

*Keywords: look, perception, reality, space.*

### **1.Introduction**

Notre analyse se déroulera prenant en considération la première partie du Prologue du roman *Les Gommès*, et elle se propose de montrer le rôle de celle-ci dans la manière employée par Robbe-Grillet pour construire la réalité.

### **2.Le Nouveau Roman – L’Ecole du Regard**

Le Nouveau Roman réunit des romanciers qui rompent, d’une manière ou d’autre, avec le roman traditionnel, sans être un courant littéraire, avec tout ce que ce terme implique : un chef, une doctrine claire, un manifeste, mais plutôt une école littéraire. L’acte de naissance de ce mouvement peut être considéré le Colloque de Cerisy-la-Salle (juillet 1971) où des écrivains tels Michel Butor, Jean Ricardou, Alain Robbe-Grillet, Nathalie Sarraute, Claude Simon se sont fait remarquer. C’est Claude Simon qui tente d’expliquer comment ce rapprochement s’est opéré :

« Nous ne nous connaissions pas, et nous avions tous déjà pas mal écrit avant de nous trouver réunis aux Editions de Minuit (...) Nous nous trouvons spontanément d’accord pour rejeter un certain nombre de conventions qui régissent le roman traditionnel. Mais à partir de là, chacun de nous œuvre selon son tempérament. » (Thoraval, Bothorel, Dugast, 1976 : 9).

Les Editions qui acceptent de publier ce type de romans sont Minuit (pour la plupart) et Gallimard. Le commentaire de Simon montre clairement que le trait commun de ces romanciers était le refus des conventions mises en œuvre par le roman traditionnel. Dans ce contexte, l’expression « nouveau roman » se rapporte au fait que les écrivains se regroupant sous cette étiquette se caractérisent par « le refus des modèles narratifs du roman traditionnel et une même volonté d’explorer de nouveaux procédés romanesques » (Bonhomme, 1996 :16), essentiellement par le refus du roman de type balzacien.

C’est d’ailleurs Alain Robbe-Grillet qui exprime l’idée qu’il ne s’agit pas, avec le Nouveau Roman, d’une école littéraire ou bien d’un groupe d’écrivains

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\* Université de Pitesti, [georgescu\\_c@yahoo.fr](mailto:georgescu_c@yahoo.fr)

acceptant de se soumettre à des principes similaires, le seul principe commun étant, dans ce cas, le refus de tout ce qui constituait le noyau du roman traditionnel :

« Si j'emploie volontiers, dans bien des pages, le terme de Nouveau Roman, ce n'est pas pour désigner une école, ni même un groupe défini et constitué d'écrivains qui travailleraient dans le même sens ; il n'y a là qu'une appellation commode englobant tous ceux qui cherchent de nouvelles formes romanesques, capables d'exprimer (ou de créer) de nouvelles relations entre l'homme et le monde, tous ceux qui sont décidés à inventer le roman, c'est-à-dire à inventer l'homme. » (Robbe-Grillet, 1963 : 9).

### 3. Sensations, perceptions, représentations

Du point de vue strictement psychologique, les processus psychiques équivalant, même partiellement, au concept de regard sont la sensation, la perception et la représentation. On devra éclaircir ces trois termes pour savoir s'ils peuvent ou non être mis en relation avec le regard.

Selon Cosmovici (1996 : 95), **la sensation** implique la connaissance d'une caractéristique isolée d'un objet ou d'un phénomène au moment où celui-ci agit sur l'organe sensoriel. Chez l'adulte on ne rencontre pas de sensations isolées ; au contraire, on constate leur présence chez les animaux inférieurs ou chez les bébés, dans les premières semaines de vie. **La perception** consiste dans une connaissance des objets et des phénomènes dans leur totalité et au moment où ils agissent sur les organes sensoriels. A la différence de la sensation qui rend une caractéristique de l'objet, la perception produit une impression globale. **Les représentations** peuvent être définies en tant que la présence à notre esprit, de certains objets ou phénomènes, hors l'excitation actuelle des organes de sens.

Tenant compte de ces définitions, on pourrait rapprocher le concept de regard de celui de perception et, seulement dans des cas limites de celui de représentation. C'est pour cela que nous allons détailler un peu ce concept.

La perception peut être considérée un premier pas vers la connaissance ; elle est mise en relation avec la pensée, mais elle ne fournit pas de connaissance approfondie. Ce ne sont que les comparaisons et l'analyse qui permettent à la pensée d'aboutir au-delà des apparences.

Si on prend en considération la distinction opérée voir-regarder, on pourrait affirmer que *voir*, plus précisément *percevoir* est une étape qui précède de peu *regarder* ou qui est englobée inconsciemment dans celui-ci sans qu'il y ait une différence temporellement perceptible.

### 4. *Les Gommès* – vers une autre manière de construire la réalité

Le *Prologue* met en scène l'endroit, le moment et le personnage : l'endroit est une salle de café, le moment est à six heures du matin et le personnage est le patron de ce café :

« Dans la pénombre de la salle de café le patron dispose les tables et les chaises, les cendriers et les siphons d'eau gazeuse ; il est six heures du matin. » (Robbe-Grillet, 1953 :11)

Tout comme dans le théâtre antique, le *Prologue* a le rôle de montrer au lecteur / spectateur le décor et les personnages, mais contrairement à celui-ci où tout était clair, l'incipit que propose *Les Gommès* se caractérise justement par l'incertitude, par le manque de clarté ; on remarque une atmosphère où rien n'est

clair, rien n'a de contours précis au niveau de l'espace et où les événements sont « enveloppés de leur cerne d'erreur et de doute ». (Robbe-Grillet, 1953 :11)

L'espace est mis sous le signe de la pénombre et le patron n'a pas « le besoin de voir clair » ; si ce n'était l'habitude, ses gestes seraient sous le signe du « flottement des intentions humaines ». C'est ainsi que l'on construit, dès le début une isotopie de l'incertain, de l'ambiguïté, de la confusion ; dans cet espace où rien n'est précis, ce sont « de très anciennes lois [qui] règlent le détail des gestes » du patron. L'emploi du verbe « régler » attire l'attention car, dans son premier sens, il se rapporte à quelque chose de mécanique qui fait penser à un personnage comme une sorte de marionnette agissant non pas sous le signe de la raison, mais sous le signe d'une répétition qui le rapproche des robots ou, bien pire, des objets.

Si l'espace semble autonome pour quelques lignes, il ne l'est pas pour longtemps car, à partir de la huitième ligne, le narrateur donne l'impression d'un temps et d'un espace qui se superposent car le temps est mesurable uniquement à travers les gestes déroulés dans l'espace : « chaque seconde marque un pur mouvement : un pas de côté, la chaise à trente centimètres, trois coups de torchon, demi-tour à droite, deux pas en avant, chaque seconde marque, parfaite, égale, sans bavure. » (Robbe-Grillet, 1953 :11)

Le narrateur fait l'équivalence seconde-mouvement, c'est-à-dire temps-espace et les nombres qui définissent les mouvements rendent non seulement le désir de précision, mais aide le lecteur/spectateur à s'imaginer l'espace dans ses moindres détails, lui configurant tout, jusque les dimensions en centimètres. Parallèlement, on compte les secondes : « Trente et un. Trente-deux. Trente-trois. Trente-quatre. Trente-cinq. Trente-six. Trente-sept. Chaque seconde a sa place exacte. » On retrouve de nouveau l'association temps (seconde) et espace (place) qui semblent indivisibles.

Cette unité se reflète dans la diminution de l'importance que le temps acquiert : « Bientôt malheureusement le temps ne sera plus le maître. » (Robbe-Grillet, 1953 :11)

Le temps n'est plus celui qui maîtrise tout ; en fait, il perd ses attributs souverains en tant que temps chronologique, traditionnel et le lecteur est plongé dans un autre type de temps. Ce qui attire l'attention tout de suite c'est l'emploi du futur qui n'est pas accidentel car la phrase suivante recourt au même temps :

« [...] les événements de cette journée, si minimes qu'ils puissent être, vont dans quelques instants commencer leur besogne, entamer progressivement l'ordonnance idéale, introduire ça et là, sournoisement, une inversion, un décalage, une confusion, une courbure, pour accomplir peu à peu leur œuvre : un jour, au début de l'hiver, sans plan, sans direction, incompréhensible et monstrueux. » (Robbe-Grillet, 1953 :11)

L'anticipation vise les événements qui suivront le jour respectif et le lecteur a l'impression, tout comme dans le théâtre antique, qui raconte ces événements, bénéficiant d'une sorte d'omniscience. Enfin, ces événements représentent ce qui constitue la trame, l'action. L'adjectif « minimes » peut être lu dans deux sens : un sens propre désignant le fait qu'un nombre réduit d'événements auront lieu (ce sens étant conforme à ce que les nouveaux romanciers comprennent par « intrigue »), tout comme un sens figuré qui vise l'importance réduite de ce qui se passera, car ce qui compte n'est pas l'action, mais le regard qui la raconte.

La prolepse ne suffit plus et le narrateur explique qu'il s'agira d'un temps non-linéaire (« une inversion, un décalage, une confusion, une courbure »), les références mentionnant les différents « jeux narratifs » avec la temporalité : les changements portant sur l'ordre narratif ou bien sur la circularité du temps. Enfin, le lecteur est prévenu sur la durée de l'action qui se déroulera en 24 heures (« un jour ») conformément aux exigences du théâtre classique. Les caractéristiques de ce jour se rapportent d'un côté à l'imprédictibilité (« sans plan, sans direction ») qui rappellent une des innovations de Gide au niveau narratif, c'est-à-dire, le roman sans plan, et de l'autre côté, à une appréciation d'ordre subjective, tenant toujours à l'omniscience de celui qui raconte : ce jour sera « incompréhensible et monstrueux ». On a affaire à un temps indéfini, sans repères précis (suggéré par l'emploi de l'article indéfini), un temps à portée générique, semblable au temps mythique. Le plan et la direction sont des attributs de l'espace qui sont, dans ce cas, étendus au temps, uniquement pour souligner une temporalité du flou, de l'incertain, qui n'existe pas en soi, mais toujours placée dans le continuum espace-temps.

La présence du narrateur se résume à une focalisation externe et on a l'impression d'une caméra qui enregistre des images en détail. Tout semble vu d'en haut, à l'exception des quelques intrusions subjectives : *malheureusement, incompréhensible, monstrueux*.

La conjonction « mais » indique la rupture entre le temps mentionné dans le paragraphe antérieur et l'espace auquel on reviendra dans le paragraphe suivant ; l'espace est assimilé à une scène où on remarque : le personnage, le décor, la lumière :

« Mais il est encore trop tôt, la porte de la rue vient d'être déverrouillée, l'unique personnage présent en scène n'a pas encore recouvré son existence propre. Il est l'heure où les douze chaises descendent doucement des tables de faux marbre où elles viennent de passer la nuit. Rien de plus. Un bras machinal remet en place le décor.

Quand tout est prêt, la lumière s'allume... » (Robbe-Grillet, 1953 :11-12)

L'emploi du terme « personnage » à la place de « personne » associé à « un bras machinal » fait penser à une certaine artificialité. Tout est vu à travers un regard impersonnel : les chaises, des objets en fait, deviennent le sujet grammatical et la voix active remplace la voix passive ; il y a même un investissement avec des attributs humains de ces objets qui « passent la nuit » sur les tables. On admet que tout est rangé pour former un décor au-dessus duquel la lumière s'allume, le texte acquérant ainsi un caractère théâtral.

La lumière allumée rend possible la description du café :

« Un gros homme est là debout, le patron, cherchant à se reconnaître au milieu des tables et des chaises. Au-dessus du bar, la longue glace où flotte une image malade, le patron, verdâtre et les traits brouillés, hépatique et gras dans son aquarium. » (Robbe-Grillet, 1953 :12)

Le personnage est « un gros homme » dont on ne sait ni le nom, ni l'histoire ; tout ce que l'on sait est qu'il est le patron du café ; il est assimilé à une « image malade » qui « flotte » et ces caractéristiques la rendent confuse ; de plus, il n'a pas de traits physiques qui puissent l'individualiser, au contraire, ses traits sont « brouillés ». L'aquarium où il se trouve est en fait le café et il ressemble à un poisson emprisonné ; l'homme devient donc prisonnier de l'espace et des objets

qui l'entourent. A part cette présence humaine, l'espace du café n'inclut plus que le bar et la glace.

Le personnage devient de moins en moins consistant, caractéristique des personnages du Nouveau Roman, allant jusqu'à sa dissolution ; cette dissolution suggère un personnage sans consistance, une « silhouette » qui n'a plus aucune fonction (« elle n'a plus qu'à disparaître »). Le rôle assigné au personnage est un rôle secondaire : il ne fait que mettre au point le décor. Le narrateur construit toute une isotopie de l'effacement du personnage à l'aide des termes « se dissout », « silhouette », « disparaître », « trembloté », « décomposé », « fantôme », « hésitante », « ombre », « nébuleuse », « halo ». Enfin, certains termes renvoient discrètement à l'idée de mort ; on y parle de « disparaître », « décomposé », « fantôme », « ombre » s'associant au terme « noyé ». Le personnage est visualisé de dehors, à travers le vitre qui devient une sorte d'écran marquant deux endroits : celui où agit le personnage et celui où se trouve le spectateur, ou bien la scène et la salle de spectacle. Le personnage est littéralement « effacé », « tué » marquant ainsi la manière où les nouveaux romanciers le conçoivent ; il n'est plus que l'ombre de ce qu'il était dans le roman traditionnel.

« De l'autre côté, derrière le vitre, le patron encore qui se dissout lentement dans le petit jour de la rue. C'est cette silhouette sans doute qui vient de mettre la salle en ordre ; elle n'a plus qu'à disparaître. Dans le miroir trembloté, déjà presque entièrement décomposé, le reflet de ce fantôme ; et au-delà, de plus en plus hésitante, la kyrielle indéfinie des ombres : le patron, le patron, le patron... Le Patron, nébuleuse triste, noyé dans son halo. » (Robbe-Grillet, 1953 :12)

Toute cette partie de début est mise sous le signe de l'incertitude, de la confusion ; tout semble modalisé, rien n'est clair comme si le vitre avait la capacité de métamorphoser la réalité. Tout est question de perception : on perçoit les images confuses (« tremblote »), on ne peut rien visualiser parfaitement, toute image étant nuancée (« presque entièrement décomposé »), n'étant pas claire. L'introduction du terme « kyrielle » implique l'idée de répétition, de retour, le jeu des kyrielles consistant à enchaîner des mots ou des expressions reprenant comme première syllabe la dernière syllabe du mot / de l'expression précédent / e.

Cette première partie du *Prologue* est riche en allusions : des allusions à des événements malheureux et incompréhensibles, à la mort, à l'idée de retour, au théâtre antique. Elle contient en germe d'un côté tout ce que signifie le concept de « nouveau roman » (intrigue inexistante ou insignifiante, personnage inconsistant, temps et espace conçus différemment, intertextualité) et de l'autre tout ce que le roman qui commence proposera au lecteur.

Elle est construite à partir des sensations visuelles principalement (rendues à l'aide de la lumière et transformées en images visuelles), mais ne négligent pas les sensations kinésiques (car ce n'est qu'à travers le mouvement que le décor peut s'édifier) ; au contraire, aucun son ce qui fait penser à une scène prête à accueillir les dialogues qui vont commencer. Ces sensations principalement visuelles construisent les perceptions offertes à travers la focalisation externe. Le Nouveau Roman a été souvent appelé « l'école du regard » et le texte pris en considération n'en est pas une exception, au contraire.

Le début du *Prologue* a deux fonctions ; il fonctionne donc comme « métatexte », étant un prétexte pour le narrateur qui a la possibilité de présenter d'une manière implicite ses conceptions sur le rôle du personnage, sur un certain type de temporalité, sur l'importance de l'intrigue concrète, dans le sens du roman

traditionnel, sur l'espace et surtout sur l'importance des objets. Tout cela ne serait possible qu'à travers la focalisation externe, une vision qui exprime le détachement de ce qui est raconté. Le terme « prologue » renvoie lui-même à l'idée de théâtre, idée soutenue par d'autres termes tels personnage, décor, lumière (« un bras machinal remet en place le décor »). La théâtralité semble surgir et le lecteur devient attentif comme si le spectacle devait commencer justement devant ses yeux. Ces termes appartenant à l'univers théâtral annoncent que ce qui se déroulera dorénavant aura quelque chose en commun avec une pièce de théâtre. Il revient au lecteur de voir laquelle.

## 5. Conclusions

La construction de la réalité chez Robbe-Grillet passe par l'intermédiaire du regard ; celui-ci est l'agent de la description, l'agent de la connaissance de tout ce qu'il y a autour; c'est à l'aide du regard que Robbe-Grillet construit la réalité ; cette manière de construire la réalité, par l'intermédiaire du regard qui génère des descriptions, a été mise en question au départ, suscitant des doutes comme celui de Bloch-Michel à l'époque :

« Ces étranges descriptions, dont on se dit qu'elles pourraient n'avoir pas de fin, il reste à se demander si elles atteindront leur but, si Robbe-Grillet fera vraiment école et si la littérature, après lui, continuera ou s'efforcera à détruire la triade qu'on pouvait croire éternelle que forment l'objet, l'image et la culture. » (Bloch-Michel :1966, 19)

Considérant le temps passé à partir de ce moment-là et sachant ce qui est arrivé entre temps dans l'histoire de la littérature on peut aujourd'hui juger sans trop se tromper que la contribution de Robbe-Grillet à l'évolution des lettres a été essentielle et que sa manière de construire la réalité reste unique.

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## UN « TABLEAU » BALZACIEN : L'INCIPIT DU PÈRE GORIOT

Diana-Adriana LEFTER\*

**Abstract:** *Our paper proposes an analysis of the incipit of one of Balzac's most famous novels, Le Père Goriot (Father Goriot). Our approach is based on Andreea del Lungo theory and classification and it is developed in two parts: First, we observe the relations between the incipit, which is a textual threshold and the rest of the novelistic text, as well as the relation between the incipit and the extra-textual world. Then, using the concepts proposed by Andreea del Lungo, we analyse the incipit of Father Goriot, showing that it is a tableau (painting), which is the typical beginning for Balzac's novels.*

**Keywords:** *incipit, painting, text.*

### Préambule

L'incipit représente un texte qui, tout en appartenant au texte fictionnel qu'il introduit, marque le passage et établit la frontière entre deux mondes : le hors-texte, le monde réel et le texte en soi, le monde fictionnel. Gérard Genette parle à ce propos de « seuil » (Genette, 1987 : 8), terme qui nous semble illustrer le mieux le rôle de « texte de passage » que remplit l'incipit.

A ce point, soulignons que incipit de la prose réaliste représente un cas selon nous très intéressant, vu le rapport entre le monde réel et celui fictionnel, spécifique pour ce type de prose. Ce que nous voulons dire c'est que, surtout dans le cas de Balzac, le monde fictionnel doit « faire concurrence à l'Etat civil »<sup>1</sup>, c'est-à-dire reconstruire un monde fictif et véridique, en utilisant des éléments empruntés au monde réel. Dans ce cas particulier donc, l'incipit marque le seuil entre un monde vrai et un autre véridique, le deuxième étant une sorte de puzzle construit à l'aide des éléments, lisons **détails**, du premier. L'incipit doit donc, dans le même temps, introduire le lecteur dans un monde fictionnel et lui créer l'illusion de la vérité.

Précurseur du réalisme, mais non pas le théoricien, Honoré de Balzac croit que le **détail** constitue le mérite de ce que, d'une manière impropre, on nomme *roman*. Pour lui, les détails doivent être extraits de la réalité contemporaine, de la géographie des villes, de l'architecture des immeubles, de la physionomie des gens, de l'aménagement des maisons, etc., moins qu'être fruits de l'imagination. La tâche du romancier ne sera autre que mettre ensemble ces données qui lui sont offerts séparément et de les introduire dans une histoire. Cette combinaison formera, à la fin, *le drame complet* qui doit constituer le vrai *roman*. Quant à l'endroit où il faut chercher ces détails, Balzac recommande plutôt les milieux pauvres ou le monde de la justice que les couches privilégiées. Il s'ensuit que l'art du romancier réside dans l'observation du détail extérieur, et plus encore dans la capacité de « percer les âmes » au-delà de l'apparence.

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\* Université de Pitesti, Roumanie, [diana.lefter@hotmail.com](mailto:diana.lefter@hotmail.com)

<sup>1</sup> de Balzac, Honoré, *Avant propos de la Comédie humaine*.



## L'incipit : limites, fonctions, classement

Avant de nous occuper des rôles et des fonctions de l'incipit, on devrait convenir sur ses **limites**, autrement dit : où commence et surtout où finit ce que l'on appelle *incipit* : la première phrase, le premier paragraphe du texte ? Un critère tout simplement formel n'est évidemment pas toujours pertinent ; ce n'est pas l'extension qui délimite l'incipit, d'autant plus qu'il existe des romans ou cette délimitation ne pourrait pas fonctionner, vu qu'ils comprennent une seule phrase, parfois même sans ponctuation.<sup>1</sup> Toutefois, le critère formel n'est pas à exclure complètement : de possibles indices graphiques, insérés par l'auteur, tels le paragraphe, l'espace blanc, peuvent parfois marquer la fin d'un incipit. En poussant l'analyse plus loin, Andrea del Lungo (del Lungo, 1993) montre que les vraies limites de l'incipit ne sont pas celles formelles, mais qu'il faut observer, pour les trouver, les indices narratifs, plus ou moins explicites : le passage d'un type textuel à un autre – de la narration à la description ou vice-versa, le passage du dialogue à la narration ou vice-versa, le changement de focalisation, de temporalité ou de spatialité.

Ainsi, sa définition des limites de l'incipit se base sur deux critères : un positionnel – le rapport entre le hors-texte et le texte, entre le texte non-fictionnel et celui fictionnel (del Lungo, 1993 : 137)<sup>2</sup> – et un autre relationnel : quels sont les rapports avec le(s) texte(s) précédents(s) et suivant(s) (del Lungo, 1993 : 137)<sup>3</sup> : l'incipit marque le passage de la non-fiction et la fiction et constitue le point de référence pour le texte fictionnel qui lui suit.

Les **fonctions** de l'incipit se manifestent au niveau intra-textuel, visant le rapport entre l'incipit et le reste du texte et au niveau extra-textuel, visant le processus de réception.

La fonction codifiante rend compte surtout du processus de réception, visant nécessairement le lecteur qui « a intérêt à recevoir l'idée la plus complète possible du genre, du style et du texte, des codes artistiques types qu'il doit disséminer dans la conscience pour percevoir le texte. Ces renseignements, il les puise pour l'essentiel dans le début. » (Lotman, 1973 : 305) A part son rôle introductif, l'incipit a aussi celui d'élaborer le code du texte, pour orienter la réception de celui-ci, « il est donc censé donner des informations ou plutôt présenter des indices sur lui-même (genre, style, etc.) et sur la narration afin d'établir un horizon d'attente et un pacte de lecture. » (del Lungo, 1993 : 138) La codification peut être *directe*, si l'on est en présence d'un métatexte qui concerne la nature, le code et le style du texte, *indirecte*, dans le cas des références transtextuelles ou *implicite*, réalisée à l'aide des signaux latents, reposant sur des références implicites. Cette fonction se matérialise le plus souvent dans la présence

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<sup>1</sup> Pierre Guyotat, *Eden, Eden, Eden* (1970), Editions Gallimard; Philippe Sollers, *Paradis* (1981), Editions Seuil; Jean-Marie Gouriot, *Apnée* (2005), Editions Julliard, sans ponctuation; Mathias Enard, *Zone* (2008), Editions Actes Sud, 500 pages à la première personne; Laurent Mauvignier, *Ce que j'appelle oubli* (2011), Editions du Minuit, 64 pages.

<sup>2</sup> un fragment textuel qui commence au seuil d'entrée dans la fiction [...] et qui se termine à la première fraction importante du texte.

<sup>3</sup> un fragment textuel qui, de par sa position de passage, peut entretenir des rapports étroits, en général de type métonymique, avec les textes qui le précèdent et le texte qui le clôt, l'incipit étant non seulement un lieu d'orientation, mais aussi une référence constante pour le texte suivant.

d'un métadiscours justificatif. Il peut arriver donc que l'incipit, ou une partie de celui-ci, par la suspension de la narration ou de la description, devienne métatexte, entrant ainsi en relation non pas seulement avec le texte qu'il introduit, mais aussi avec d'autres textes, non fictionnels, appartenant au même auteur ou à d'autres.

La fonction séductive de l'incipit définit la / les manière(s) à travers la(les)quelle(s) le texte capture son lecteur et lui éveille le désir de lire. Il s'agit d'une fonction constante, repérable dans tous les types d'incipit, bien que les formes en soient les plus diverses et de nature différente : une *énigme* proposée au lecteur et qu'il est censé déchiffrer le long de la lecture ; un *texte imprévisible* conciliant anticipation et orientation avec suite imprévisible ; un *pacte de lecture* proposé au lecteur, sous la forme d'une *captatio benevolentiae* ou d'une interdiction de lecture, une *dramatisation immédiate*, ce que l'on appelle début *in medias res*, « qui ouvre un espace de l'incertitude » (del Lungo, 1993 : 141).

La fonction informative est l'une des fonctions variables de l'incipit, non pas dans le sens qu'elle peut être absente, mais dans le sens que l'incipit peut offrir plus – *saturation informative* – ou moins d'information – *raréfaction informative* – au lecteur. Les informations peuvent porter sur l'histoire racontée, avec des références à « un savoir hors-texte » (del Lungo, 1993 : 142) – c'est la *sous-fonction thématique*, sur l'organisation de la narration – ce qui est la *sous-fonction narrative*, ou sur la construction de l'univers fictionnel : temps, espace, personnages – *sous-fonction constitutive*. Bref, la fonction informative s'occupe de mettre en « scène la fiction et [...] construire l'univers fictionnel à travers des informations variées qui sont autant de points de repère pour le lecteur qui vient d'entrer dans le terrain inconnu du roman ». (del Lungo, 1993 : 142)

Enfin, la fonction dramatique est toujours une fonction variable, qui rend compte de la vitesse d'« entrer en action ». Ainsi, l'on parle de *dramatisation immédiate (in medias res)* « si le lecteur est jeté le plus vite possible dans l'action, dans une histoire déjà commencée » (del Lungo, 1993 : 143) et d'une *dramatisation retardée* qui « s'opère quand le texte diffère le moment du début de l'histoire, par l'insertion d'un fragment discursif ou descriptif, ou par sa redondance informative » (del Lungo, 1993 : 145).

Le tableau ci-dessous présente de manière schématique les fonctions de l'incipit, selon Andrea del Lungo :

FONCTION CODIFIANTE fonction constante	ACTIONS	- métadiscours justificatif - le texte élabore son code - le texte oriente sa réception - informations sur le genre, le style et sur la narration établir l'horizon d'attente
	FORMES	- directe - indirecte - implicite
FONCTION SÉDUCTIVE	ACTIONS	- capter le lecteur - provoquer chez le lecteur le désir de lire

fonction constante	CONFIGURATIONS (FORMES)	- l'énigme - l'imprévisibilité initiale du récit détermination d'un pacte de lecture ( <i>captatio benevolentiae</i> ou interdiction de lecture) - dramatisation immédiate (début <i>in medias res</i> )
FONCTION INFORMATIVE fonction variable	ACTIONS	- donner des points de repère sur le texte  FONCTION CODIFIANTE - donner des points de repère sur le référent et la fiction
	COMPREND sous-fonctions	- fonction thématique - fonction métanarrative - fonction constitutive
	FORMES	- saturation informative - raréfaction informative
FONCTION DRAMATIQUE fonction variable	ACTIONS	- entrer dans l'action - disséminer des indices de dramatisation
	FORMES	- début <i>in medias res</i> - entrée progressive dans l'histoire - différer le commencement de l'action

Le **classement** proposé par Andrea del Lungo a comme critère général la « vitesse générale d'entrée dans l'histoire » (del Lungo, 1993 : 145) et les bases en sont les fonctions informatives et dramatiques.

Ainsi, dans *l'incipit statique* la codification est directe et la fonction informative prédomine. Dans le cas de *l'incipit progressif*, les deux fonctions coexistent, la dramatisation est immédiate et l'on a une saturation informative. *L'incipit suspensif* correspond à une dramatisation retardée et à une raréfaction informative ; la codification est directe et les fonctions informatives et dramatiques sont perçues comme absentes. Enfin, dans *l'incipit dynamique* prédomine la fonction dramatique, il s'agit d'une dramatisation immédiate, mais aussi d'une raréfaction informative.

Nous présentons ci-dessous le tableau réalisé par Andrea del Lungo :

	dramatisation retardée	dramatisation immédiate
saturation informative	<b>incipit statique</b> - prédomine la fonction informative - codification directe	<b>Incipit progressif</b> - fonctions informative et dramatique coexistent
raréfaction informative	<b>incipit suspensif</b> - fonctions informative et dramatique perçues comme absentes - codification directe	<b>incipit dynamique</b> - prédomine la fonction dramatique ( <i>in medias res</i> )

### ***Le Père Goriot, à la base de la Comédie humaine***

Publié en 1835, le très connu *Père Goriot* est rangé par Balzac dans les *Etudes de mœurs*, volet *Scènes de la vie privée*. Ce roman tellement connu et analysé doit sa renommée au rôle de tournant qu'il joue dans l'ensemble de l'œuvre balzacienne, se trouvant à la base du vaste édifice qu'est la *Comédie humaine*. L'*Avant-propos* de la *Comédie* exprime clairement le projet de l'auteur : réunir les œuvres éparses dans un vaste ensemble romanesque, afin de construire un tableau aussi complet que possible de la société française du temps :

*Le hasard est le plus grand romancier du monde : pour être fécond, il n'y a qu'à l'étudier. La Société française allait être l'historien, je ne devais être que le secrétaire. En dressant l'inventaire des vices et des vertus, en rassemblant les principaux faits des passions, en peignant les caractères, en choisissant les événements principaux de la Société, en composant des types par la réunion des traits de plusieurs caractères homogènes, peut-être pouvais-je arriver à écrire l'histoire oubliée par tant d'historiens, celle des mœurs. Avec beaucoup de patience et de courage, je réaliserais, sur la France au dix-neuvième siècle, ce livre que nous regrettons tous [... ] (de Balzac, 1979 :7)*

Et comment y aboutir ? Balzac veut trouver un fil conducteur et un système qui organise son œuvre romanesque<sup>1</sup>, aussi bien qu'en assurer l'unité, tout en faisant accroître le sensation de véridicité. Il pense donc à la technique du retour des personnages, qu'il inaugure notamment dans *Le Père Goriot*<sup>2</sup> :

*N'est-il pas véritablement plus difficile de faire concurrence à l'Etat-Civil avec Daphnis et Chloë, Roland, Amadis, Panurge, Don Quichotte, Manon Lescaut, Clarisse, Lovelace, Robinson Crusoë, Gilblas, Ossian, Julie d'Etanges, mon oncle Tobie, Werther, René, Corinne, Adolphe, Paul et Virginie, Jeanie Dean, Claverhouse, Ivanhoë, Manfred, Mignon, que de mettre en ordre les faits à peu près les mêmes chez toutes les nations, de rechercher l'esprit de lois tombées en désuétude, de rédiger des théories qui égarent les peuples, ou, comme certains métaphysiciens, d'expliquer ce qui est ? D'abord, presque toujours ces personnages, dont l'existence devient plus longue, plus authentique que celle des générations au milieu desquelles on les fait naître, ne vivent qu'à la condition d'être une grande image du présent. (de Balzac, 1979 :11)*

Compte tenu de cette place particulière que tient *Le Père Goriot* dans l'ensemble et pour la construction de la *Comédie humaine*, son incipit serait, à notre avis susceptible de présenter les traces de la pensée et de la stratégie balzacienne dans la construction de l'ensemble romanesque : codification de genre, figement d'une époque, d'un cadre, introduction de personnages.

Le premier aspect dont on doit s'occuper est l'établissement des **frontières** de l'incipit du *Père Goriot* et, dans un deuxième temps, interroger les rapports de ce texte avec le/les textes antérieurs et avec la suite du roman.

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<sup>1</sup> [...] relier ses compositions l'une à l'autre de manière à coordonner une histoire complète, dont chaque chapitre eût été un roman, et chaque roman une époque [...]. (de Balzac, 1979 : 9).

<sup>2</sup> Le personnage qui reparaît dans *Le Père Goriot* est Eugène de Rastignac, présent déjà dans *Etude de femme* (1832). Un autre personnage errant est Vautrin / Jacques Collin / Carlos Herrera qui apparaîtra aussi dans *Splendeurs et misères des courtisanes*, *Illusions perdues*, *Le Député d'Arcis*.

Certainement, le début de l'incipit est plus facile à délimiter : c'est l'entrée dans le monde de la fiction, à savoir la phrase « Madame Vauquer, née de Conflans, est une vieille femme qui, depuis quarante ans, tient à Paris une pension bourgeoise établie rue Neuve-Sainte-Geneviève, entre le quartier latin et le faubourg Saint-Marcel » (de Balzac, 1839 : 1). La phrase qui la précède ne peut pas être considérée comme partie de l'incipit, parce qu'elle ne fait pas partie de la fiction, étant ouvertement assumée par l'auteur, instance extra-textuelle dont elle porte la signature – « De Balzac » - et non pas par un narrateur, instance intra-textuelle et, on le verra, omnisciente. Il s'agit là d'une dédicace adressée à Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire, grand naturaliste, fondateur d'une théorie selon laquelle l'homme est le seul animal qui adopte de caractères différents selon le milieu dans lequel il vit. Cela vient à dire que l'homme est le produit de la société et que la société déclenche les différences entre les hommes et constitue la cause des différences de caractère. Certes, cette dédicace renseigne elle-aussi le lecteur sur le projet que Balzac développe dans *Le Père Goriot*, un projet énoncé aussi dans *L'Avant propos de la Comédie humaine* : créer non pas des individus, mais des caractères, à savoir des personnages typiques.

Pour ce qui est de la clôture, elle coïncide avec la fin de la digression sur le *drame* : « Qui décidera de ce qui est plus horrible à voir, ou des cœurs desséchés, ou des crânes vides ? » (de Balzac, 1839 : 5). C'est là que l'on peut saisir une « fracture » dans le texte, matérialisée dans le passage du discours à la description : le discours sur le drame et sur les mœurs parisiens est remplacé par la description de la rue Neuve-Sainte-Geneviève : « La façade de la pension donne sur un jardinet, en sorte que la maison tombe à angle droit sur la rue Neuve-Sainte-Geneviève, où vous la voyez coupée dans sa profondeur. » (de Balzac, 1839 : 5) Disons aussi que si description il y a eu dans les premiers deux paragraphes, elle n'y est pas dominante et ne fait que servir de prétexte pour la digression sur la codification et sur les mœurs.

L'incipit entretient donc des relations étroites avec la dédicace – ils ont en commun la référence à la théorie des caractères – celle-ci est implicite dans la dédicace et sollicite le savoir du lecteur sur le naturaliste Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire ; d'autre part, la présence de quelques éléments descriptifs, surtout dans le début du deuxième paragraphe, facilite le passage vers la suite du texte, qui reprend la description de la zone.

Après avoir fixé les frontières de l'incipit, voyons comment il remplit ses **fonctions**, pour pouvoir, à la fin, le classer.

Même si le texte débute avec un nom propre, introduisant déjà l'un des personnages de l'histoire, une bonne partie en est occupée par une digression qui fonctionne comme métatexte : c'est le discours sur le drame. Ce discours instaure un code de lecture : le texte est à lire comme un « drame » et non pas comme un « roman », c'est à dire comme une histoire véritable, pareille à une possiblement réelle : « Ah ! sachez-le : ce drame n'est ni une fiction ni un roman. *All is true*, il est si véritable, que chacun peut en reconnaître les éléments chez soi, dans son cœur peut-être. » (de Balzac, 1839 : 2) Codification directe donc, qui invite le lecteur à une lecture à la fois critique et analytique : il est appelé à voir dans le

« drame » de Goriot non pas une histoire vraie<sup>1</sup>, mais une histoire qui pourrait arriver à tous, parce qu'elle est construite autour de caractères, comportements, mœurs, partagés aussi par le lecteur de l'époque. L'horizon d'attente du lecteur est ainsi construit, celui-ci sera témoin des « secrètes infortunes du père Goriot » - univers d'attente confirmé d'ailleurs par la suite et par la fin de l'histoire.

Balzac codifie, dans ce début de texte, le genre et le lecteur qu'il envisage pour cette histoire. La répétition presque obsessionnelle du terme « drame », qu'il oppose à « fiction » et au « roman », fait écho au même terme qui apparaît dans *l'Avant-propos* : « Mais comment rendre intéressant le drame à trois ou quatre mille personnages que présente une Société ? » (de Balzac, 1979 : 9). Le terme définit, chez Balzac, une manière particulière d'articuler l'histoire<sup>2</sup> et aussi une manière de réception : « [...] peut-être aura-t-on versé quelques larmes *intra muros* et *extra*. » (de Balzac, 1839 : 3)

Pour Balzac, le terme « drame », opposé en tout premier lieu à la « fiction », revendique le caractère véridique de l'histoire<sup>3</sup> et invite le lecteur à y croire. Pour ce qui est de l'opposition avec le genre romanesque, c'est que Balzac voit dans le roman un « genre mineur, propre à toutes les affabulations » (Gengembre) ; or, son but est de « feindre de refléter le monde en dissimulant son pouvoir créateur et prendre le lecteur au piège séduisant de l'imitation » (Gengembre).

A quoi doit donc s'attendre le lecteur du *Père Goriot* ? A un drame, c'est-à-dire à une histoire véridique, à une histoire qui mêle vices et vertus, douleurs, égoïsmes<sup>4</sup> – des sentiments – à une histoire qui présente la relation entre l'homme et la société – on y comprend l'influence de Saint Hilaire –, à une histoire des désamours qui finiront par provoquer la mort : « Qui décidera de ce qui est plus horrible à voir, ou des cœurs desséchés, ou des crânes vides ? » (de Balzac, 1839 : 5)

Le lecteur de cet incipit est séduit essentiellement par l'illusion de vérité, doublée par quelques énigmes astucieusement glissées dans le texte. Mais, tout d'abord, qui est le lecteur que Balzac a en vue, quel est, pour reprendre le syntagme instauré par Eco, son « lecteur modèle » ? Un qui soit capable de coopérer à l'actualisation textuelle telle qu'il la conçoit comme auteur. Ce lecteur devrait se manifester du point de vue interprétatif tel que Balzac s'était manifesté du point de vue génératif. Le lecteur idéal de Balzac est sans doute un Parisien, un Parisien tout aussi connaisseur de sa ville et tout aussi attentif aux détails de

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<sup>1</sup> *All is true!* (Tout y est vrai!). La vérité invoquée est celle des caractères, des comportements, des mœurs, qui sont « copiés » à ceux réels ; il ne s'agit pas d'une « histoire vraie », dans le sens « réelle ». Balzac éclaircit cela dans la phrase suivante : « il est si véritable... »

<sup>2</sup> [...] *ce drame n'est ni une fiction ni un roman. All is true, il est si véritable [...]* (de Balzac, 1839 : 4)

<sup>3</sup> [...] *le réalisme balzacien réside d'abord dans la façon dont le romanesque intègre fonctionnellement les éléments matériels, et dans celle dont il met en relation le physique et le moral, ou le public et le privé, ou encore le moi social et le moi intime de ses personnages.* (Gengembre).

<sup>4</sup> Cependant il s'y rencontre çà et là des douleurs que l'agglomération des vices et des vertus rend grandes et solennelles : à leur aspect, les égoïsmes, les intérêts s'arrêtent et s'apitoient ; mais l'impression qu'ils en reçoivent est comme un fruit savoureux promptement dévoré. (de Balzac, 1839 : 5)

l'espace familial : « cette histoire [...] Sera-t-elle comprise au-delà de Paris ? Le doute est permis. Les particularités de cette Scène pleine d'observations et de couleur locale ne peuvent être appréciées qu'entre les buttes Montmartre et les hauteurs de Montrouge [...] » (de Balzac, 1839 : 2). Il s'agira d'un lecteur tout aussi préoccupé que Balzac par la complexité de l'âme humaine, sensible et compatissant.

Le texte construit aussi l'image d'un lecteur moins préparé pour décoder le texte d'une manière valide : celui qui, dans son bon-vivant, n'y verra qu'un simple amusement, un divertissement, une pure invention de l'auteur : « Ainsi ferez-vous, vous qui tenez ce livre d'une main blanche, vous qui vous enfoncez dans un moelleux fauteuil en vous disant : « Peut-être ceci va-t-il m'amuser. » Après avoir lu les secrètes infortunes du père Goriot, vous dînez avec appétit en mettant votre insensibilité sur le compte de l'auteur, en le taxant d'exagération, en l'accusant de poésie. » (de Balzac, 1839 : 2) Ce n'est pas à proprement parler une interdiction de lecture, c'est plutôt un avertissement, une clé de lecteur qui lui est offerte.

En grandes lignes, l'histoire du *Père Goriot* est assez prévisible. Le lecteur qui aura porté la lecture jusqu'à la fin y trouvera tout ce que l'incipit annonce : l'histoire infortunée de Goriot. Pourtant, le lecteur est attiré aussi par quelques énigmes, allusions glissées dans l'incipit. La première porte sur un personnage, la « pauvre jeune fille » qui habite dans la pension Vauquer, dont le nom ne sera dévoilé que plus tard<sup>1</sup>. La deuxième énigme est encore plus invitante pour le lecteur : « Cependant il s'y rencontre çà et là des douleurs que l'agglomération des vices et des vertus rend grandes et solennelles [...] » (de Balzac, 1839 : 2), continué par « les secrètes infortunes du père Goriot » (de Balzac, 1839 : 2), ce qui dévoile le personnage, mais non pas la nature des malheurs. Le cadre de l'histoire est aussi énigmatique : un coin de Paris, morne, oublié, sombre, un espace propice à cacher, à occulter, un espace qui respire une sorte de mort, reflet terrestre des Catacombes.

Bien que parsemé d'énigmes, l'incipit du *Père Goriot* présente une relative saturation informative, offrant des réponses, parfois partielles, aux questions qui tracent les repères du texte : qui ?, quand ?, quoi ?, où ?, comment ?, remplissant ainsi sa fonction informative. L'incipit débute par le nom d'un personnage – Madame Vauquer – ce qui s'avère finalement une stratégie pour tromper l'univers d'attente du lecteur car, on le verra, cette femme n'est pas le personnage central du roman. Toutefois, ce simple nom, suivi par celui qu'elle avait eu comme jeune fille, fonctionne aussi comme une analepse : la particule de noblesse dans le nom de jeune fille « de Conflans » renseigne sur une possible origine aristocratique de la Vauquer, ce qui fait de son mariage une mésalliance qui l'a transformée en bourgeoise. Son âge n'est pas précisé, mais on peut facilement déduire que c'est une femme dans ses soixante ans, vu qu'elle gère déjà sa maison depuis une quarantaine

Deux autres personnages sont présentés, dans un ordre qui ne correspond pas à leur poids dans l'histoire : la pauvre jeune fille, dont on apprend les malheurs, mais non pas le nom, et le père Goriot, sans prénom, qui est, on le suppose, l'un des pensionnaires de la Vauquer et dont on annonce la malheureuse

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<sup>1</sup> C'est Victorine Taillefer, une belle et infortunée jeune demoiselle dont la mère est morte et que le père refuse de reconnaître, ce qui voue à l'échec ses tentatives d'accéder à sa famille.

destinée. Pas de prénom, nous avons dit, seulement un appellation désignant un homme mûr et de condition modeste.

Le cadre de l'histoire se dispose par cercles concentriques : le cadre large, le Paris du début du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle, limité au nord par Montmartre et au Sud par Montrouge. Le quartier ensuite, qui est le Quartier Latin, espace des jeunes étudiants et de la bourgeoisie, avec sa rue emblématique Neuve-Sainte-Geneviève, aujourd'hui rue Tournefort. Enfin, un immeuble de cette rue, la maison Vauquer, une maison tout aussi morne que le quartier « horrible » et « inconnu ».

La formidable précision géographique est doublée par celle temporelle : l'an 1819<sup>1</sup>. Quelques autres indications temporelles donnent des informations intéressantes sur le statut de la pension : elle existe « depuis quarante ans », ce qui remonte dans l'année 1779, époque de l'Ancien Régime. C'était alors un « respectable établissement » ouvert à tous. L'époque révolutionnaire – 1789 – année du début de la Révolution française (les trente ans avant 1819) déclenche la déchéance de la maison, qui ne loge dorénavant que des vieux et des personnes à ressources limitées.

La fonction dramatique est faiblement représentée dans cet incipit. Le commencement de l'action est retardé et l'on apprend peu de choses sur les relations dramatiques qui existent entre les personnages. Tout ce qu'on sait en effet c'est que Madame Vauquer est propriétaire d'une pension où il y a au moins deux pensionnaires : la pauvre jeune fille et le père Goriot.

A ce qu'on a observé, la fonction informative prédomine dans cet incipit, surtout pour ce qui est des détails sur la géographie et l'histoire. A cela s'ajoute le long discours sur le drame, ce qui constitue une codification directe. Ce sont les indices d'un incipit statique, dont les principales caractéristiques sont la dramatisation retardée et la saturation informative<sup>2</sup>, un « tableau », selon la terminologie de Barthes<sup>3</sup>.

Nous déléguons la conclusion à Andrea del Lungo : « [...] il semble vraiment que la catégorie dynamique (et l'incipit in medias res) soit refusé par le roman balzacien qui, de par son désir de complétude, vise en général à insérer les événements racontés dans un contexte historique, social, politique, économique, etc. » (del Lungo, 1993 : 147)

#### **Texte de référence**

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<sup>1</sup> L'époque de la Restauration. (1814, chute du Premier Empire-1830, Révolution des Trois Glorieuses. C'est le retour à la souveraineté monarchique de la maison des Bourbons, ce qui explique l'intérêt de l'ancien vermicellier Goriot d'entretenir le mariage de ses filles avec des aristocrates.

<sup>2</sup> [...] « saturation » ne signifie pas « complétude », puisque l'information donnée par un texte ne peut jamais être absolument complète et qu'un récit comporte forcément une rétention informative. (del Lungo, 1993 : 143).

<sup>3</sup> *Le roman balzacien s'ouvre sur un discours statique, longtemps synchronique, vaste concours immobile de données initiales que l'on appelle tableau.* (Barthes, 1970 : 9).



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## **ÉCRITURE ET REPRÉSENTATION DANS LES ONZE DE PIERRE MICHON**

**Alexandrina MUST ŢEA**

**Abstract:** *The novel Les Onze by Pierre Michon places us within an invented universe, situated on the edge of reality – the life and works of François Élie Corentin, a painter from the time of the French Revolution, who was commissioned to execute a painting dedicated to the eleven commissaries of the National Salvation Committee.*

*One of the essential problems that the text raises and which is the main object of our study is that of representation, analysable from different points of view. In the interpretation that we suggest, we add the difference between the representation as substitution and representation as performance to the distinction between the verbal and visual arts.*

*In Michon's text, the first is manifested under many forms, going from ekphrasis- this figure of speech which evokes and describes a real or invented work of art, passing through the use of symbols and metaphors as substitutes of some realities that the author wants to represent in a poetical manner, and ending by imitating a style and a language belonging to the mental space of Enlightenment.*

*On the other hand, the author gives a special importance to the representation as performance, a series of things, facts and events being presented under the form of exhibition or theatrical performance, giving them symbolic values and repeatedly referring to Macbeth, as a metaphorical equivalent of Terror.*

**Keywords:** *representation, substitution, performance.*

Ce « bloc en prose » qui est *Les Onze*, pour reprendre les mots de Michon caractérisant ses créations qu'il refuse d'appeler « romans », nous fait plonger dans un univers inventé en marge de la réalité – la vie et l'œuvre d'un certain François Élie Corentin, peintre limousin de l'époque de la Révolution, à qui on a commandé la réalisation d'un tableau consacré aux onze commissaires du Comité du Salut National.

L'histoire est prise en charge par un narrateur à la première personne qui fait le guide auprès d'un interlocuteur anonyme, interpellé par l'appellatif-vocatif *Monsieur*, questionné et impliqué discursivement tout le long du roman. Le guide l'accompagne apparemment au Musée du Louvre pour lui faire voir *Les Onze*, tout en lui présentant les circonstances biographiques et historiques qui ont présidé à la réalisation du chef-d'œuvre en question.

Les deux se situent dans un présent actuel, par rapport aux faits relatés, qui tiennent d'un passé révolu, revisité grâce à des témoignages plus ou moins fiables - des biographies et des romans consacrés au peintre et à sa famille, des peintures qui paraissent le représenter à des époques différentes de sa vie, etc. Le tout est un mélange de faits et de personnages inventés et de faits réels, respectivement de personnes qui ont réellement existé (les onze du Comité du Salut National, les peintres Tiepolo, Géricault, l'historien Michelet, qui aurait consacré douze pages au tableau inexistant de l'inventé Corentin), ce qui produit une confusion voulue, recherchée par l'auteur, qui se voue à un jeu de mystification d'un type particulier : il ne s'agit pas d'une question d'attribution de l'œuvre à un auteur autre que celui

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\* Université de Pitesti, [alexandrinamustatea@yahoo.com](mailto:alexandrinamustatea@yahoo.com)

réel, mais de l'invention à l'intérieur de l'œuvre d'un personnage et d'un tableau placés dans un contexte scriptural et historique qui les fait passer pour de la réalité. En fait, les détails inventés et le contexte évoqué sont tellement réalistes qu'ils ont pu tromper bon nombre de lecteurs, partis à la quête du tableau au musée du Louvre.

Loin d'être une narration classique respectant l'ordre chronologique des événements, l'histoire de Corentin et de son tableau se tresse par un va-et-vient entre les différentes époques de la vie du protagoniste, les nombreuses analepses et prolepses étant interrompues tout le temps par les remarques et les commentaires du guide. Les considérations de celui-ci mettent en cause, les décrédibilisant, toutes les sources qui auraient contribué à la réalisation de son récit. C'est que le narrateur n'assume pas ses dires, les attribuant à l'opinion publique, à la tradition, à des monographies inexistantes, aux notes qui figureraient dans l'antichambre de la salle du Louvre qui abriterait le tableau, etc., des formules telles *on dit, la tradition veut que, les mauvaises langues disent, autant qu'on sache* etc. étant courantes dans le texte.

Un des problèmes essentiels que pose le roman et qui fait l'objet principal de notre étude, est celui de la représentation, analysable sous divers angles.

Le concept de représentation a suscité des débats depuis l'Antiquité grecque, Platon et Aristote le mettant en rapport avec celui de *mimésis*.

Selon Bernard Vouilloux<sup>1</sup> (« *Image, représentation et ressemblance. Une tentative de clarification* », 2004), dans la vision actuelle, la représentation intervient à trois niveaux : cognitif, institutionnel et artistique. Pour la philosophie du langage et la sémantique cognitive, la représentation est « l'entité mentale qui est déclenché dans l'esprit par une expression linguistique et qui est constitutive de sa compréhension ». Autrement dit, pour reprendre la théorie de la schématisation<sup>2</sup>, il faut distinguer entre l'image matérielle, concrète, située au niveau du discours/texte, et cette entité mentale qui est la représentation. Au point de vue institutionnel, elle est la relation (de type politique, juridique, commerciale, etc.) entre deux personnes ou deux collectivités dont l'une tient la place de l'autre ou vaut pour l'autre (par exemple l'ambassadeur représente l'Etat). Au niveau artistique sont appelés « représentatifs »

les arts ou les genres qui sont à propos de quelque chose [...], comme les genres dramatiques et narratifs dans l'art verbal (par rapport aux genres dissertatifs) ou comme la peinture et la sculpture figuratives (par rapport à la peinture et à la sculpture abstraites, à l'architecture, à la musique, à la danse). » (*ibidem*)

En ce qui est de la représentation artistique, la seule qui nous intéresse ici, il convient de faire une distinction nette entre les arts verbaux et les arts visuels, mis en rapport avec les concepts de *mimésis* et de ressemblances. Pour les premiers, « représenter n'est pas imiter, et réciproquement : un récit représente un événement, mais il ne l'imité pas ; tout ce qu'il peut imiter, c'est un autre texte ».

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.fabula.org/atelier.php?Image%2C\\_repr%26eacute%3Bsentation\\_et\\_resemblance](http://www.fabula.org/atelier.php?Image%2C_repr%26eacute%3Bsentation_et_resemblance) (consulte le 01/06/2016).

<sup>2</sup> J.-B. Grize, « Pour aborder l'étude des structures du discours quotidien » in *Langue Française. Argumentation et énonciation*, No.50, mai 1981.

Pour les seconds, la représentation se produit par la figuration, qui, elle, est ressemblante ou non, fonction de l'adéquation de l'image au modèle. Donc dans les arts visuels peut jouer l'imitation.

Depuis Aristote on fait la distinction entre la mimésis linguistique ou énonciative et la mimésis visuelle, spéculaire :

La première se fonde sur le "système des faits", la seconde sur la ressemblance, les genres dramatiques participant des deux [...]. Il est toutefois possible d'étendre la notion de ressemblance à la mimésis linguistique, mais cela implique que la compréhension en soit modifiée. Elle peut être déterminée, en premier lieu, comme un ensemble de similitudes formelles abstraites (par exemple syntaxiques, lexicales, phoniques, rythmiques...) (*ibidem*)

Nous considérons qu'il faut faire encore une distinction lorsqu'on se rapporte à l'art, notamment entre deux significations différentes du mot « représentation », très bien rendues en roumain par les termes *reprezentare* et *reprezentatie*, renvoyant, le premier à la représentation comme *substitution*, le second à la représentation comme *monstration*.

### **La représentation comme substitution**

Dans le texte de Michon, *la représentation comme substitution* se manifeste sous plusieurs formes, allant de l'*ekphrasis* - cette figure de style qui évoque et décrit un objet ou une œuvre d'art réelle ou inventée - passant par l'emploi de symboles et de métaphores en tant que substituts de différentes réalités que l'auteur veut représenter d'une manière poétique et finissant par l'imitation d'un style et d'un langage appartenant à l'espace mental des Lumières.

Un premier point sur lequel il faut donc s'arrêter est le caractère particulier de ce texte qui utilise le procédé de l'*ekphrasis*.

Puisque nous sommes en présence d'une œuvre littéraire et non pas picturale, l'*ekphrasis* est le procédé adéquat pour rendre « visible », par l'intermédiaire des paroles, des images autrement visuelles, soient-elles réelles ou inventée.

Il y a essentiellement deux *ekphrasis* dans le roman : la description de la fresque de Tiepolo, représentant les noces de Frédérique Barberousse avec Béatrice de Bourgogne, et la description fragmentaire et fragmentée, différée et reprise plusieurs fois du tableau *Les Onze*.

Cependant, dans tous les cas, l'*ekphrasis* n'est qu'un prétexte, un point de départ, qui permet à l'auteur de développer des séquences imaginaires en tant qu'alternatives aux choses ainsi dites réelles, qu'il met de la sorte sous le signe du doute. Car, dans son essence, le texte s'avère être un immense paradoxe, jouant sur la contradiction être/ne pas être.

Mais voyons-le à l'œuvre :

Il était de taille médiocre, effacé, mais il retenait l'attention par son silence fiévreux, son enjouement sombre, ses manières tour à tour arrogantes et obliques – torves, on l'a dit. C'est ainsi du moins qu'on le voyait sur le tard. Rien de tel n'apparaît dans le portrait qu'aux plafonds de Wurtzbourg, précisément sur le mur sud de la Kaisersaal, dans le cortège des noces de Frédéric Barberousse, Tiepolo a laissé de lui, quand le modèle avait vingt ans ; il est là à ce qu'on dit, et on peut l'aller voir, perché parmi cent princes, cent

connétables et massiers, autant d'esclaves et de marchands, de portefaix, des bêtes et des putti, des dieux, des marchandises, des nuages, les saisons et les continents au nombre de quatre, et lieux peints irrécusables, ceux qui de la sorte ont rassemblé le monde dans sa recension exhaustive et soin du monde pourtant, Gianbattista Tiepolo en personne et Giandomenico Tiepolo son fils. Il est donc là lui aussi, la tradition veut qu'il y soit, et qu'il soit le page qui porte la couronne du Saint Empire sur un coussin à glands d'or ; on voit sa main sous le coussin, son visage un peu penché regarde la terre ; tout son buste fléchissant semble accompagner le poids de la couronne : il ploie sous l'Empire, tendrement, suavement.

Il est blond. (p.15)

Il s'agit ici de la description de l'œuvre de Tiepolo, occasion pour Michon d'introduire son protagoniste sous l'apparence d'un personnage qui y figure réellement, mais qui n'a rien à voir dans la réalité avec Corentin, cet être inventé. C'est là que commence la mystification du lecteur. Mystification immédiatement démentie par les lignes qui suivent : « Cette identification a tout pour séduire, quand bien même elle serait une fantaisie : ce page est un type, pas un portrait, Tiepolo l'a pris dans Véronèse, pas dans ses petits assistants ; c'est un page, c'est le page, ce n'est personne ». (p.15)

Et ce jeu paradoxal continue, tous les soi-disant témoignages picturaux prétendant représenter le protagoniste sont tour à tour réfutés comme des faux, comme « farce du Temps ». Ce que le narrateur met en doute ce sont ces représentations et non pas l'existence du héros :

Une coutume guère moins douteuse le fait apparaître quarante ans plus tard... parmi les témoins du Serment du Jeu de Paume dans l'ébauche qu'en fit David : il est cette silhouette sans âge, chapeauté, oblique, qui montre à des petits enfants l'élan torrentueux de cinq cent soixante bras tendus. (p.16)

Et le narrateur d'ajouter : « Devant cet homme fiévreux mais clame, qui pourrait aussi bien être lui quant au visage, je suis plutôt de ceux qui prononcent le nom de Marat. » (p.16) Ou encore :

Je laisse de côté à regret la mine de plomb de Georges Gabriel, qui passa long temps pour sa figure, où il apparaît chapeauté encore, facial, exorbité, craintif, offensé, comme saisi la main dans le sac, et qui me fait penser à un célèbre autoportrait gravé de Rembrandt ; on sait aujourd'hui que c'est ou bien le cordonnier Simon, bourreau et bouffon du petit Louis XVII au Temple, ou bien Léonard Bourdon, un sans-culotte effréné de l'an II qui changea de camp en thermidor. Le beau portrait indubitable qu'en donna Vincent après 1760, dans sa maturité à lui donc, [...] est perdu depuis la Terreur. On ne lui connaît pas d'autoportrait. Entre le page d'Empire et le vieil enragé oblique, nous ne possédons rien qui lui ressemble.

Son portrait tardif attribué à Vivant Denon est un faux. (p.16)

Toutes ces représentations, attribuées à des peintres qui ont réellement existé, contestées en tant que représentations réelles du protagoniste, malgré les ressemblances, celles qui auraient causé les confusions en question, n'ont d'autre rôle que de renforcer aux yeux du lecteur la croyance en l'existence même de celui-ci.

La même chose se passe avec l'autre ekphrasis, celle qui décrit à plusieurs reprises le tableau des *Onze*, prise en charge par deux descripteurs différents – le guide et Michelet, devenu lui aussi personnage dans le récit du narrateur.

Le guide fait voir à son interlocuteur ce qui lui semble représentatif dans le tableau des *Onze*, l'ekphrasis y prenant la forme de commentaire :

Vous les voyez, Monsieur ? Tous les onze, de gauche à droite : Billard, Carnot, Prieur, Prieur, Couthon, Robespierre, Collot, Barère, Lindet, Saint-Juste, Saint-André. Invariables et droits. Les Commissaires ? Le Grand Comité de la Grande Terreur. Quatre mètres virgule trente sur trois, un peu moins de trois. Le tableau de ventôse. [...] Vous les voyez ? On a du mal à les saisir tous à la fois dans le même regard maintenant avec ces reflets sur la vitre derrière quoi on les a mis au Louvre. (p. 45)

Michon souligne, par la voix de son narrateur, le rapport qui s'établit entre le pré-savoir sur un fait ou un objet, la représentation mentale qu'on en a et la réalité elle-même. Autrement dit, il peut y avoir ou non adéquation entre la réalité et la représentation mentale qu'on s'est faite :

A quoi pensez-vous, Monsieur, devant la grande vitre, le reflet derrière quoi il y a des figures levées qui regardent vers vous ? Vous êtes lecteur, Monsieur, vous êtes des Lumières vous aussi à votre façon, et par conséquent vous connaissez un peu ces hommes de derrière la vitre, on vous a parlé d'eux à l'école et dans les livres. (p.49)

Il attire également l'attention sur la précarité de la représentation, sur son caractère changeant, en fonction du contexte de sa manifestation: un simple reflet modifie tout, devient créateur d'illusion. Tel est le rôle de la vitre - cet intermédiaire entre l'œil et l'image:

Voyez comme les reflets changent sur la vitre quand on se déplace un peu. Comme je vois clairement l'habit noir de Couthon, soudain, sur sa chaise d'or acide. Non, pas de l'or, du souffre, l'or est pour Saint-Juste. Et si je fais deux pas quel luxe sur les franges espagnoles de l'écharpe aux trois couleurs du représentant Saint-André, à l'autre bout. Deux pas encore et tout est sombre. Que regardent-ils, Monsieur ? Quelle revanche, quelle défaite ? (p.49)

En ce qui est de la soi-disant vision de Michelet sur le tableau des *Onze*, elle sert de prétexte à l'auteur pour exposer indirectement, en sous-texte, ses idées sur le rôle de la mémoire, de l'imagination, de l'intertextualité et de l'imitation dans la création artistique. Voyons un bref commentaire du narrateur sur la description que Michelet aurait fait du tableau de Corentin :

Et dans cette reconstruction de mémoire, dans les célèbres douze pages donc, il applique au grand tableau ce qu'il a vu, imaginé et bricolé ce jour-là : il dit que dans Les Onze même on voit la grande table de chêne et la lanterne de corne sur la table ; il dit surtout qu'on y voit les chevaux, les chevaux dans leurs stalles de soufre, d'or, de basalte, leurs stalles à la nation, les chevaux de l'enfer et de l'adoration. A la décharge de Michelet on peut croire que, dans le bric-à-brac prodigieux et prodigieusement encombré qui lui tint lieu de mémoire, il a pour guide et repères d'autres peintures, l'Officier de chasseur de Géricault, une bataille de Rubens, les illustrations que fit pour Macbeth

Füssli, ou la jument emblématique du Cauchemar de ce même peintre [...] (p.124)

Michon y explique pourquoi les représentations artistiques sont des substituts imparfaits de la réalité, et finalement quelles sont les raisons qui mènent à la « falsification » sinon à la mystification même de cette réalité. Il arrive ainsi à comprendre la représentation artistique comme substitut de la réalité décevante, à y voir un effet compensatoire dicté par le besoin de beauté et d'illusion de l'homme. Et il l'exprime clairement à travers les commentaires de son narrateur :

... nous aimons le reconnaître (il s'agit de Corentin) dans le blondinet de Wurtzbourg. Nous aimons sous cette forme l'ériger dans nos rêves. [...] ; on se prend à penser que c'est pour lui, le blondinet, toutes ces femmes hautaines et faciles jetées sur les plafonds ; si bien que dans la fresque où le page apparaît, où la légende le fait apparaître, on a parfois l'impression (on en a le désir) qu'à dix pas devant lui la belle Béatrice de Bourgogne agenouillée aux côtés du beau Barbarossa son maître sous l'aplomb, la crosse, la mitre, le gant, du prince-évêque qui les marie, que Béatrice va se tourner versz lui, se lever, de tout son poids de chair blonde et de brocard bleu marcher vers lui et renversant la couronne, l'étreindre. (p.17)

Aussi la représentation artistique, soit elle littéraire ou visuelle, est créatrice de chimères, les œuvres se prêtant à la reprise et à l'emploi des mythes, des légendes, des symboles et des métaphores, qui sont tous des constructions de type substitutif, basées sur des rapports de ressemblance.

Voilà un exemple de renvoi mythique, dont on peut facilement déchiffrer le rôle créateur :

Ce sont des sirènes encore qui chantent à Combleux sur ce bord de Loire dans des vols de hérons, comme elles chantaient à Venise et Wurtzbourg, seulement plus mezzo voce, avec dans le rôle du maestro non plus Tiepolo et ses esprits de l'air, mais un vieillard féroce et ses bataillons de calibans limousins. Elles nous appellent de toutes leurs forces, mezzo voce. Elles tournent sur le fleuve [...] et nous restons là, le nez en l'air, à écouter leur chant circulaire comme si c'était l'histoire si complexe du monde qu'elles nous dévoilaient. [...] Elles veulent m'empêcher de parler des Onze, elles me tirent l'oreille vers leur tintouin de lessive sur les défroques de deux pauvres filles mortes qu'elles battent en Loire comme des lavandières leurs draps. Eh, Monsieur, bien malin qui leur résiste. C'est qu'elles racontent des histoires, Monsieur, et nous aussi. (p.30)

On y lit, en sous-texte, sans doute, les réflexions de l'auteur sur sa manière de faire de la littérature, sur la force enchanteresse de celle-ci.

Enfin, Michon reprend dans son texte, par un jeu mi admiratif, mi ironique, tout un espace mental – celui du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle culturel, scientifique, social et historique, matérialisé dans des re-présentations explicites de clichés parsemés le long du texte, ou par des renvois permanents à des personnalités, des œuvres, des manières, des styles, qui accompagnent le mince fil narratif ou qui forment l'essence même des descriptions et des commentaires du narrateur.

C'est ce type d'imitations de nature verbale qui fait du roman de Michon une création à part : il s'agit de l'intégration des caractéristiques verbalisées et

verbalisables d'un siècle dans le discours représentatif d'un autre siècle. L'art de l'écrivain consiste à construire son texte sur le savoir, l'histoire, l'art, la philosophie et la littérature des Lumières, comme s'il écrivait de l'intérieur de l'époque, tout en se tenant dans l'actualité. Son texte se fait avec d'autres textes ou avec des tableaux de cette époque-là, comme dans le fragment ci-dessous :

Le jour est superbe, et lui-même (Corentin enfant) est beau comme le jour, comme une fille, il rit et n'a pas dix ans. [...] Voici la mère déjà sur le perron avec ses jupes énormes, le grand panier comme on lit dans Manon Lescaut, ou la robe volante qu'on voit dans Watteau : belle plus encore qu'avant, la blondeur même, l'épanouissement des blondes, les mains de pain blond. (p.45).

Il va encore plus loin, utilisant tout un jargon philosophique, théologique, scientifique, politique du siècle, dont les termes et les syntagmes sont marqués par des italiques, des guillemets, des répétitions, ou dissimulés dans le texte sous forme de citations approximatives, sans guillemets, et d'allusions plus ou moins transparentes. Des formules telles *l'attraction universelle*, *le Grand Architecte*, *l'habit à la nation*, *plumet à la nation*, *le ci-devant peintre*, *le ci-devant maître d'école*, *les ci-devant écrivains*, *le ci-devant bleu de roi*, etc. abondent dans le texte, se présentant comme une véritable langue de bois.

### **La représentation comme monstration**

Michon accorde une importance particulière à la représentation comme *monstration*. Le long du roman apparaissent des moments où l'on nous donne à voir les choses, les faits et les événements sous forme d'exposition ou de spectacle.

Aussi l'interlocuteur du narrateur est-il invité à maintes reprises à *voir* des personnages, des endroits, des objets d'art, etc., ou autrement dit de se les représenter mentalement, d'après ses descriptions. Il s'agit ici de l'appel à l'imagination du lecteur, mis dans la posture de participant à la réalisation de l'œuvre :

Et – vous parlant de lui petit enfant blond dans des jupes – je ne peux m'empêcher de voir, comme dans un reflet en surimpression le vieux crocodile en manteau blanc errer lentement sur les jetées sous le ciel sale des mars, croissant ses bas blancs, rabattant sur ses yeux ce chapeau clair que fouette la pluie de mars. Il lève la tête de temps en temps, il interroge encore une fois ce ciel, ce sol ; et si je porte mon regard dans la direction des objets qu'il regarde, je vois de la pluie sur le monde ; je vois les chalands embâclés et parmi eux, plus haute, féminine, ventrue, cette énorme gabarre de Nantes écoulée depuis novembre 1783 [...]. Je vois les saules nus de mars et les vols de hérons [...] ; tout le pittoresque et le pictural, le fret universel qui fait les beaux tableaux, je le vois, comme Tiepolo, comme Fragonard ou Robert, comme Corentin, comme un peintre ou un badaud. (p.51)

Michon présente dans son texte les événements historiques comme spectacle théâtral, attribuant aux faits des valeurs symboliques et faisant des renvois répétés à Shakespeare et à son *Macbeth*, posé comme équivalent métaphorique de la



Terreur. Il crée d'assez longs fragments cohésifs et cohérents à partir d'un lexique axé sur le mot thème *théâtre*, comme dans les lignes qui suivent :

Ce que j'ai appelé partis, dans cette période de crescendo théâtral, de surenchère maximaliste où chacun n'élevait la voix que pour se distinguer de la voix de l'autre, la recouvrir et pour finir la jeter dans la poubelle avec la tête qui l'énonçait, les partis n'étaient plus que des rôles. Il ne s'agissait plus d'opinions, mais de théâtre ; cela arrive souvent dans la politique ; et cela arrive toujours dans la peinture, quand elle représente la politique sous la forme très simple d'hommes : car les opinions, cela ne se peint pas ; les rôles, si.

Quel rapport avec la commande passée dans la nuit de nivôse dans l'église Saint-Nicolas ? Vous me demandez qui, dans cette scène emballée de cinquième acte, pouvait vouloir le tableau ? Quel premier ou second rôle voulait faire de ce comité fantôme un comité réel, théâtralement réel ? (p.86)

Les termes *théâtre, théâtral, théâtralement, rôles, scène*, créent cette impression de représentation – monstration, induisant l'idée de *theatrum mundi*, du monde comme spectacle, dont le caractère concret est facilement représentable dans la peinture, alors que les idées, ces abstractions de nature mentale, ne s'y prêteraient pas.

En plus le syntagme *théâtralement réel*, au-delà de la contradiction dans les termes, synthétise le rapport fiction-réalité qui engendre le texte de Michon, que l'on pourrait qualifier de *fictionnellement réel*. Autrement dit, si la fiction doit y passer pour de la réalité, la réalité historique, sociale et politique peut passer pour de la fiction théâtrale.

Au fond, Michon fait voir à ses lecteurs sa propre manière de créer, la poétique du texte s'inscrivant de toute évidence dans l'écriture même. L'écrivain nous dit qu'inventer, mystifier et imiter est l'essence même de son art. Aussi la représentation, dans toutes ses formes, s'accompagne-t-elle de réflexions sur le rôle de l'art et de l'artiste, rendant au texte une double valeur : celle de création littéraire fictionnelle et celle d'art poétique implicite.

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## **LA PROFONDEUR DES CHOSES DANS «LE PETIT PRINCE» DE SAINT-EXUPÉRY**

**Doina T NASE\***

***Abstract:** Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's "The Little Prince" might seem like a children's book, but it actually is a complex literary work rich in signification. Antoine de Saint-Exupéry starts from the idea that, in order to reach the essence, the truth, we must look beyond the exterior aspects of things. One of the most frequently used processes is repetition, it signals (expresses) the little prince's surprise when he discovers the solitary and bizarre characters that live on different planets.*

*One idea that repeats itself with each new character encounter is that each one of them persists in a way of thought and action that leads them in a circle, unable to find the meaning of life. The secret the fox shares is that in order to see the essential, man must see with his soul.*

*This book is profoundly philosophic and treats major themes, such as: life, friendship, love, the sentiment of responsibility, the danger represented by modern technological society.*

***Keywords:** to see, essence, heart.*

### **Qu'est-ce que Le Petit Prince de Saint-Exupéry?**

C'est un livre pour enfants ou un conte philosophique? On se pose souvent cette question, car le livre semble échapper à toute détermination. De toute façon, les enfants aiment ce livre parce qu'ils y trouvent d'abord un conte merveilleux relatant le voyage d'un petit prince sur des planètes éloignées. Si on regarde la multitude d'images représentant des animaux, des fleurs, des arbres, des montagnes, des oiseaux et des informations sur les continents (nous remarquons: aucun élément important ne manque à cette énumération!) on pourrait même dire que c'est un livre pour enfants censé transmettre des notions sur la planète, à la manière des atlas. Mais les images – les aquarelles de l'auteur – semblent cacher un secret: parfois elles sont claires, bien définies, d'autres fois à peine esquissées, comme pour inviter l'enfant à prendre les crayons de couleur pour les achever. Dans ce cas, on pourrait affirmer que ce n'est qu'un livre à dessiner accompagné d'un texte dont le rôle est d'enchaîner d'une certaine façon tous les éléments représentés dans les images. C'est l'une des théories formulées par Laurent de Galembert – spécialiste d'Antoine de Saint-Exupéry et auteur de plusieurs études sur Le petit prince: «Le Petit Prince fonctionne donc comme une B.D.; le texte se réduirait presque à une glose et un commentaire sur les dessins [...]. Le texte renvoie même aux dessins avant de renvoyer au réel [...] le dessin remplace la réalité. » (Galembert, 2000: 44).

Pourtant, le texte ne manque pas d'intérêt; il a une profondeur qu'on peut saisir dès le début, grâce aux explications qui renvoient au jeu d'images avec ou sans contenu sur les premières pages du livre. Il y a là une première image qui représente un serpent boa en train d'avaler un fauve et deux autres – nommées «le

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\* Université de Pitesti, [doinatanase67@yahoo.com](mailto:doinatanase67@yahoo.com)

dessin numéro 1» et «le dessin numéro 2» – qui reprennent l'idée, mais pour présenter une autre proie beaucoup plus grande – un éléphant. La question sur laquelle l'écrivain veut attirer l'attention en présentant ces deux images numérotées (la première se réduisant au contour, ce qui entraîne des confusions à cause de la ressemblance avec un chapeau) est une question philosophique qui porte sur la distinction entre *apparence* et *essence*. Pour arriver à l'*essence*, c'est-à-dire à la véritable connaissance, il faut apprendre à penser par soi-même. Le fait d'avoir choisi finalement un éléphant pour illustrer le contenu de son dessin peut renvoyer à l'idée que l'image est trompeuse même quand choses semblent être grandes et évidentes. L'écrivain signale donc un aspect qui revêt une importance capitale pour la connaissance: l'image, l'aspect des choses, leur apparence ne constituent pas obligatoirement un indice de ce qui existe vraiment devant nos yeux. Mais le problème n'est pas nouveau. Les philosophes de l'Antiquité grecque Platon et Socrate affirmaient que les sens sont trompeurs et qu'il y a une vérité éternelle à laquelle on ne peut accéder que par l'esprit.

Au problème signalé auparavant, s'ajoutent encore dans le premier chapitre des remarques peu flatteuses sur «les grandes personnes» qui « ne comprennent jamais rien toutes seules » et dont l'identité (pour ainsi dire...) se révèle au moment où, en pleine histoire, on se confronte à la voix de l'écrivain: « car je n'aime pas qu'on lise mon livre à la légère » (Saint-Exupéry, 1943 : 19). « Les grandes personnes» sont donc les lecteurs adultes et l'allusion est directe, le pronom indéfini faisant partie d'un énoncé de portée générale. Ce qui reste est de savoir comment on peut voir l'essence des choses ou l'*essentiel*. La réponse viendra à la fin du chapitre XXI, lorsque le renard (symbole de la sagesse) dit au Petit Prince qu'on peut le voir seulement «avec le cœur ». Cette affirmation rappelle aussi la dichotomie platonicienne, qui oppose le monde des idées aux apparences. Cette dichotomie va déclencher dans l'œuvre des questionnements sur des thèmes majeurs: la vie, l'amour, l'amitié, le sens de la responsabilité, la technologisation de la société, etc.

D'après ces considérations, on peut affirmer que le livre s'adresse en même temps aux enfants et aux adultes, ces derniers étant représentés constamment par la formule « les grandes personnes ». Cela veut dire qu'à la base de la création de l'œuvre se trouve une double intention: fournir aux enfants un conte parsemé d'images et lancer au lecteur adulte un défi majeur, en lui proposant de réfléchir à l'éternel problème épistémologique de la distinction entre *apparence* et *essence*, ainsi qu'à beaucoup d'autres qui surgissent tout au long de l'histoire racontée. Maintenant nous comprenons une chose évidente – les dessins numérotés renvoient directement à l'objet que nous avons devant les yeux. Qu'est-ce qu'on voit de l'extérieur? Un conte pour enfants (le chapeau). Qu'est-ce que nous découvrons en parcourant le livre? Une véritable philosophie (l'éléphant). Donc nous sommes avertis dès le début de la double nature du livre. Pour toucher les deux catégories de public, l'auteur se met à la portée de chacun, comme il nous le montre à la fin du premier chapitre: « alors je ne lui parlais ni de serpents boas, ni de forêts vierges, ni d'étoiles. *Je me mettais à sa portée*». (Saint-Exupéry, 1943 : 7)

Galembert renvoie à ces deux catégories de public, lorsqu'il parle de l'œuvre comme d'une création hybride, résultant du croisement du conte avec le mythe. Les deux genres sont entremêlés et chacun retrouve son public sur des plans différents: « le conte est une dégradation du mythe: c'est un mythe profane et désacralisé. Il présente un monde désenchanté, où le merveilleux remplace le sacré.

Le mythe, lui, traduit sur un autre plan ce que le conte raconte. Il cherche le grand secret, la révélation primordiale.» (Galembert, 2001: 70)

Comme tout personnage mythique, le petit prince devrait donc apporter des réponses aux hommes. Dans ce cas, nous serions tous invités à suivre son parcours fabuleux pour en tirer les enseignements. Mais les ruptures du fil narratif, le manque de cohérence, les passages brusques du concret à l'abstraction – tous ces aspects rendent la compréhension du texte difficile. Nous ne savons pas par où commencer.

Paul Valéry affirme dans son cours de poétique du Collège de France que, pour pouvoir comprendre une œuvre, il faut chercher les motivations. Celles-ci produisent les lois internes de la création: « le même mouvement interne de production lui donne à la fois et indistinctement l'impulsion, le but extérieur immédiat et les moyens ou les dispositifs techniques de l'action. » (Valéry, 1937: 322)

La démarche proposée par Paul Valéry pose donc le problème du but et des moyens. Le but est maintenant transparent : initier les lecteurs à une connaissance plus profonde, en leur montrant comment on peut aller à l'essentiel. Le mot « essentiel » désigne les valeurs que l'homme devrait constamment défendre, autrement dit ce qui compte vraiment pour la vie. Cette connaissance est fondée sur une compréhension plus profonde, sur l'empathie et l'amour. Ce qui reste à faire est d'identifier les procédés auxquels fait appel Saint-Exupéry pour nous convaincre de la justesse de son message. L'une des figures de style privilégiées est la répétition, qu'il s'agisse des séquences lexicales ou des images récurrentes, comme par exemple celle des personnages qui « tournent en rond » dans un mouvement qui n'est pas celui de la rotation de leur planète, mais celui d'une vie privée de sens. Les procédés surgissent à des moments différents, mais leur parcours est parfois commun. Il y a encore le questionnement du petit prince sur les lois qui régissent notre existence ainsi que sur les effets inquiétants du monde technologique dans lequel nous vivons.

## **La répétition**

Dans son ouvrage *Le Petit Prince. Étude et Commentaire*, Rouba Borgi essaie de décoder le message de cette œuvre si complexe, en faisant recours à l'analyse des répétitions qui attirent d'ailleurs notre attention dès le début. Dans *Le Petit Prince* il y a des groupes de mots ou des phrases entières qui se répètent, parfois dans un seul chapitre, comme c'est le cas du groupe de mots « à mille milles de toute terre habitée », dans le chapitre VIII. Selon Rouba Borgi, par cette répétition, l'écrivain «voulait que le lecteur soit bien plongé dans le désert où se déroulait l'histoire » (Borgi, 2013: 7) Une autre répétition sur laquelle elle attire l'attention est une phrase qui rappelle maintes fois au lecteur la persévérance et la ténacité du petit prince lorsqu'il se trouve devant l'inconnu. L'idée apparaît chaque fois avec de petites variations : «Le Petit Prince ne renonçait jamais à une question, une fois qu'il l'avait posée. » (ch. VII); «rappela le Petit Prince qui jamais n'oubliait une question une fois qu'il l'avait posée » (ch X) «répéta le petit prince qui jamais de sa vie, n'avait renoncé à une question, une fois qu'il l'avait posée.» (ch. XIII). Le message est clair : il faut être en quête permanente du sens, il faut se confronter à l'inconnu et le déchiffrer.

Une phrase entière attire l'attention en se répétant à la fin de chaque visite

chez un personnage qui habite seul sa planète. Elle vient résumer la conclusion du petit prince sur ce qu'il a vu : une existence qui frise l'absurde. Il ne se propose pas de critiquer, mais il ne peut pas non plus contenir son étonnement quant aux idées, aux gestes et, en général, au comportement étrange de chacun. Ainsi, dans le chapitre X, après avoir rendu visite au roi qui avait toujours l'air d'un « monarque absolu » et « ne tolérait pas la désobéissance » – même s'il n'y avait personne sur sa planète qui puisse lui obéir ou désobéir! – il s'exclame: « Les grandes personnes sont bien étranges » (Saint-Exupéry, 1943 : 46). Décidément, un roi qui prétend régner sur tout, mais qui supplie un petit garçon de rester chez lui pour le sauver de la solitude ne peut être que bizarre à ses yeux. La conclusion porteuse de message est simple: le pouvoir dont dispose quelqu'un sur les autres ne garantit pas le bonheur.

### **Le cercle vicieux**

C'est toujours dans le chapitre consacré au roi qu'une idée très intéressante commence à s'esquisser, pour devenir ensuite de plus en plus visible, tout au long de l'histoire du petit prince: l'idée que l'isolement et la solitude constituent la conséquence directe d'un type de raisonnement et d'action habituellement exprimé par l'expression « tourner en rond ». Parfois l'idée est explicite, d'autres fois elle est suggérée, comme dans le jeu auquel se prête le roi pour s'assurer qu'il a le pouvoir de décider du sort de ses sujets: « je crois bien que sur ma planète il y a quelque part un vieux rat. Je l'entends la nuit. Tu pourras juger ce vieux rat. Tu le condamneras à mort de temps en temps. [...] Mais tu le gracieras chaque fois pour l'économiser. Il n'y en a qu'un. » (Saint-Exupéry, 1943 : 46)

Dans le chapitre XI nous faisons connaissance avec le vaniteux – un personnage malin mais déplorable, qui prie le petit prince de l'applaudir: « Frappe tes mains l'une contre l'autre, conseilla donc le vaniteux » (Saint-Exupéry, 1943: 48) . Le paradoxe et l'absurdité de cette situation c'est qu'il demande humblement au petit prince de l'applaudir, mais les compliments doivent être parsemés de superlatifs «le plus beau, le mieux habillé, le plus riche et le plus intelligent de la planète » (Saint-Exupéry, 1943: 49). Après chaque représentation, il salue « modestement ». Le jeu insensé qu'il propose ainsi que le faux retour à la modestie conduisent le petit prince à la même conclusion: le vaniteux tourne en rond lui aussi, donc rien d'intéressant ne peut se produire sur sa planète. «Les grandes personnes sont décidément bien bizarres » – est la conclusion finale du petit prince. (Saint-Exupéry, 1943 : 49)

Le chapitre dédié au buveur (XII) présente un personnage qui plonge le petit prince dans « une grande mélancolie ». Le court dialogue avec lui trace le plus clairement possible le cercle infernal dans lequel il tourne: il boit pour oublier qu'il a honte de boire ! La conclusion est renforcée par le double adverbe d'intensité : « les grandes personnes sont décidément très très bizarres » (Saint-Exupéry, 1943: 50-51)

Rouba Borgi élargit la signification de la scène, pour signaler le problème de la dépendance: « Saint-Exupéry critique, à travers le petit prince, tant de problèmes auxquels nous faisons face. Ainsi, la rencontre du petit prince avec le buveur n'était que pour soulever le problème de l'alcoolisme et souligner que la logique "qui se mord la queue" n'est pas la bonne. » (Borgi, 2013: 19)

Peu à peu, nous comprenons que les personnages solitaires créent une galerie de portraits représentant des caractères et des comportements reconnaissables dans « notre monde », ce qui est d'ailleurs confirmé dans le chapitre XVI où l'auteur réunit tous ces personnages sur la Terre.

Le businessman semble être l'illustration parfaite de ce qu'est le non-sens. En l'interrogeant sur son activité, le petit prince apprend avec stupéfaction qu'il « compte et recompte » les étoiles, puis il les achète et devient riche. Cela lui permettra d'acheter d'autres étoiles pour devenir encore plus riche, et ainsi de suite, en tournant en rond dans son projet fantasmagorique. L'absurdité de son occupation réside aussi dans le fait que pour lui, les chiffres et les additions sont plus importants que ce qu'ils désignent. De plus, ce personnage se déclare « un homme sérieux » parce qu'il ne s'amuse pas à « des balivernes » comme ceux qui ont le temps de « rêvasser ». Remarquons les termes dépréciatifs qui, face au sérieux affiché par le personnage, provoquent des effets comiques. De l'absurde au ridicule il n'y a qu'un pas. Comble de l'absurdité, le businessman imagine qu'il possède tout ce qui n'est pas revendiqué par quelqu'un, c'est-à-dire... toutes les étoiles : « – À qui sont-elles ? Riposta, grincheux, le businessman. – Je ne sais pas. À personne. – Alors elles sont à moi, car j'y ai pensé le premier. » (Saint-Exupéry, 1943: 55)

L'auteur s'arrête pour nous présenter une autre vision sur l'idée de possession. Posséder signifie prendre soin, entretenir, améliorer, en un mot: être responsable: « – Moi, dit-il encore, je possède une fleur que j'arrose tous les jours. Je possède trois volcans que je ramone toutes les semaines. [...] C'est utile à mes volcans, et c'est utile à ma fleur, que je les possède. Mais tu n'es pas utile aux étoiles. » (Saint-Exupéry, 1943: 56)

Il convient de noter que l'écrivain ne se propose pas de faire une classification des vices et des défauts humains ; ce ne sont que des portraits qui reflètent, plus ou moins, un certain type de conduite, une certaine psychologie. D'ailleurs, le voyage initiatique de ce prince est un voyage dans les profondeurs de l'être humain, un voyage utilisant l'humour et l'ironie comme arme de combat.

L'histoire de l'allumeur de réverbères (chapitre XIV) occupe une place à part dans le livre. Il s'agit de l'unique personnage dont le petit prince aurait voulu faire un ami, bien que lui aussi il tourne dans un cercle infernal, en allumant et en éteignant les réverbères une fois par minute. Mais aux yeux du petit prince cet homme est « moins absurde » que les personnages antérieurs, grâce au côté esthétique de son travail: « peut-être bien que cet homme est absurde. Cependant il est moins absurde que le roi, que le vaniteux, que le businessman et que le buveur. Au moins son travail a-t-il un sens. Quand il allume son réverbère, c'est comme s'il faisait naître une étoile de plus, ou une fleur. [...] ». (Saint-Exupéry, 1943 : 58) En plus, cet homme est animé par le sentiment du devoir, mais la contradiction entre le rythme accéléré de la planète et la consigne qui n'y est pas adaptée ne lui laisse aucune chance de se reposer. La petitesse de sa planète désigne une vie dans laquelle il n'y a plus de place ou de temps pour faire autre chose que travailler.

### **Le monde technologique**

L'allumeur de réverbères représente la société humaine face à la révolution industrielle qui se produit à grande échelle dans la période de temps que l'écrivain traverse. Le progrès apporté par la science et la technique semble être salutaire,

mais il y a toujours le revers de la médaille; le stress, le sentiment d'aliénation, le manque des repères en sont la cause directe. Le chapitre XXV présente la technologisation comme un phénomène brutal et étrange, capable de prendre dans son tourbillon des gens toujours plus solitaires et tristes: «Les hommes, dit le petit prince, ils s'enfourment dans les rapides, mais ils ne savent plus ce qu'ils cherchent. Alors ils s'agitent et tournent en rond...». (Saint-Exupéry, 1943 : 90)

Donc, le progrès de la science ne peut pas résoudre le problème de la solitude, même si les gens peuvent se trouver dans des endroits agglomérés et vivre dans une agitation permanente. L'idée transparaît aussi dans les paroles d'un employé de gare «Je trie les voyageurs, par paquets de mille, dit l'aiguilleur. J'expédie les trains qui les emportent, tantôt vers la droite, tantôt vers la gauche. » (Saint-Exupéry, 1943 : 84) Ce progrès ne peut pas non plus donner un sens aux hommes: « – Ils poursuivent les premiers voyageurs ? demanda le petit prince. – Ils ne poursuivent rien du tout, dit l'aiguilleur. Ils dorment là-dedans, ou bien ils bâillent. » (Saint-Exupéry 1943, p. 85).

### **Le questionnement**

Pour comprendre la vie, le petit prince pose toujours des questions et il nous conseille de faire de même, c'est-à-dire de persister dans l'interrogation. Il faut toujours réfléchir à des questions majeures et ne jamais considérer une réponse comme définitive. En guise d'exemple, les questions sur le rôle des épines des roses dans le chapitre VII et la tirade portant sur « la guerre des moutons et des fleurs ». Le sérieux du problème réside dans son caractère immuable, démontré par la durée: « Il y a des millions d'années que les fleurs fabriquent des épines. Il y a des millions d'années que les moutons mangent quand même les fleurs. Et ce n'est pas sérieux de chercher à comprendre pourquoi elles se donnent tant de mal pour se fabriquer des épines [...] ? » (Saint-Exupéry, 1943 : 30)

Les allégories présentes dans le conte nous aident à mieux comprendre les idées. Dans ce cas, il s'agit donc de comprendre la création dans un univers où tout est connecté, dans cette grande équation dans laquelle tout fusionne.

Le questionnement suscité par *Le Petit Prince* est riche: comment trouver des solutions aux problèmes fondamentaux de l'existence? comment distinguer quelque chose quand la vie tourne autour de nous à une vitesse de plus en plus grande ? comment voir ce qui est vraiment important, pour ne pas gaspiller notre temps et notre énergie pour des buts dérisoires? comment peut-on sortir du cercle vicieux, du cercle infernal créé, le plus souvent, par nos propres passions et ambitions et surtout comment procéder pour voir l'essentiel? La solution fournie par le renard dans le chapitre XXI insiste sur une idée inédite: il faut être « *«*apprivoisé *»*, c'est-à-dire capable de « *créer des liens* » L'égalité entre les deux termes appartient à l'écrivain: «Qu'est-ce que signifie *“*apprivoiser *”* ? – C'est une chose trop oubliée, dit le renard. Ça signifie *“*créer des liens *”*...» (Saint-Exupéry, 1943 : 78)

### **Le secret du renard**

On remarque que le renard se plaint lui aussi de l'ennui permanent et de la monotonie de sa vie, avant d'être apprivoisé par le petit prince. Il vit dans la

solitude et tourne en rond: « ma vie est monotone. Je chasse les poules, les hommes me chassent ». (Saint-Exupéry, 1943 : 80) Le fait d'être apprivoisé constitue donc une condition absolue pour quiconque veut accéder à la vie en plénitude. Le renard prie le petit prince de l'apprivoiser et ensuite il lui confie le secret: « Voici mon secret. Il est très simple: on ne voit bien qu'avec le cœur. L'essentiel est invisible pour les yeux. » (Saint-Exupéry, 1943 : 83)

Cette citation est perçue aujourd'hui comme un aphorisme grâce à la vérité fondamentale qu'elle transmet. En tant qu'êtres humains, nous devons saisir une réalité dans ce qu'elle a de plus profond et d'authentique. Saint-Exupéry nous enseigne donc une précieuse leçon: pour connaître la vérité, il faut regarder au-delà de l'aspect extérieur, dans la profondeur des choses, en faisant appel à l'âme, au cœur, à l'esprit. Ce secret va aussi résoudre le problème signalé au début du livre, quant à la confusion qui peut se produire chaque fois qu'on s'arrête à la surface. Il résout aussi le grave problème de l'isolement et le non-sens d'une existence enfermée dans un cercle vicieux.

Il convient d'attirer l'attention sur des éléments lexicaux appartenant à l'idiolecte de l'auteur: le verbe « apprivoiser », dont le sens sort du champ d'interprétation habituel, pour se réduire à l'humain, ainsi que l'expression « créer des liens » – expression qui, au premier regard, serait synonyme avec « créer des relations » mais le sens n'est pas identique, le mot « liens » comportant une forte connotation affective. Les aspects signalés confèrent au discours des subtilités et une profondeur inattendue. Dans son étude *Petit lexique de poétique du sujet à l'usage des critiques soucieux d'étudier l'imaginaire de l'auteur*, Christian Chelebourg affirme qu'il ne faut pas confondre la langue littéraire avec la langue vernaculaire. Il apporte une précision nécessaire: « la langue littéraire et essentiellement idiolectale, elle n'appartient qu'à l'auteur qui l'a créée [...] si l'on veut cerner le sens d'une œuvre pour son auteur, il faut entendre son lexique dans la logique interne mise en place par le réseau de ses œuvres, et non par le simple recours au dictionnaire. » (Chelebourg, 2003: 3). Les éléments lexicaux que nous avons précisés ci-dessus sont présents dans *Terre des Hommes* et témoignent de la même profondeur. Par exemple, en parlant de Bark, un esclave arabe libéré par les aviateurs, Saint-Exupéry décrit son besoin affectif de la manière suivante: « mais cette liberté lui parut amère: elle lui découvrait surtout à quel point il manquait de liens avec le monde » et pour être plus précis, il ajoute un peu plus loin: « ces mille liens qui l'attachent aux autres».... (Saint-Exupéry, 1939: 121, 123)

## Conclusions

Les problèmes relevés dans cette étude prouvent que Saint-Exupéry veut transmettre un enseignement qui nous permette de mieux comprendre la vie. Ne pas se fier à l'aspect extérieur des choses, éviter les cercles vicieux dans lesquels on peut s'enfermer en suivant les passions les plus basses (l'orgueil, la vanité, la méchanceté, l'égoïsme, les vices, comme dans le cas des habitants des planètes solitaires) réfléchir à tout ce qui existe autour de nous, ne pas considérer le progrès technique comme valeur suprême de la vie – tout ça signifie voir au-delà de l'apparence et progresser dans la connaissance. L'image finale du ciel étoilé et de la douce complicité entre le créateur du petit prince et ses lecteurs prouve du fait que le message de ce livre est toujours vivant et continuera de vivre.



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## PAUL ET VIRGINIE: LE GRAND CARREFOUR DES REFLEXES ESTHETIQUES

Andreea VL DESCU<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract:** *This study argues the importance of Bernardin de Saint – Pierre’s work in the aesthetic context of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century. It explains the existence of the Classicism (ending) and that of the Romanticism (ascending) in one novel, Paul et Virginie (or Paul and Virginia), starting from the idea of bringing together the joint essence of the two literary trends.*

*Our piece of work identifies aesthetic reflexes that mark on one hand the differences and, on the other, the continuity of the successive artistic trends at multiple levels: message, narrative approach, character typology, vision of love and natural setting.*

**Keywords :** *Sense, sentimentality, nature.*

Fin observateur et grand peintre aussi de la nature que de l’âme humaine, Jacques-Henri Bernardin de Saint-Pierre (1737-1814) se situe dans l’histoire de la littérature française à une distance égale entre J. J. Rousseau (1712-1778) – son maître déclaré - et R.de Chateaubriand (1768-1848) – son disciple et un admirateur sans réserves. D’ailleurs, son chef d’œuvre, *Paul et Virginie* (1777-1778), l’a consacré en tant qu’esprit préromantique, créateur de l’exotisme dans la littérature française.

Paradoxalement, ce que le romantisme – le courant littéraire le plus redevable à l’auteur – a saisi et a admiré dans ce roman est son essence... classique! Ainsi, Chateaubriand (dans le *Génie du christianisme*) apprécie dans *Paul et Virginie* « son charme qui consiste en une certaine morale mélancolique » et considère le roman « une églogue [qui] n’est si touchante que parce qu’elle représente deux familles chrétiennes exilées, vivant sous les yeux du Seigneur, entre sa parole dans la Bible et ses ouvrages dans le désert. » Lamartine (*Graziella*) est émerveillé par « ces événements si simples [...], des choses que tout le monde sent et comprend [...] et par le pathétique [qui] seul est infailible dans l’art ».

La critique de l’époque romantique partage la position des créateurs envers cet auteur encore de grand succès au début du XIXe siècle, autant en France, qu’en Europe. Dans *Causeries du lundi*, Sainte-Beuve même identifie dans l’œuvre les traits définitoires d’une esthétique classique: « Tout ici, presque tout est parfait, simple, décent et touchant, modéré et enchanteur. Toutes ces harmonies, tous ces contrastes, ces réverbérations morales, il les a ici réalisées dans un cadre heureux. »

Autres observations de Sainte-Beuve (*Portraits littéraires*), suggèrent une certaine nostalgie romantique pour la rigueur et la concision d’un âge d’or esthétiquement révolu: « Ce qui me frappe et me confond au point de vue de l’art dans *Paul et Virginie* c’est comme tout est court, simple, sans un mot de trop, tournant vite au tableau enchanteur. Chaque alinéa est bien coupé, en de justes moments. Chaque petit ensemble aboutit, non pas à un trait aiguisé, mais à quelque

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\* Universitatea Spiru Haret Bucure ti; [deea.lupu@yahoo.com](mailto:deea.lupu@yahoo.com)

image, soit naturelle et végétale, soit prise aux souvenirs grecs; on se figure une suite de jolies collines dont chacune est terminée par un arbre gracieux ou par un tombeau. »

À plus de deux siècles de la parution du roman, nous considérons que sa valeur demeure intacte justement par la manière spécifique de marquer le lent détachement de la vision et de la rhétorique classique. L'œuvre convertit ces données dans une perspective profondément subjective et dans un langage esthétique imagé, propres à illustrer le passage du discours de la morale édifiante vers l'individualité du sentiment. *Paul et Virginie* acquiert ainsi l'importance d'un convaincant témoignage artistique de la continuité du romantisme, par rapport au classicisme.

La personnalité de l'auteur même semble partagée entre ces deux dimensions spirituelles, qui allaient assurer le succès de la réception de son livre. Son aventure existentielle en témoigne. Esprit positif, de formation rationaliste, le jeune ingénieur du roi erre - jusqu'à 1771 - aussi en Europe (en Pologne, en Autriche, en Allemagne), que sur les mers et les îles des tropiques (au Madagascar et à l'île de France-aujourd'hui Maurice). Afin d'informer / d'instruire ses lecteurs, ce jeune noble érudit acquiert la célébrité en témoignant ses observations et ses conclusions sur l'homme et la nature dans: *Voyage à l'île de France* (1773), *Études de la Nature* (1784), *l'Arcadie* (1781).

Fonctionnaire à l'âge mûr (intendant du Jardin des Plantes, 1792), membre de l'Institut de France (1795) et de l'Académie Française (1803), Bernardin de Saint-Pierre devient populaire en tant que porte-parole des idéaux d'une génération qui se considérait une victime de la société et qui, éprise de la nature, y trouvait le remède de ses maux et le cadre de l'amour idéale.

Les œuvres de sa maturité créatrice sont parsemées des reflets d'une littérature à venir, dont lui-même paraissait saisir la nouveauté : « J'en ai formé un système si hardi, si neuf, et si spécieux, que je n'ose le communiquer à personne. Je m'accroche à tout et laisse flotter çà et là des fils, comme l'araignée, jusqu'à ce que je puisse ourdir ma toile ». Cette toile semble être représentée par la publication indépendante du roman *Paul et Virginie*, (1787), par le conte *La chaumière indienne* (1790) les essais (*Le café de Surate*, 1790; *Les vœux d'un solitaire pour servir de suite aux «Études de la Nature»*, 1790; *De la nature morale*, 1798; *La mort de Socrate*, 1808; *Harmonies de la nature*, 1815) et par un dernier journal (*Voyage en Silésie*, 1807).

C'est ainsi que dans le petit chef d'œuvre, qui consacre d'ailleurs Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, le roman *Paul et Virginie*, on découvre aussi bien la raison, due à l'éducation classique, la morale et l'objectivité de l'ingénieur et du botaniste (qui a vécu sur l'île Maurice), que l'expérience et l'esprit d'aventure du voyageur ; la sentimentalité (d'un familier du salon de Julie de Lespinasse) et le besoin de confession (de l'ami et du disciple de Jean Jacques Rousseau).

L'œuvre de Bernardin de Saint-Pierre devienne de la sorte représentative pour l'esprit des chefs d'œuvres du XVIIIe siècle, qui associent en même temps les deux termes de l'antinomie définitoire entre l'autorité consacrée (sociale et esthétique) et le renouvellement (de la pensée, du vécu et de la représentation artistique). On y retrouve condensée la relation spécifique entre la tradition classique (en déclin) et l'expression encore vague du besoin, lui-même ambigu de sentimentalité, de foi et d'idéalité de l'être.

Si les grands contemporains de Bernardin de Saint -Pierre, J. Jacques Rousseau et Voltaire s'adressaient à un certain public, bien défini – rêveur, sentimental et idéaliste, pour le premier auteur, réflexif et critique pour le second – Bernardin de Saint-Pierre atteint la performance de répondre à la fois à ces deux horizons d'attente opposés. Il découvre les centres d'intérêts communs entre le lecteur conservateur, élitiste et cultivé à l'esprit des valeurs classiques, stables et confirmées par le temps, et le public bourgeois, peut-être plus jeune et plus nombreux, rattaché aux idéaux révolutionnaires, à l'intensité du vécu et au rythme du progrès / de la mode.

La présence d'une thèse dans ce roman comble l'attente classique et, qui plus est, par son contenu, cette thèse rassure aussi le lecteur à prédispositions romantiques. Cette thèse engendre le roman, conçu et publié en 1784 en tant que texte conclusif, quatrième volume des *Études sur la nature*. Elle affirme le rôle de la nature, créée par l'immanence à la portée de l'homme, pour en jouir et pour la posséder en maître, mais aussi en tant que source de la raison, de la pureté et des vérités originaires de l'être.

Confié dans l'*Avant-Propos*, **le message du roman** pose en effet le problème du bonheur, en tant que bût de l'existence: « *Notre bonheur consiste à vivre suivant la nature et la vertu* ». La quête du bonheur, qui allait mobiliser les efforts créateurs des courants esthétiques du XIXe siècle, est ce qui semble avoir sensibilisé à l'époque les deux catégories de public de Bernardin de Saint-Pierre.

Peut-être que ce nouveau idéal attirait les esprits progressistes par l'individualité de l'expérience et par la dimension tellement humaine qu'elle impliquait. En ce qui concerne les conservateurs de cette période (pré)moderne, ils étaient déjà lassés par le fardeau de l'ancien idéal-la gloire – trop lourd, abstrait et tardif, par rapport à l'existence même. En plus, ce que l'auteur leur proposait supposait aussi la raison, que la morale.

Au premier abord, la solution de Bernardin de Saint-Pierre – posée aussi en tant qu'hypothèse de sa démonstration romanesque – associe deux termes qui renvoient à l'idéalité d'un équilibre entre l'existant, concret, vif, dynamique, suivant ses lois (la nature) et la morale, avec sa donnée finale (la pureté absolue, idéale, inflexible). D'ailleurs, *nature* et *vertu* sont les termes qui semblent exprimer un équilibre entre l'option romantique et la suprême valeur classique. Nous considérons qu'en réalité, dans ce contexte, *nature / naturel* sont des termes poli sémantique. Justement cette polysémie symbolique jalonne de même les significations de continuité classique que le tournant vers le romantisme.

Dans le roman, nature signifie en premier lieu *conforme à la raison, au bon sens, à l'ordre normal des choses*, principes chères au classicisme. C'est pourquoi pour ce roman sentimental l'auteur maintient / réactualise dans la première partie de l'œuvre les cadres de **la formule narrative de tradition pastorale, associée aux mouvements épiques du roman sentimental** (vers la fin de l'œuvre).

En vogue au XVIIIe siècle, dépourvue des artifices, de l'affectation et des contraintes des usages épiques contemporaines, l'idylle comblait aussi l'attente du public familier à l'univers bucolique d'André Chénier. En plus, elle expliquait le bonheur, en tant qu'expression de la vie conforme au rythme et à la liberté totale de l'innocence originnaire.

Supposant l'authenticité du sentiment, l'exceptionnel des êtres impliqués dans l'amour, la liberté du moi, promues par le romantisme, l'idylle de Bernardin

confère à la nature aussi *le sens symbolique d'essence antithétique à l'artifice, à l'affectation, à la contrainte*. Mais, cette signification désigne aussi ce qui est tel quel, crée par la volonté et par la force divine, par rapport à ce qui est bâti, forgé, dressé par l'homme ou vécu par lui dans son univers artificiel, construit. Dans l'idylle de Bernardin de Saint-Pierre cette lecture symbolique du terme nature circonscrit clairement *l'opposition* propre à la pensée du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle, *entre la nature / la culture et la civilisation*, que Bernardin, sur les traces de Rousseau, circonscrit à travers une perspective critique :

« Ils étaient ignorants comme des créoles et ne savaient ni lire ni écrire. Ils ne s'inquiétaient pas de ce qui s'était passé dans des temps reculés et loin d'eux : leur curiosité ne s'étendait pas au-delà de cette montagne. » (p.12).

*Paul et Virginie* illustre, dans des termes qui renvoient à *Daphnis et Chloé*, l'amour arcadien de deux enfants / adolescents. Gens simples et pauvres, comme les deux bergers de Longus, **les amoureux** sont en même temps représentatifs pour *la nature humaine originare*. Ils deviennent les symboles de l'âge d'or de l'humanité (ce qui renvoie au répertoire classique, mais en même temps au couple primordial, adamique - rattaché au mythe chrétien, de la foi redécouverte par les (pré)romantiques) :

« Tels dans le jardin d'Éden, parurent nos premiers parents lorsque, sortant des mains de Dieux, ils se virent s'approchèrent et conversèrent d'abord comme sœur et frère: Virginie, douce, modeste, confiante comme Ève ; et Paul, semblable à Adam, ayant la taille d'un homme, avec la simplicité d'un enfant. » (p. 33)

À ces amoureux on ne saurait leur nier la signification rousseauiste des hommes conformes à la nature, libres des maux et des contraintes sociales et doués d'une pureté perdue, que l'être historique doit reconquérir: Expression de l'innocence pure, cet état suppose l'ignorance de tout mal et une pureté absolue, dues à préserver l'âme de toute souffrance et la raison de tout souci / toute méfiance envers les autres :

« Ainsi croissaient ces deux enfants de la nature. « Ainsi croissaient ces deux enfants de la nature. Aucun souci n'avait ridé leur front, aucune intempérance n'avait corrompu leur sang, aucune passion malheureuse n'avait dépravé leur cœur : l'amour, l'innocence, la piété développait chaque jour la beauté de leurs âme en grâces ineffables dans leurs traits, leurs attitudes et leurs mouvement [...] » (p.32).

Guidés par la nature, les deux amoureux esquissent l'harmonie du tout, qui est leur couple. Profondément marqués par la tradition classique (de l'unité entre l'aspect physique d'une beauté parfaite et celui psychologique, d'une bonté et d'un dévouement sans faille), ils se singularisent par leur complémentarité antithétique.

D'une perfection absolue, les deux êtres circonscrivent l'unité et l'équilibre du couple idéal justement par leurs oppositions. Suggérant la sensibilité commune, les marques de la douceur et de la tendresse convertissent leurs portraits d'une beauté exemplaire en archétypes des portraits romantiques, exceptionnels et contrastants. Le portrait mélancolique, mais solaire, lumineux, de Virginie ébauche l'image de la femme angélique, vouée au malheur, par le sort hostile et par la méchanceté des gens:

« des grands cheveux blonds ombrageait sa tête ; ses yeux bleus et ses lèvres de corail brillaient du plus tendre éclat sur la fraîcheur de son visage, leur obliquité

naturelle vers le ciel leur donnait une expression d'une sensibilité extrême et même celle d'une légère mélancolie. » (p. 13).

Paul, par contraste, emprunt une teinte noirâtre, des traits plus fermes, à suggestions saturniennes, quant à la force intérieure d'un ange déchu, capable de révolte :

«Sa taille était plus élevée que celle de Virginie, son teint plus rembruni, son nez plus aquilin et ses yeux qui étaient noirs, aurait eu un peu de fierté, si ses longues cils ne leurs avaient donné la plus grande douceur » (p.13).

Paul et Virginie ne sont pas seulement deux partenaires, mais ils représentent - selon la tradition inaugurée par Rousseau et amplement développée par les romantiques – l'axe de l'existence des autres, par leur amour dévastateur, fatal.

Remplaçant tout autre expérience sociale / spirituelle, **l'amour** en tant qu'expérience du vécu est unique et profond. Il est exemplaire, mais il protège l'âme et l'isole, ce qui change la signification des partenaires dans le couple et leur relation avec le monde extérieur, qui devient « l'autre ». Sur l'îlot de leur amour, les deux partenaires sont peut-être les premiers véritables marginaux du répertoire romantique, proies sans issue à la double clôture : sociale (de l'île natale) et affective. Sujets de l'amour, Paul et Virginie puissent leur individualité, leur personnalité de cette profonde liaison affective, qui définit de la sorte leur univers intérieur en tant que « moi ». Chez Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, le roman du couple rassemble ces deux moi dans l'allégorisation mythique des hypostases de l'amour.

Faute des moyens d'analyse du sentiment (pratiqué par les romantiques), l'auteur de l'époque des lumières lui saisit au moins la dynamique et le mécanisme. Il les suggère par les significations des renvois Meta textuels aux sources antiques. Ainsi, la camaraderie enfantine, l'omniprésence de l'un auprès de l'autre rappellent « Castor et Pollux, les enfants de Lédà, enclos dans la même coquille » (p.12).

L'adolescence, moment crépusculaire de l'innocence est partagée entre la candeur juvénile (« on eût cru voir un groupe antique de marbre blanc, représentant quelques – uns des enfants de Niobé) et la sacralisation de l'amitié, par la flamme de la tentation :

« Mais à leurs regards qui cherchait à se rencontrer, à leurs sourires rendus par des plus doux sourires, on les eût pris pour ces enfants du ciel, pour ces enfants bienheureux dont la nature est de s'aimer et qui n'ont pas besoin de rendre le sentiment par des pensées et l'amitié par des paroles » (p. 13).

Objets de l'amour partagé, les deux adolescents sont sacralisés par l'intensité et par la pureté vertueuse du sentiment unique, absolu. Par conséquent, « céleste », d'une profondeur presque religieuse, l'amour est conçu dans le roman comme le sentiment des élus, des êtres d'exception. On y retrouve ici aussi la fatalité de l'amour romantique, son éloquence du silence et le jeu des regards qui est l'aveu du sentiment partagé.

Dans ce contexte psychologique (« des enfants bienheureux, dont la nature est de s'aimer »), le terme nature signifie *caractère, penchant affectif définitoire pour les âmes sensibles, d'exception* (« bienheureux »), dont les romantiques allaient faire les héros de leurs romans. Cette signification symbolique précise les dimensions et les niveaux de l'opposition pathétique et tragique entre

l'offre affective du moi et la réponse hostile et agressive du non-moi, qui finalement constitue l'essence du conflit romantique.

Anticipant les expériences psychologiques du siècle à venir, l'auteur place - dans le milieu naturel, familial et familier (de l'île) - sur la toile de fond de cet amour accompli, et dans une étroite relation avec lui, les nuances de la tendresse envers l'autre. Il s'agit des sentiments, filial et maternel (des deux jeunes gens envers Mme de la Tour et la bretonne Marguerite), amical (entre l'ami narrateur et les deux familles), du dévouement des domestiques (Domingue et Marie), qui va jusqu'au sacrifice suprême, envers leurs maîtresses.

Dans cet îlot familial, l'intensité du sentiment propagé par les héros souligne de nouveau leur essence exceptionnelle, hors du commun, leur profonde individualité idéale, plutôt intangible qu'exemplaire... En même temps, pour le moi sensible, la diversité des formes d'amour illustre aussi la vertu. C'est pourquoi Paul et Virginie sont les créateurs du bonheur sur l'île. Autour d'eux, s'érigent les bastions de ce tout ce que le « labyrinthe » du vécu implique dans l'amour.

Démiurgique, la dénomination (et même en majuscules !) confère une « existence » morale et affective aux éléments de l'amour, que le romantisme allait analyser:

« Rien n'était plus agréable que les noms donnés à la plupart des retraites charmantes de ce labyrinthe. ». Ainsi désignée, chacune des « retraites charmantes » représente en soi un jalon de *la nature-paysage* (romantique) : « Ce rocher [...] s'appelait la DÉCOUVERTE DE L'AMITIÉ ; un vieil arbre s'appelait [...] LES PLEURS ESSUYÉS ; TOUJOURS AGITÉE, MAIS CONSTANTE, cette devise [qui] conviendrait encore mieux à la vertu » est « au-dessus de la porte de la cabane ; « un cercle d'orangers, de bananiers, de jam roses se nommait LA CONCORDE ». On retrouve ici, associés la verticalité sculpturale des symboles de la solitude (le rocher, la cabane, le vieil arbre) et le déchainement chromatique du peinturage de l'exotisme romantique (« orangers », « bananiers », « jam roses »).

« Retraites charmantes » de ce labyrinthe, les éléments de cet univers symbolique circonscrivent l'espace de l'intersubjectivité pure. Siège de la relation idyllique entre Moi (Paul, Virginie) et L'autre (la famille, les proches et, finalement, la société en entier), elles suggèrent l'îlot de l'équilibre, encastré dans l'Île (de France). Le roman de Bernardin de Saint-Pierre préface de la sorte d'une manière encore plus poussée que J. J. Rousseau l'essence subjective et les fonctions de la nature romantique.

On aboutit ainsi à une autre signification du terme nature, par laquelle cet auteur d'une pastorale (exotique!) atteint la substance même de la vision romantique: celle d'*univers extérieur (macrocosme), par rapport au moi*, mais dans une étroite relation spécifique avec celui-ci (microcosme). Dans cette acception du terme, *Paul et Virginie* fait seulement le passage vers la relation réversible entre le moi et la nature selon la perspective romantique.

Nourri autant par Rousseau que par Defoe – l'auteur anglais lu dans le roman par madame de la Tour – et muni de la science du botaniste ayant vécu aux îles, Bernardin de Saint-Pierre convertit le décor consacré par la tradition romanesque en paysage. Par les couleurs des tropiques et les jeux de lumière et d'ombre, il crée une perspective chromatique, qui confère l'épaisseur à un espace devenu ainsi tridimensionnel. Justement cette nouvelle dimension est ce qui le rattache en premier lieu au romantisme à venir. Cette sensation de profondeur est

mise en relief par la relation entre deux niveaux symboliques de la nature, qui délimitent l'espace: la nature-cadre et la nature-foyer.

*La nature – cadre* est celle de l'Île de France, qui réunit comme une sorte de mauvais présage les éléments symboliquement suggestifs pour le destin des héros: «la baie du Tombeau», «le Cap Malheureux», «le Coin de Mire». On remarque ici rassemblés les éléments définitoires du paysage romantique: «de grands rochers», «la montagne», «le chemin», «l'église», «une forêt qui s'étend jusqu'aux extrémités de l'île», «les bords de la mer», «la baie du Tombeau», «la pleine mer». De plus, l'écrivain met en relief la profondeur de ce paysage en ajoutant à la poésie visuelle la suggestivité et la diversité de l'univers auditif :

« Les échos de la montagne répètent sans cesse le bruit des vents qui agitent les forêts voisines, et le fracas des vagues qui brisent au loin sur les récifs. ».

D'ailleurs, extrêmement dynamique et gradée jusqu'à une ampleur menaçante, cet univers sonore semble plutôt renvoyer ou préfacier les grands mouvements intérieurs des héros. Là, Bernardin de Saint-Pierre semble avoir eu l'intuition du rapport romantique entre le vécu et le macrocosme, qui participe à sa manière aux crises du moi.

Ce n'est pas dans ce genre de nature (démessurée, soumise au hasard déchaîné des tempêtes ou des déluges et siège éternel des contrastes irréconciliables-entre la profondeur infinie de la mer et la hauteur hostile des cimes de la montagne) que l'auteur retrouve la grande ressource extérieure du bonheur. Au contraire, il l'a retrouvé dans l'alternative à cette hypostase. Celle-ci s'éloigne par son essence même de la vision romantique, ou plutôt elle trahit sa substance classique.

Au beau milieu de la nature sauvage et exotique, dressée vers l'infini, l'écrivain place la *nature-foyer, espace de l'existence quotidienne*. Là, il s'agit de l'îlot du bonheur au sein de l'Île. À l'opposé de l'Île même, cet espace est (à demi) clos («un bassin formé par des grands rochers, qui n'a qu'une seule ouverture, tournée vers le nord.»). Cadre originaire, protecteur, familier par sa forme douce, où la nature et la profondeur s'équilibrent, ce lieu abrite les humbles logements des héros.

Les cabanes dominent le lieu aménagé, approprié par l'effort du travail quotidien :

« On voit dans le terrain jadis cultivé, les ruines de deux petites cabanes ». Foyer des deux familles, ces cabanes suggèrent autant l'exceptionnel de la condition des exilés, leurs solitude contemplative, le bonheur de l'âme vertueux, qui a la force profondément chrétienne de s'isoler loin des péchés et des coups de la vie sociale.

Nature et vertu s'y rejoignent une première fois dans ce roman, à la manière classique. Familiale, par l'opposition à la nature romantique (sauvage), cette nature-foyer est cultivé, illustrant le contraste entre la vie contemplative / affective et celle laborieuse, dont elle est l'expression :

« Sur le cote oriental de la montagne, qui s'élève derrière le Port-Louis de l'Île de France, on voit, dans un terrain jadis cultivé, les ruines de deux petites cabanes. ».

D'ailleurs, la beauté calme, équilibrée du site habité n'a rien à voir avec la grandeur sauvage qui l'entoure :



« Elles sont situées presque au milieu d'un bassin formé par des grands rochers, qui n'a qu'une seule ouverture, tournée au nord ».

Rassurant est aussi l'univers auditif, qui exprime l'équilibre, la paix, l'harmonie, justement par les nuances du silence, qui enveloppent la vallée. ». On dirait qu'il s'agit de l'atmosphère bucolique, si l'auteur n'avait pas introduit des détails exotiques. De la sorte, l'émotion romantique surgit en pleine atmosphère pastorale :

« Un grand silence règne dans leur enceinte, où tout est paisible : l'air, les eaux et la lumière. À peine l'écho y répète le murmure des palmistes qui croissent sur leurs plateaux élève et dont on voit les longues flèches toujours balancées par le vent ».

Tout cet univers de couleurs, de parfums, de formes déchainées propres aux tropiques, que l'auteur évoque, dans ce roman, en connaisseur, répond autant à l'attente classique – par l'intention d'instruire – qu'à celle romantique – la fascination d'ordre (pré)romantique pour l'exotisme, le lointain, l'inconnu :

« de jeunes pans de citronniers, d'orangers, de tamarins, dont la tête ronde est d'un si beau vert, et d'attiers [...] qui a le parfum de la fleur d'orange [...], l'agatis, ou pendent tout autour, comme des cristaux d'un lustre, de longues grappes de fleurs blanches ; le lilas de Perse, qui élève droit en l'air ses girandoles gris de lin ; le papayer, dont le tronc sans branches, formé en colonne hérissée de melons verts, porte un chapeau de larges feuilles semblable à celles du figuier. »

Grandiose, diverse, vivant au rythme des cycles cosmiques, qui marquent de même l'existence humaine, cette nature nous semble avoir une essence distincte aussi de celle de la pastorale classique que de celle romantique (canonique) :

« Paul s'étant rendu par hasard dans ce lieu, fut rempli de joie en voyant ce grand arbre sorti d'une petite graine qu'il avait vu planter par son amie [...]. Tantôt il voulait l'abattre, parce qu'il lui rendait trop sensible la longueur du temps qui s'était écoulé depuis le départ de Virginie ; tantôt le considérant comme un monument de sa bienfaisance, il baisait son tronc et lui adressait des paroles pleines d'amour et de regrets ».

Le noyau de cette différence, qui singularise la vision de Bernardin de Saint-Pierre est le fait que cette nature exotique est – tout comme celle de l'île de Robinson – cultivée. Sur son île, tout comme Robinson, Paul transforme la nature. Par son effort effectif – si loin du travail gracieux et artificiel des petits bergers de l'idylle antique – Paul construit par ses efforts effectifs la vie matérielle de ses proches. Il établit de la sorte sa « petite colonie » familiale et un univers social où en tant que « blanc », il est le maître des esclaves « noirs ».

Si Robinson cultivait sur son île les « grains » de l'ancienne civilisation, son désir de confort et du bien-être personnel, basé sur la domination et la prise en possession, Paul et sa société cherchent la paix et le bonheur.

Les protagonistes du roman trouvent cet équilibre intérieur dans leur condition même « d'enfants de la nature ». Tel quel, ils sont dépourvus des biens qui inciterait à la convoitise ou à l'avarice, libres de tout instinct de possession et de toute envie, en dehors des rivalités, épargnés de la jalousie, par les sentiments partagés en famille et dans le couple.

Situés en dehors de la société hiérarchique, vivant dans un univers lointain et exotique, d'une innocence adamique, ces personnages sont la réplique

donnée au sublime par l'exceptionnel même : « Ils ne savaient pas qu'il ne faut pas dérober, tout chez eux était commun ; ni être intempérants, ayant à discrétion des mets simples ; ni menteurs, n'ayant aucune vérité à dissimuler. ».

Dépourvus des contraintes culturelles (« ils ne savaient ni lire ni écrire »), de la foi (« on ne leur avait appris de la religion que ce qui la fait aimer »), ou de la morale (« jamais les leçons d'une triste morale ne les avait rempli d'ennui »), Paul et Virginie atteignent la vertu exemplaire, par la bonté de leur nature.

Par cette dernière acception du terme *nature* (=caractère, essence humaine originaire) que nous avons décelé dans l'œuvre de Bernardin de Saint-Pierre l'auteur provoque son lecteur à un jeu qui lui est propre, entre familier et étrange(r), lointain et tout proche, connu, quotidien. « Naturel » devient ainsi « bon » dans le pays du lointain, de la liberté, de l'égalité effective, de la fraternité réelle, convertie en amour de l'être proche.

L'île paradisiaque et l'amour absolu qui se déroule là deviennent de la sorte les symboles de la perfection humaine, dans l'acception rousseauiste de la bonté originaire. Par opposition le proche, le connu (soumis aux contraintes et au système de la hiérarchie – politique / administrative, le gouverneur de la Bourdonnais ; sociale, la tante hypocrite ; religieux, l'abbé traître) est la ressource des vices et du mal. De cette manière, le pays des valeurs morales accomplis et « en fonction » devient l'île. Celle-ci est la contrée non pervertie par la civilisation et où l'on existe selon sa nature, donc proche à l'être pur et la société avec ses hypocrisies en devienne « lointaine » à cette essence.

Madame de La Tour même souligne cette idée:

« O, mes chers enfants ! Le malheur ne m'est venu que de loin ; le bonheur est autour de moi ! »

Cette clôture de l'espace extérieur, qui bien qu'exotique et frémissant de vie se convertit dans un espace moral par la totale subjectivisation de la nature – qui en devient le support, sinon le ressort de l'expérience du moi – annonce déjà le romantisme. Mais là où les auteurs romantiques allaient dire leur fin mot, en s'éloignant de cet achèvement du sentiment par / au nom de la vert est justement la grande fougue des héros. Leur moi s'éloigne autant que possible de cet « autour de moi », cherchant l'intangible, le lointain, le différent, l'au-delà et le malheur venu du lointain.

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## **MULTILINGUISME ET TRADUCTION DANS LES INSTITUTIONS EUROPEENNES: L'APPORT DU FRAN AIS**

**Sanda-Marina B DULESCU\***

***Abstract:** The present article is intended to show the contribution of French Language in the field of translation, in the European Institutions as European Parliament and European Commission, based on the principle of institutional multilingualism. It is also considered the state of the Languages Market before and after the Brexit, as an open problem to solve.*

***Keywords:** institutional multilingualism, institutional translation, European Institutions, French Language contribution, Brexit.*

### **Introduction**

Le multilinguisme institutionnel de l'Union européenne s'adresse à des citoyens et administrations essentiellement monolingues par leur naissance et fonctionnement au sein des vingt-huit états membres qui la composent aujourd'hui. Le multilinguisme et l'égalité assurée des langues officielles créent un lien profond et direct avec les citoyens européens autant qu'ils permettent le fonctionnement d'un réseau administratif et politique essentiel pour l'effectivité du droit européen. En effet, les vingt-quatre langues officielle<sup>1</sup> ont vraiment le même statut, les citoyens des vingt-huit États membres pouvant utiliser n'importe laquelle de ces langues pour communiquer avec les institutions européennes. Les langues officielles et de travail de l'Union européenne remplissent le rôle d'interface entre l'ordre juridique et politique européen en permanente construction, et les ordres juridiques, politiques et culturels nationaux qui interagissent entre eux dans une dynamique valorisante. Le multilinguisme de l'Union européenne est à la base du travail de médiation, cette fonction très ancienne de résolution des conflits par des tiers extérieurs, que Claude Mayer et Christian Boness signalaient déjà en 2004, dans leur ouvrage intitulé « *Interkulturelle Mediation und Konfliktbearbeitung* » (Mayer et Boness, 2005: 13).

Tout passe par le filtre d'un intense travail linguistique qui ne fait pas simplement la synthèse des cultures participantes mais qui les met en rapport et permet à chacune d'elles d'explicitier ses présupposés et de conclure un accord négocié sur des significations partagées et assumées. L'auteur de cet ouvrage se propose de décrire l'apport du français, à travers la traduction au sein des institutions européennes, dans un milieu d'un bilinguisme généralisé où l'anglais serait, même à l'époque située sous le signe du Brexit, « lingua franca ». L'équivalence des langues, visée ultime de la traduction, nous servira de parler de l'uniformité du droit européen, des effets complexes de fidélité et de rupture, de familiarité et d'étrangeté qui résultent des interactions entre les langues nationales (dans notre cas le français et le roumain) et avec le droit de l'Union européenne

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\* Université de Pitești, [sbadules@gmail.com](mailto:sbadules@gmail.com)

<sup>1</sup> Avant le Brexit

(tout en nous appuyant surtout sur les textes des Directives avec lesquels l'auteur a travaillé plus d'une quinzaine d'années, à Bruxelles et ailleurs).

### **Marché des langues**

Dans le contexte de l'internationalisation et de l'instantanéisation de la communication, l'Europe moderne est un bel exemple de la vivacité de ce que certains ont appelé « *le marché des langues* ». Cette réalité remonte aux années '80 qui ont imposé des besoins toujours croissants en terminologie vive engendrés par le flux informationnel spécialisé. Mentionnons à titre d'exemple le marché actuel de la traduction, grande consommatrice de terminologies vives. Ce marché mondial de la traduction représente aujourd'hui 150 millions de pages par an (en 2015, la DG Traduction a traduit 1,9 million de pages), avec un contingent de 175 000 traducteurs. En ce qui concerne l'espace européen commun de la traduction, à l'époque où le marché européen de la traduction, pour sa part, s'étendait sur 12 pays utilisant 9 langues officielles (français, allemand, anglais, danois, espagnol, grec, italien, néerlandais, portugais) cela représentait 72 couples de langues à traduire répartis sur 1,5 millions de pages par an pour un effectif de plus de 2 000 traducteurs. Lorsque le nombre de pays a augmenté à 15, aux langues parlées se sont ajoutés le suédois (langue maternelle 2% et langue seconde 1%) et le finlandais (langue maternelle 1%). L'irlandais et le catalan avaient aussi été proposés comme langues supplémentaires ou demi-officielles, dans la Constitution de l'Europe, restée au niveau de projet, pour conclure les traités. Depuis la cinquième vague d'adhésion, à partir du 1<sup>er</sup> mai 2004, le marché européen des langues s'étendait sur 25 pays utilisant 20 langues officielles (estonien, hongrois, letton, lituanien, maltais, polonais, slovaque, slovène, tchèque à part les langues déjà mentionnées), ce qui représentait 462 couples de langues à traduire. À partir du 1<sup>er</sup> janvier 2007, lorsque le roumain et le bulgare s'y sont ajoutés, on avait 27 pays utilisant 22 langues officielles, tandis qu'après l'accès de la Croatie en 2014, on utilisait 23 langues officielles. La liste des langues officielles de l'Union est établie par un règlement, qui est modifié à chaque nouvelle adhésion. Toutes les langues officielles de l'Union jouissent d'un statut égal.

### **Multilinguisme – Actes législatifs**

La législation adoptée par le Parlement européen concerne plus de 500 millions de citoyens de 28 pays et 24 langues officielles. Cette législation se doit d'être identique et sans ambiguïté dans toutes les langues. C'est aux juristes-linguistes du Parlement que revient la tâche de vérifier la qualité linguistique et juridique des textes de lois. Les juristes-linguistes du Parlement assurent, tout au long de la procédure législative, le plus haut degré de qualité possible des actes législatifs dans toutes les langues de l'Union. Afin que la volonté politique du Parlement soit exprimée par des textes législatifs de qualité, les juristes-linguistes interviennent à tous les stades de la procédure législative. Les travaux sont confiés à une équipe de 75 juristes-linguistes qui sont notamment chargés de plusieurs tâches: fournir aux députés et aux secrétariats de commissions des conseils en matière de rédaction et de procédure, et ce de la rédaction initiale des textes jusqu'à leur adoption en plénière; élaborer et publier des actes législatifs qui seront adoptés en commission et par la plénière, en garantissant un niveau de qualité

optimal de toutes les versions linguistiques des amendements figurant dans les rapports ainsi que le bon déroulement de la procédure; assurer la préparation technique des amendements présentés en plénière et la publication de tous les textes adoptés le jour du vote en plénière; mettre la dernière main aux actes législatifs en coopération avec les juristes-linguistes du Conseil.

### **Traduction dans les institutions européennes**

Les institutions européennes appliquent une politique d'égalité des chances et acceptent les candidatures sans aucune discrimination fondée sur le sexe, la race, la couleur, les origines ethniques ou sociales, les caractéristiques génétiques, la langue, la religion ou les convictions, les opinions politiques ou toute autre opinion, l'appartenance à une minorité nationale, la fortune, la naissance, un handicap, l'âge, l'orientation sexuelle, l'état civil ou la situation familiale.

En 1994, on a établi à Luxembourg, en tant qu'Agence indépendante de l'Union européenne, le Centre de traduction des organes de l'Union européenne. Au départ, le Centre a été chargé de la traduction pour certains organes décentralisés, essentiellement les Agences décentralisées de l'Union européenne, mais rapidement, en 1995, le Conseil a modifié ses missions et lui a permis de donner un coup de main aux institutions disposant d'un service de traduction. En effet, son activité s'étend aussi à la prise en charge de la surcharge de travail en traduction des organes centraux. Suite aux différentes modifications de son rôle et de ses responsabilités, le Centre a essentiellement deux rôles: les activités de traduction et connexes et un rôle interinstitutionnel important dans la rationalisation du travail entre les institutions européennes.

La traduction dans les institutions européennes suppose un travail laborieux, depuis la conception et la rédaction du texte à sa négociation finale et sa publication. La traduction dans ce cadre représente un flux combinant plusieurs étapes successives associant la phase de rédaction monolingue (en anglais ou en français), de révision juridique et linguistique et de traduction vers d'autres langues officielles (le roumain dans notre cas). Ce travail se répète trois fois, au niveau de chacune des trois institutions responsables de l'activité législative : au stade de la préparation d'une initiative au sein de la Commission européenne, à l'étape des amendements du texte par le Conseil et le Parlement européen, qui sont des co-législateurs pour la vaste majorité des documents, et enfin à la phase de la finalisation du texte après les négociations interinstitutionnelles. Le multilinguisme est mis en œuvre à la fin de chacune de ses phases, lorsque les textes sont disponibles dans les 24 langues officielles, et connaît des voies intermédiaires. En effet, si l'original est rédigé en français, par exemple, il suit l'adoption des propositions législatives par le Collège des commissaires dans les langues dites procédurales (anglais, français, allemand), et les versions en nombre variable suivant les besoins des parlementaires au niveau des commissions du Parlement. Le texte de départ est soumis à des révisions rétroactives si les autres versions contiennent des erreurs ou des ambiguïtés. Le travail multilingue vise à l'harmonie qui résulte de la confrontation des systèmes linguistiques et des conditions historico-culturelles différentes. Il rappelle l'image décrite par le poète Henri Michaux : « *Je est un autre* ».

Le travail législatif ayant à la base la traduction implique différents actants aux compétences bien précisées : le responsable de la conception politique, appelé aussi l'auteur, qui rédige le texte initial, le juriste linguiste qui examine l'original du double point de vue de la qualité juridique et linguistique, le traducteur qui assure la version de l'original dans une des langues officielles (le français, dans notre cas, si l'original est produit en anglais). Ils y interviennent aussi les experts nationaux qui se prononcent sur le fond et la formulation du texte, en amont de la rédaction proprement dite. Une mention spéciale doit être faite à propos des bases électroniques de traduction qui constituent la mémoire institutionnelle des textes dans toutes les versions linguistiques, Il s'agit de la base terminologique qui s'appelle Inter Active Terminology for Europe (IATE) et qui renferme plus de huit millions de termes dans toutes les langues officielles de l'Union européenne, dont en français. Ces apports multiples se font dès le stade « pré-législatif », par exemple dans un comité d'experts sectoriels, et accompagnent toute la phase de conception. L'auteur a travaillé, pour plusieurs années, dans le comité d'experts sectoriels pour la reconnaissance des qualifications professionnelles, à Bruxelles. Le produit visé était la « Directive sur la reconnaissance des qualifications professionnelles » et la « Directive sur les langues officielles pour les communications et les services ». La coopération dans l'élaboration des directives en matière prend la forme d'échanges entre universitaires et les services nationaux et européens sur la plateforme CIRCA, pour la terminologie, et à travers le système « Elise » entre traducteurs et juristes linguistes.

### **Multilinguisme au Parlement européen**

Au Parlement européen, chacune des langues officielles a la même importance. Tous les documents parlementaires sont publiés dans toutes les langues officielles de l'Union européenne et chaque député au Parlement européen jouit du droit de s'exprimer dans la langue officielle de son choix. Grâce à ce système, chaque citoyen peut en outre suivre le travail du Parlement européen et accéder.

L'Union européenne a toujours considéré sa grande diversité culturelle et linguistique comme un atout. Ancré dans les traités européens, le multilinguisme est le reflet de cette diversité. Il rend aussi les institutions européennes plus accessibles et plus transparentes pour tous les citoyens, ce qui est essentiel au bon fonctionnement du système démocratique de l'Union européenne. Par ailleurs, tout citoyen de l'Union doit pouvoir lire les textes législatifs qui le concernent dans la langue de son pays. En tant que co-législateur, le Parlement européen doit également garantir que tous les textes de loi qu'il adopte sont d'une qualité linguistique irréprochable, et ce, dans chacune des langues officielles. La législation de l'Union consacre le droit des citoyens européens à suivre les travaux parlementaires, à poser des questions et à recevoir des réponses dans leur langue.

Le Parlement européen se distingue des autres institutions de l'Union par l'obligation qui lui incombe d'assurer le multilinguisme le plus large possible. Tout citoyen européen a le droit de se présenter aux élections du Parlement européen. On ne saurait exiger des députés qu'ils maîtrisent à la perfection une des langues les plus couramment utilisées, par exemple le français ou l'anglais. Le droit de chaque député de lire et de rédiger des documents parlementaires, de

suivre les débats et de s'exprimer dans sa propre langue est expressément reconnu dans le règlement intérieur du Parlement européen.

Le chemin parcouru a été bien long depuis la fin des années 50, lorsque quatre langues seulement étaient parlées dans les institutions de la Communauté européenne (allemand, français, italien, néerlandais, en 1958). Aujourd'hui, les 24 langues officielles résonnent dans l'hémicycle du Parlement européen, ce qui est en soi un véritable défi linguistique (anglais et danois, depuis 1973; grec, en 1981; espagnol et portugais, en 1986; finnois et suédois, en 1995; estonien, hongrois, letton, lituanien, maltais, polonais, slovaque, slovène et tchèque, en 2004; bulgare, irlandais et roumain, depuis 2007; croate, depuis 2013). La liste de ces langues officielles est établie par un règlement, qui est modifié à chaque nouvelle adhésion. Encore une fois, Toutes les langues officielles de l'Union jouissent d'un statut égal. Avec 24 langues officielles, 552 combinaisons sont possibles puisque chaque langue peut être traduite dans 23 autres langues. Pour relever ce défi, le Parlement européen s'est doté de services d'interprétation, de traduction et de contrôle des textes juridiques extrêmement performants. Des règles très strictes ont aussi été mises en place pour garantir le bon fonctionnement de ces services et le maintien des coûts à un niveau raisonnable.

### **La traduction au Parlement européen**

Pour assurer la publication de ses documents écrits dans les différentes versions linguistiques et pouvoir correspondre avec les citoyens dans toutes les langues officielles, le Parlement européen dispose d'un service de traduction interne à même de répondre à ses exigences de qualité et de respect des délais courts imposés par les procédures parlementaires.

Les traducteurs du Parlement européen traduisent principalement les textes législatifs de l'Union qui sont examinés, votés, adoptés ou rejetés par les commissions et en plénière. Avec l'adoption du traité de Lisbonne, les textes adoptés par le Parlement après un accord avec le Conseil en première lecture deviennent textes de loi, ce qui, d'une certaine manière, fait de la traduction le dernier maillon du processus législatif et lui confère une nouvelle et lourde responsabilité.

La variété des textes confiés aux traducteurs est extrêmement riche: résolutions du Parlement européen sur des sujets d'actualité; textes relatifs à l'adoption du budget annuel de l'Union et à la procédure de décharge; questions parlementaires; documents d'autres organes politiques; décisions du Médiateur européen; documents d'information à destination des citoyens et des États membres; décisions des organes internes du Parlement européen.

Il y a plus de cinq ans, Ost parlait d'un « *dialogue coopératif* » (Ost, 2009a :7) entre traducteurs et juristes linguistes, dialogue qui connaît aujourd'hui une étape supérieure avec l'examen d'une proposition législative par le Parlement européen et le Conseil de l'Europe. Un travail d'amendements s'opère au niveau de chaque commission parlementaire compétente, en plusieurs langues y compris en français, et au niveau des groupes de travail du Conseil où interviennent les experts nationaux. Le rôle de ces experts choisis au niveau de chaque état membre est très important, car ils opèrent au fur et à mesure qu'on parachève les textes officiels. Ils font des observations d'ordre linguistique et terminologique qui

doivent être prises en compte. La révision juridique intervient au niveau du Conseil de l'Europe, après l'accord politique mais avant l'adoption formelle du texte. Cette révision a pour double objectif d'améliorer la qualité de tout texte dans la langue de rédaction – dans notre cas le français, cette opération appelée « *mise au point* », en veillant à la cohérence terminologique, et de réconcilier les versions avec l'original, après ce qu'on appelle « *relecture* ». Après une deuxième lecture, des groupes de travail composés de juristes linguistes, de l'« *auteur* » de la commission parlementaire et des experts du domaine en question mettent au point un texte final qui concorde du point de vue linguistique et juridique. A cette étape qui précède l'adoption conjointe par le Parlement européen et le Conseil de l'Europe y sont aussi associés les « *conseillers qualité* » du Conseil de l'Europe et les coordinateurs linguistiques et thématiques du Parlement européen. C'est un travail collectif et pluridisciplinaire par excellence, où s'entremêlent la traduction au sens étroit du terme – français-roumain, par exemple, et la traduction au sens large – reformulation, relecture, révision suivant le contexte, amendement.

Au Parlement européen, le rapport de la commission parlementaire était adopté en séance plénière en 24 langues officielles, après révision par les juristes linguistes qui examinaient les amendements apportés à la proposition initiale aussi bien que la version consolidée.

### **Traduire pour la Commission européenne**

C'est plus qu'évident que le multilinguisme de l'Union européenne oblige, et la Commission européenne s'est très tôt dotée d'une Direction Générale Traduction : les 24 langues officielles ont en effet le même statut, les citoyens des 28 États membres pouvant utiliser n'importe laquelle de ces langues pour communiquer avec les institutions européennes. Avec un volume de travail sans équivalent et des chiffres impressionnants qui parlent d'eux-mêmes, la Direction Générale Traduction a traduit, suivant les survols d'il y a cinq ans, 2,11 millions de pages, dont 72 % ont été traduites en interne et le reste par des sous-traitants.

Un des rôles historiques de la Direction Générale Traduction consiste à aider et accompagner au plan linguistique les pays candidats à l'adhésion à l'Union. Depuis 2004, la Commission a ainsi pu faire face à une très forte augmentation des demandes de traductions due à l'arrivée de nouveaux États membres et à maintenir sa vocation première de préparer des textes législatifs dans toutes les langues officielles de l'UE. Les principaux types de documents traduits furent par ordre de priorité : propositions de textes législatifs, documents de politique générale et documents de consultation de la Commission, documents de consultation à destination ou en provenance des parlements nationaux, correspondances avec les autorités nationales, les entreprises et les particuliers, sites web et des communiqués de presse. On a constitué une base de données gigantesque, l'IATE, accessible au grand public comme aux traducteurs professionnels, alimentée dans les 24 langues, ce qui représente un travail considérable.

On est en effet confrontés à un défi crucial de renouvellement générationnel : à chaque fois qu'un pays rejoint l'Union, il arrive doté d'un contingent de traducteurs. C'est la raison pour laquelle la Commission a mis en place un programme spécifique intitulé « *European Master Translation* », qui veut



créer un lien avec les différentes formations de master en traduction afin de parvenir à un consensus sur des critères communs d'excellence. C'est un travail laborieux d'organiser des réunions dans les écoles et les universités, qui vise à faire avancer l'idée que les métiers de traducteur et d'interprète sont des métiers d'avenir. Il s'ajoute à cela tout un travail lié à la langue française, comme acteur du multilinguisme mais aussi pour résoudre des besoins de traduction et d'enrichissement de la langue, y compris de trouver des équivalents à des termes importants de la vie économique, sociale, politique et internationale.

Les institutions européennes se caractérisent par une énorme production de traductions. La traduction juridique n'est pas pour la Commission le volume principal. Il s'agit en réalité d'un petit nombre de traducteurs très spécialisés qui le font à la demande de la hiérarchie de chaque institution. Certains, notamment au sein de la Cour de Justice de Luxembourg, ont la double formation de traducteur et de juriste linguiste, ce qui n'est pas le cas de la grande masse des traducteurs de la Commission européenne.

### **Le français – une langue européenne entre les langues**

Deux axes de référence traversent la construction de la traduction en/du français dans les institutions européennes. Un axe horizontal qui rend compte de la traduction inter-langues et intertextes, et un axe vertical ascendant qui rapporte les textes à l'économie générale de la traduction et à la finalité de la législation.

Dans le contexte tellement spécifique, la version linguistique résultant de la traduction se réfère à l'original comme l'étalon juridique mais chaque langue officielle, y compris le français doit trouver l'équivalence propre à un système linguistique et juridique individuel. Le concept de «*biens*» utilisé dans les Directives, par exemple, inclut aussi les «*biens immobiliers*», de même que «*beni*» en italien, «*bienes*» en espagnol, et «*bens*» en portugais. Si l'on veut exclure l'immobilier, on utilise le terme «*marchandises*». Les juristes linguistes doivent procéder à une comparaison entre les langues et écarter, le cas échéant, le sens soi-disant normal d'un terme dans le droit national. Parfois, au lieu de garder le terme national avec une acceptation différente, il faut trouver des solutions soi-disant correctes, mais qui sont étrangères à la langue. Prenons l'exemple du terme «*durable*» appartenant au domaine spécialisé «*environnement*». Ce terme a connu un destin linguistique variable à partir de la très bien connue expression «*énergie durable*» en français jusqu'à l'emploi d'un emprunt «*sustenabil*» en roumain.

Il y a des débats terminologiques extrêmement acérés sur des termes, qui cachent parfois des divergences politiques importantes. Pour en donner un seul exemple, on a eu des débats acharnés sur le choix de traduction pour le mot-valise créé en anglais «*flexicurity*» ou «*flex-security*», le gouvernement français refusant «*flex sécurité*», terme proposé par la Commission européenne, et préférant «*flexisécurité*», un petit «*i*» qui pèse apparemment très lourd. En roumain, on utilise soit «*flexicuritate*», soit «*flexisecuritate*», pour le domaine de l'«*emploi de la force de travail*». En matière fiscale, le roumain a simplement roumanisé le terme français d'«*évasion fiscale*» au risque de confondre l'évitement de l'impôt avec la fraude, et la même chose se passe en italien – «*elusione fiscale*» vs «*evasione fiscale*». C'est ainsi que, du point de vue de la traduction, il y a l'impératif de concordance entre les langues de l'Union européenne résultant du caractère contraignant et autonome de l'ordre juridique

européen. Le multilinguisme s'y inscrit dans l'espace d'une « *équivalence sans identité* », comme l'appelle Paul Ricoeur (Ricoeur, 2012).

Au niveau syntaxique et non plus simplement lexical, l'exercice de concordance français-roumain, roumain-français présente des difficultés encore plus grandes dues aux contraintes liées à l'emploi des prépositions, pour n'en donner qu'un seul exemple. L'alignement des paragraphes et des notes, la manière de donner les citations diffèrent toujours entre les deux langues que nous prenons en considération, et plus encore entre les langues officielles de l'Union européenne. Ils sont fixés dans les modèles pré-structurés et multilingues utilisés pour la rédaction juridique des directives, obligeant les langues de traduction à tordre l'ordre logique et les règles grammaticales. Souvent, le style des originaux est riche en métaphores qui ne trouvent pas toujours de correspondants en roumain.

Les négociations au niveau politique peuvent faire apparaître des cas d'ambiguïté dans le texte, faisant partie des techniques législatives qui permettent de dépasser l'absence d'accord complet entre les participants. « *Le résultat sera, dans ce cas, l'inverse de celui recherché par l'introduction dans le texte d'un « flou artistique » censé de résoudre les problèmes de négociation de la norme* » (Guide pratique commun, point 1.3)

Pour trouver le mot juste dans le contexte qui est le sien, les traducteurs dans les institutions européennes doivent aussi bien maîtriser plusieurs langues que savoir distinguer l'acception européenne et l'acception nationale d'un même terme. Ils doivent donc disposer d'une compétence interculturelle élargie à travers laquelle ils puissent comprendre et sentir les différences plus ou moins cachées qui précèdent l'acceptation et l'assimilation d'une autre culture. On peut y signaler l'existence d'un certain « eurojargon » dans le contexte national, la langue que les spécialistes en questions européennes emploient. Les exemples en sont nombreux, commençant par le terme même de « *directive* », et continuant par beaucoup d'autres encore : « *comitologie* », « *communautarisme* », « *subsidiarité* », « *implémentation* », « *entreprise publique* » qui sont tous des néologismes, voire des oxymores, dans certains cas. Il y a aussi le cas d'appareils synonymes qui s'avèrent être de véritables « faux amis ». ex. « *sensible* » vs. « *raisonnable* » ; « *administration* » vs. « *gouvernement* ».

Quant aux textes des Directives auxquels l'auteur de cet ouvrage a travaillé, leur transposition au niveau national suppose le fait que le législateur roumain peut adapter les termes juridiques et techniques au contexte juridique qui est le sien. Il s'agit de la retraduction intralinguistique qui peut aller jusqu'à altérer la substance. Il y a dans ce cas la solution juridiquement correcte de créer dans le texte de la directive un terme européen spécifique différent de l'équivalent national. Par contre, dans le cas des règlements, la formulation, telle que publiée au Journal officiel de l'Union européenne, doit rester inchangée et elle coexiste avec les lois nationales.

### **Conclusions ouvertes**

La contribution de la traduction à la société multilingue est, par exemple, de consolider une langue, avec comme objectif de renforcer l'identité d'un peuple ou d'un groupe. Parce qu'elle facilite les échanges économiques entre communautés linguistiques, la traduction est un vecteur majeur de la mondialisation de l'économie et du marché intérieur européen: elle permet

l'échange rapide et prédictible d'informations, de biens et de services, réduit les risques liés à la dimension linguistique d'une activité internationale et facilite le fonctionnement interne des multinationales. Pour une entreprise, la traduction permet aussi de pénétrer les marchés avec un bien ou un service produit dans une autre langue, que ce soit pour des raisons réglementaires ou de sécurité ou pour favoriser son adoption au-delà des consommateurs multilingues. Pour un territoire, la traduction généralisée est aussi une condition du développement d'un tourisme de masse, aux côtés de politiques favorisant le multilinguisme. Enfin, la traduction est elle-même à l'origine de certains échanges et marchés nouveaux, par exemple via la retraduction d'œuvres déjà traduites, ou les échanges d'œuvres, services ou produits traduits par les utilisateurs. La traduction permet aussi le transfert de savoirs, en permettant l'échange des savoirs culturels, techniques et scientifiques et leur élargissement au plus grand nombre. En particulier, elle offre une contribution majeure au débat scientifique, en assurant la meilleure précision des concepts et des raisonnements. De plus, la retraduction d'œuvres scientifiques, techniques, politiques ou philosophiques peut apporter à elle seule des points de vue nouveaux. Elle permet en conséquence aux membres de la communauté scientifique de se confronter au plus grand nombre de perspectives sur une question donnée, condition nécessaire selon les experts de la créativité et de l'innovation.

La traduction contribue à l'inclusion sociale, en particulier de deux groupes : les communautés linguistiques autochtones minoritaires d'un territoire, et les communautés linguistiques migrantes. Le rôle de la traduction est notamment de permettre l'accès de tous aux services de base - éducation, santé, et à la justice, assurant aussi l'égalité de traitement entre individus et favorisant la meilleure qualité de vie de tous. Au travail, la traduction améliore l'employabilité des personnes monolingues, notamment lorsqu'elles sont aussi les moins qualifiées. Enfin et de façon plus générale, la traduction donne accès à des ressources culturelles, mais aussi à des services - notamment en ligne, qui ne seraient autrement réservés qu'à la frange multilingue d'un territoire donné.

Parce qu'elle constitue un des éléments du socle des relations entre les États membres de l'Union européenne, la traduction participe à la construction européenne. La traduction systématique, fait partie du pacte assurant la cohésion européenne, et facilite ainsi l'entrée de nouveaux États membres. La traduction de la législation en vigueur dans les langues nationales adoptées parmi les langues officielles de l'Union européenne est d'ailleurs une condition de l'adhésion du pays.

La traduction permet aussi, à tous les citoyens, d'accéder sans intermédiaire au texte des lois, mais aussi des décisions qui requièrent leur participation. Elle constitue enfin un des moyens des échanges entre citoyens de tous les pays, condition à la constitution possible d'une identité commune et d'une citoyenneté européenne.

La traduction, enfin, a des effets dans des situations de conflit, ou de façon générale en situation de crise, où il faut éviter à tout prix le choix de traductions tronquées, biaisées ou erronées par exemple. De façon plus générale, et notamment via le rôle pivot des agences de presse, elle est un moyen de soutenir un point de vue, implicite ou explicite, sur l'actualité internationale.

Après le Brexit, dont la date n'est pas encore bien claire, l'anglais ne fera plus partie des langues officielles de l'Union Européenne, car il n'est pas la langue officielle dans aucun autre état membre. Danuta Hubner, membre du Parlement

Européen, dans la Commission pour les problèmes constitutionnels, explique que la règle dit que chaque état membre a le droit de notifier l'usage d'une seule langue officielle: « *Les Irlandais ont annoncé le gallois, et les Maltais le maltais, donc il revient à la Grande Bretagne l'anglais. S'il n'y a plus de Grande Bretagne, il n'y aura plus d'anglais* » (suivant Politico). A l'époque où l'Irlande et Malte furent intégrés dans l'Union Européenne, l'anglais était déjà langue officielle, de sorte que les deux nouveaux états membres demandèrent d'y ajouter le gallois et le maltais. En dépit de tout cela, l'anglais reste la langue de travail la plus souvent utilisée dans les institutions européennes. Pour pouvoir la garder en tant que langue officielle de l'Union Européenne, il est nécessaire l'accord unanime des états membres pour qu'on puisse modifier le règlement intérieur dit Hubner. Selon une source des institutions européennes, le règlement sur les langues officielles de l'Union Européenne qui date depuis 1958, rédigé en français, est ambigu là-dessus. Le texte original ne dit pas clairement si un état membre peut avoir plus d'une langue officielle, tandis que la version anglaise exclut cette possibilité. La Commission Européenne a déjà commencé à utiliser beaucoup plus souvent le français et l'allemand dans ses communiqués extérieurs à la suite du référendum du 23 juin 2016, selon Wall Street Journal.

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## **METAPHORISIERUNGSMECHANISMEN IN DER WERBEBOTSCHAFT**

**Silvia BONCESCU**

***Abstract:** In this article I aim to exemplify and explain how the reader identifies and understands the metaphorical mechanisms. This study has been undertaken in order to provide an overview of these mechanisms both in German and in French advertising message. The examples illustrate how metaphor operates on two domains or how sometimes, metaphor and metonymy work together in a figure of speech.*

***Keywords :** metaphor, metonymy, polysemy.*

### **1. Einleitung**

Metaphorisierungen verwenden wir regelmäßig in der Alltagssprache, ohne dass uns deren Sprachwirkung bekannt ist. Die Kenntnis dieser Mechanismen ermöglicht doch eine gezielte Verwendung in der Kommunikation. In der Werbesprache werden Metaphorisierungsmechanismen in ihrer Wirkung durch den Emittenten auf den Rezipienten untersucht. Im Vordergrund stehen dabei kommunikationsfördernde Aspekte und die Verwendung rhetorischer Figuren, die mit dem Inhalt der Worte verschiedene Spracheffekte erzielen. Beispiele sind Metapher und Metonymie, die Konnotationsmechanismen sind, die in der Werbesprache als Anreizstrategie fungieren. Baudrillard<sup>1</sup> (1968 : 194) gemäß ist die Werbung gleichzeitig eine Rede, die sich mit Gegenständen beschäftigt, und ein Gegenstand selbst. Tatsächlich ist die Werbebotschaft auch ein Gegenstand, weil man darauf hinschaut, um sich zu amüsieren. Demnach wird die Werbung zu einem "Verbrauchsgegenstand" (Baudrillard, *ibidem*), denn man sie als Verbrauchsmittel behandelt.

Die Beispiele metaphorischer Lexeme lassen sich jedoch mit Hilfe eines größeren Kontextes und anhand von Elementen aus dem Text, in dem sie sich befinden, enträtseln. Man muss die Metaphern rekonstruieren und interpretieren und dieser Beitrag soll zeigen, wie der Leser die textuellen Elemente und die Beziehungen zwischen diesen Elementen und dem metaphorischen oder metonymischen Lexem erkennt. Die Beispiele stammen aus der deutschen und französischen Presse. Im folgenden werde ich einige französischen und deutschen Werbebotschaften (von 2000 bis 2016) untersuchen, die ich in den französischen und deutschen Zeitschriften *Femme actuelle* und *Spiegel* ausgesucht habe. Ausgehend von ihrer Leseanreizfunktion und ihrem engen Rahmen möchte ich auf ihre semantischen Eigenschaften eingehen. Eine Werbebotschaft soll rätselhaft sein, damit sie die Aufmerksamkeit des Lesers erregen kann. Metapher und Metonymie sind Verfahren der Ausweitung einer Bedeutung von der Grundbedeutung auf eine abgeleitete Bedeutung, also Formen der Polysemie, und diese Begriffe werden weiter behandelt.

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\* Universitatea din Pitesti, [silvia.boncescu@upit.ro](mailto:silvia.boncescu@upit.ro)

<sup>1</sup> "Il faut bien distinguer cette double détermination : elle est discours sur l'objet, et objet elle-même".

## 2. Begriffsbestimmung

Die Bedeutungen von Wörtern werden in ihrem Kontext berücksichtigt. Im Mittelpunkt der Betrachtung ist das sprachliche Zeichen, das aus Significans und Significatum besteht. Durch das Significatum wird auf einen Referenten hingewiesen. Dieser Referent ist offen, bis er in einer Sprechsituation in einer Äußerung benutzt wird. Der semantische Wandel ist der Wandel des Significatums beim Gleichbleiben des Significans. Die Metapher und die Metonymie sind Verfahren des Bedeutungswandels, denn ein Ausdruck bekommt zu seiner bisherigen Bedeutung eine weitere – metaphorische oder metonymische – Bedeutung. Durch welche Mechanismen des Sprachwandels semantische Merkmale aus einer Bedeutung verschwinden beziehungsweise zu ihr hinzukommen können, ist Gegenstand unserer Untersuchungen.

In der Sprache hat ein Significans mehrere Significata, aber nur ein einziges Significatum wird auf dem semantischen Niveau der Denotation ausgeführt. Trotzdem werden die anderen semantischen Merkmale nicht ganz ausgeschlossen. Sie können als Konnotationsmerkmale behandelt werden. Es ist der Fall der Werbung, die die Konnotationsmechanismen und den doppelten Sinn benutzt; außerdem ruft die stilistische Konnotation<sup>1</sup> (Kerbrat-Orecchioni, 1977 : 86) eines Ausdrucks den humorvollen Charakter der Äußerung hervor.

Metaphorische Ausdrücke werden massiv in der Werbesprache verwendet. Die Metaphertheorie von Lakoff/Johnson (1980) spielt eine wichtige Rolle für unsere Analyse, denn Metaphern beruhen auf einer Gleichsetzung.

Lakoff/Johnson (1980) gemäß ist die Welt durch metaphorische Konzepte strukturiert. Sie behaupten, dass jede Metapher auf einer Gleichsetzung von zwei Domänen und auf einer metaphorischen Prädikation “A ist B” beruht, bei der A und B auf die Konzepte verweisen. Die Gleichsetzung der zwei Konzepte wird aber mit Hilfe der gemeinsamen semantischen Merkmalen aufgebaut, denn das Zeichen wird mit einem neuen Significatum verwendet, das mit dem Ausgangssignificatum semantische Ähnlichkeit hat.

Der Domänen-Begriff ist wichtig, denn das Wissen ist in Domänen (Lakoff, 1987) strukturiert. Die Metaphern beruhen auf bekannten konzeptuellen Kategorisierungen und Domänen. Sie werden “eingeführte Metaphern” (De Knop, 2003 : 253) genannt. Der Kontext, in dem sie vorkommen, ist nicht notwendig zu ihrer Interpretation, weil sie konventionell und usuell sind.

Es gibt auch “textuelle Metaphern” (De Knop, *ibidem*), die im Gegensatz zu den von Lakoff/Johnson eingeführten Metaphern die Informationen aus dem Text zur Bestimmung der gemeinsamen semantischen Merkmalen zwischen A und B und zur Interpretation benötigen. Demnach interagieren Lexem und Text miteinander. Sie sind innovativ und kreativ und das Verstehen der Metapher ist in diesem Fall “[...] ein aktiver Prozess, bei dem es nicht ausreicht, die metaphorische Prädikation zu rekonstruieren.” (De Knop, *ibidem* : 251).

## 3. Erscheinungsformen der Metaphorisierung im Überblick

Da es uns in diesem Artikel um Werbesprache und Konnotationsmechanismen gehen soll, wird eine einfache Klassifizierung der Figuren in den

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<sup>1</sup>“connotation stylistico-énonciative ».

Werbepbotschaften im Vordergrund stehen und einige Klarstellungen werden am Rande Erwähnung finden. Unsere Beispiele haben das Ziel, einen Beweis für die enge Verbindung zwischen Metapher und Metonymie zu liefern.

Das erste Beispiel enthält eine metaphorische Prädikation : die gleichsetzende Kopula ist explizit und stellt das Leben gleich mit einem Roman und seinen verschiedenen Ereignissen.

**(1) “Das Leben ist ein Roman. Wir sorgen dafür, dass er gut ausgeht. ”**  
(SwissLife Lebenssicherung Altersvorsorge, *Der Spiegel* 30/2001)

Im Rahmen der konzeptuellen Metapher “Das Leben ist ein Roman” wird von “Ereignissen” gesprochen. Die Eigenschaften des Lebens werden implizit vermittelt und sind allgemein anerkannt. Es gibt eine Analogiebeziehung zwischen Leben und Roman, die eine implizit ausgedrückte gemeinsame Eigenschaft haben. In dem ersten Beispiel wird eine positive Qualität des Lebens bezeichnet. Gemeint ist so etwas wie “das Leben ist voller Ereignisse”.

Im zweiten französischen Beispiel ist von der Komparation zwischen Haut und Kaschmir mit Hilfe der Kopula *comme* (“wie”) die Rede :

**(2) “Mon teint est velouté, comme du cachemire”<sup>1</sup>** (L’Oréal, *Femme actuelle*, 2003)

Hier soll die Haut bezeichnet werden : “Die Haut ist wie der Kaschmir”. Das Adjektiv *samtweich* hat hier seine wörtliche Bedeutung.

Das Verstehen entsteht in folgendem Beispiel aus der Interaktion zwischen dem Vorwissen des Lesers und den Informationen aus dem Text :

**(3) “Pollenflug. Zuhause bleiben lohnt sich. Mit O2DSL”** (wifi O2) (*Der Spiegel* 29/2015)

Die Werbung bevorzugt in diesem Fall die Syllepse, wenn eine doppelte Bedeutung, ein Denotatum und ein Konnotatum, für ein Significans auftritt. Die zwei Bedeutungen liegen übereinander. Catherine Kerbrat-Orecchioni spricht von “einem doppelten Sinn mit Anspielung”<sup>2</sup> (Kerbrat-Orecchioni, 1977 : 92). In diesem Beispiel wird der Leser besonders befördert. *Pollenflug* umfaßt semantische Merkmale, die konjunktiv miteinander verknüpft sind. Die zwei Bedeutungen sind auf zwei verschiedene Weisen zueinander geordnet : der Pollenflug kann mit zwei Bedeutungen betrachtet werden. Der Text handelt von Wireless Internet : ohne den Text wäre nicht zu raten, was der Pollenflug ist. Die Erklärung beruht auf einer anderen Metapher : aufgrund des gemeinsamen semantischen Merkmals “Verbreitung”, die sowohl Pollen und Wifi kennzeichnet, können die zwei Domänen gleichgesetzt werden. Es gibt hier eine metonymische Beziehung zwischen dem Bild des Pollenflugs und dem Bild des Wireless Internets : es wird ein neues Diskursuniversum<sup>3</sup> (Le Guern, 2006 : 102) aufgebaut. Die metaphorische Syllepse ist im folgenden französischen Beispiel eigentlich eine Katachrese :

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<sup>1</sup> “Meine Haut ist samtweich wie der Kaschmir”.

<sup>2</sup> “double sens avec allusion”.

<sup>3</sup> “La syllepse réunit deux univers de discours, portés chacun par une partie du contexte, pour construire un nouvel univers de discours”.

(4) **“Le téléphone qui a mangé un ordinateur”**<sup>1</sup> (Nokia 6600, *Femme actuelle*, 2004))

Es geht um eine Metapher, die an sich inkompatible Bilder (*das Handy, essen, ein Computer*) enthält. Der Begriff wird durch die folgenden semantischen Merkmalen konstituiert: *manger* (“essen”) wird metaphorisch mit der Bedeutung “zusammenfassen” verwendet. In diesem Fall sind die spezifischen semantischen Merkmalen verschwunden. Das Beispiel zeigt die Veränderung der Bedeutung des Verbs, wodurch es eine zusätzliche Bedeutung aufgrund der Ähnlichkeit zwischen *essen* und *zusammenfassen* annimmt. Das Beispiel verdeutlicht, dass der Vorgang zuerst bezeichnet wird, dann auch dessen Ergebnis. Die Basis der Metapher ist, wie gesagt, die semantische Ähnlichkeit, also etwa die Ähnlichkeit zwischen *essen* und *zusammenfassen*. Hier ist wieder zu beachten, dass es um eine Ähnlichkeit zwischen Significata geht. Die Significata sind ähnlich, und das kann man durch eine semantische Analyse zum Ausdruck bringen. Relevant für diese Metapher ist offenbar das Bedeutungsmerkmal, das der Ausgangsbedeutung und der Zielbedeutung gemeinsam ist. Bei der Metonymie dagegen entstehen neue Bedeutungen, welche sich nur wenig an die Grundbedeutung angrenzen.

(5) **“Omega zeichnet olympische Träume auf seit 1932**

Eine olympische Medaille ist der ultimative Traum jedes Sportlers. Ein Leben voller Hingabe kann sich in weniger als einem Herzschlag in Gold verwandeln. Diesen Sommer in Rio werden die Teilnehmer des OMEGA Teams die Sekundenbruchteile messen, die über die Medaillenhoffnungen der weltbesten Athleten entscheiden – darunter auch Michael Phelps. Wir werden ihre Leistungen an jedem Spielfeld, jedem Pool und jeder Rennstrecke aufzeichnen, wenn sie danach streben, ihre Träume zu verwirklichen.» (OMEGA-Uhr, *Der Spiegel* 31/2016)

Die im Text erschienene Bedeutung des Verbs *aufzeichnen* ist in Ausdrücken wie *Träume aufzeichnen* nicht gemein. Es wird also ein Ausdruck, dessen eigentliche Bedeutung “aufnehmen” ist, in einem Kontext verwendet, wo er die Bedeutung “messen” erhält. Die Metapher liegt in der Übertragung des Ausdrucks von dem ursprünglichen auf den neuen Kontext und dem Erwerb der neuen Bedeutung “messen”.

Die Metonymie spielt in der Werbung auch eine große Rolle, denn die Pars-pro-Toto-Beziehung liegt diesem Beispiel wie *Gold* zugrunde. Diese auf der Teil-Ganzes-Beziehung beruhende Metonymie heißt auch Synekdoche : *Gold* steht hier für *Goldmedaille*.

Ein Beispiel von Synekdoche tritt auch in (6) auf : zum Beispiel ist der Schaum nur in einem übertragenen Sinne das Bier, da *Schaum* im wörtlichen Sinn nur ein Teil des Bieres ist :

(6) **“L’empire de la mousse”**<sup>2</sup> (Heineken, *Femme actuelle*, 2010)

Man kann bemerken, dass es ein Zusammenhang zwischen Metonymie und Ellipse besteht, denn man kann Schaum als verkürzt aus *Schaum des Bieres* verstehen. Die beiden Bedeutungen befinden sich eigentlich in einer Kontiguitätsbeziehung<sup>3</sup> (Molinié, 1992 : 312), denn die Synekdoche bezeichnet hier das Bier.

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<sup>1</sup>“Das Handy, das einen Computer gegessen hat”.

<sup>2</sup>“Das Reich des Schaums”.

<sup>3</sup>“[...] en rapport de contiguïté ou d’englobement sémantiques”.



In der folgenden Werbebotschaft gibt es ein Spiel mit dem Referenten : auf den ersten Blick scheint es so, als kämen durch diesen Vorgang semantische Merkmale hinzu. Das Lexem enthält die durch Synekdoche aufgebaute Bedeutung "junge Weine", aber es deutet auch auf die allgemeine Bedeutung "junge Person" hin:

**(7) "Or soutenu, arômes floraux... enfin des jeunes qui ont du vocabulaire"**<sup>1</sup>  
(Blancs du Val de Loire, *Femme actuelle*, 2004)

In anderen Beispielen kann das gesamte Sachzusammenhang verschleiert werden und der Leser muss die gesamte Werbung (Bild) näher betrachten : es wird darauf hingedeutet, dass die folgende Werbung von Beschleunigung berichtet :

**(8) "Das Kribbeln im Bauch beginnt im rechten Fuß**

Was bringt die Schmetterlinge in der Magengegend zum Flattern ? Verliebt sein. Bungee-Jumping. Oder die Beschleunigung eines Turbodiesels mit 135 kW (184 PS) und 380 Nm Drehmoment. Letzteres kann man jetzt jeden Tag haben. Alles, was man dafür braucht, ist der rechte Fuß. Und natürlich ein neuer Golf GTD. " (Volkswagen, *Der Spiegel* 29/2013)

Das Phrasem *Schmetterlinge im Bauch* weist durch eine metonymische Assoziation auf das Kribbeln hin. Die metaphorische Prädikation lautet : Das Kribbeln im Bauch ist, genauso wie das Flattern der Schmetterlinge, etwas Spannendes, wenn man Auto fährt. Die vorhandenen Hinweise (*verliebt sein, Bungee-Jumping, die Beschleunigung eines Turbodiesels*) im Text ermöglichen diese Interpretation.

Der rechte Fuß ist metonymisch mit dem Gashebel verbunden, denn er hilft uns, aufs Gaspedal zu treten. Es geht um die Veränderung der Bedeutung des Ausdrucks *der rechte Fuß*, wodurch er eine zusätzliche Bedeutung "Beschleunigung" aufgrund der Kontiguitätsbeziehung zwischen dem Ausgangssignifikatum und dem neu entstandenen Signifikatum bekommt. Diese Beziehung ist die Basis der metonymischen Gebrauchsausweitung. Ebenso ist der *rechte Fuß* der Beschleunigung in keiner Weise ähnlich, aber die Beschleunigung entsteht dort, in rechtem Fuss.

Weniger abgenutzt ist die abgewandelte Formel, die durch Substitution aufgebaut wird. Die Abwandlung ist eine sprachspielerische Abweichung, die die Spannung aufbaut. Hier werden das Vorwissen des Lesers und der Text für die Interpretation des Lexems benötigt. Den intertextuellen Zusammenhang der Anspielung kann man leicht rekonstruieren. Die Aufmerksamkeit des Lesers wird auf den textuellen Abschnitt gelenkt, der eine Erklärung für das rätselhafte Phrasem enthält. Der Einfluß der Lieder auf die Werbebotschaften ist im folgenden Beispiel zu berücksichtigen. Der Leser muss das Lied von Marlene Dietrich ("Von Kopf bis Fuß auf Liebe eingestellt") erkennen und sein Vorwissen mitbringen. Diese Metaphern lassen sich hier mit Hilfe eines enzyklopädischen Wissens interpretieren. Man muss die Bedeutung der mehrdeutigen Wörter identifizieren : so ist beispielsweise die Polysemie der Wörter *Getriebe* und *eingestellt* in der abgeänderten Formel "von Kopf bis Fuß auf Getriebe eingestellt" :

**(9) "Wir sind von Kopf bis Fuss auf Getriebe eingestellt. Willkommen im Land der Pferdestärken.**

**Sie kennen unsere Pferde. Erleben Sie unsere Stärken".** (Niedersachsen, *Der Spiegel* 29/2013)

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<sup>1</sup>"Anhaltender Gold, Blumenduft ... endlich Jugendlichen, die sprechen können".

Im gegebenen Beispiel gehören dazu etwa die folgenden Merkmale des Lexems *eingestellt*: 1. Gesinnt, orientiert; 2. Reguliert. Die Wirkung der Metapher beruht darauf, dass diese Merkmale nicht einfach verloren gehen, sondern auch in der neuartigen Verwendung noch ins Bewußtsein dringen.

*Das Getriebe* ist auch ein polysemes Lexem, das sich durch semantische Merkmale (eine technische Bedeutung und eine übertragende Bedeutung) beschreiben läßt, die sich wie folgt zusammensetzen: 1. Vorrichtung in Maschinen o. Ä., die Bewegungen überträgt u. die Maschine o. Ä. Funktionstüchtig macht; 2. Lebhaftes Treiben (Duden 2003).

Manchmal wird der wiederholte Gebrauch eines und desselben Ausdrucks in unterschiedlichen Bedeutungsinhalten verwendet. Es ist der Fall des Lexems *die Stärken*, das zuerst auf die technische Bedeutung, dann auf die Grundbedeutung hinweist.

Die Verhältnisse zwischen den semantischen Merkmalen, die die zwei Lexeme *eingestellt* und *Getriebe* charakterisieren, illustrieren die zwei Bedeutungen des polysemen Wortes *eingestellt* und des polysemen Wortes *Getriebe*. Folglich nimmt die Polysemie des Ausdrucks *auf Getriebe eingestellt* zu. Je polysemer also das Wort ist, desto weiter seine Bedeutung. Dem entspricht, dass sich bei Hinzunahme einer neuen Bedeutung die Extension eines Wortes vergrößert: Diese Art Metaphorisierungen erfordert "einen aktiveren Leser, der auf der Ausgangsbasis konventionalisierter metaphorischer Ausdrücke diese weiterführenden Extensionen verstehen und interpretieren muss." (Di Meola, 1998 : 224).

Aber wie die Beispiele gerade gezeigt haben, ist die Relation zwischen den Merkmalen meistens die Konjunktion, denn die Merkmale treffen gleichzeitig zu. Diesen Fall von Mehrdeutigkeit nennt man Polysemie und sie entsteht durch Schaffung abgeleiteter Bedeutungen aufgrund einer Grundbedeutung. Die Metapher und die Metonymie sind die wichtigsten semantischen Prozesse, die solche abgeleiteten Bedeutungen schaffen.

#### **4. Schlussbemerkungen**

Ich habe hier die Zusammenstellung einiger metaphorischen und metonymischen Mechanismen in der Werbesprache vorgenommen. Die Funktionsweise der Metapher und der Metonymie kann mit Hilfe der semantischen Merkmalen verstanden werden, so wie schon dargestellt.

Es handelt sich dabei um Stilmittel der Rhetorik, um beim Leser eine bestimmte Sprachwirkung zu entfalten. Die Rhetorik stellt dabei sprachliche Mechanismen zur Verfügung, die der deutschen und französischen Werbekommunikation zugute kommen sollen. Der Inhalt kann durch diese Mechanismen besondere Spracheffekte in beiden Sprachen erzielen. Die Anwendung der Metaphorisierungen ist häufig in der Werbung und sie bestätigt, dass die Werbesprache mehr ist, als ein Mittel zum Kaufverhalten.

Es wurde bei der Behandlung der Polysemie in der deutschen und französischen Werbesprache gezeigt, dass die unterschiedlichen Bedeutungen eines Lexems nicht einfach zusammengebracht werden. Ein Lexem kann durch bestimmte semantische Operationen polysem werden. Die beiden wichtigsten davon sind die Metapher und die Metonymie. Beide beruhen darauf, den polysemantischen Gehalt vieler Worte zu verwenden, um damit durch weitere Verfahren wie die Syllepse, die Synekdoche oder die Katachrese unerwartete Wirkungen zu erzielen. Die

Polysemie ist ein bevorzugter Konnotationsmechanismus in der deutschen und in der französischen Werbung, denn sie ist eine Kommunikationsstrategie. Die vorangegangenen Beispiele haben gezeigt, dass die Neugier des Lesers auf das Produkt und besonders auf die Werbebotschaft gelenkt wird, die ein Produkt selbst ist.

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## **AN INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOCULTURAL ASPECTS OF PRODUCT ADVERTISEMENTS**

**Bianca DABU\***

**Abstract:** *In nowadays societies the interdisciplinary approach of concepts is generated by the interference of various fields of activity. Advertising is an activity that overlaps psychology and marketing as well as language and communication in the context of globalization.*

*Advertising as a part of marketing mix relies on the connection between targeted consumers' needs and designed advertising campaigns becoming "an integral part of modern culture (Mathur 2007:8). In the same context, Hofstede's research on cross-cultural values in an employment context may be applicable to consumer behaviour and thus to advertising thinking.*

*Advertising as a cultural and linguistic approach envisages the idea that the sociocultural frame of linguistic contact, the contact proper between cultures induces the diffusion of material and spiritual elements of culture and generates lexical and cultural interferences. Advertising involves a form of semiotic communication actively using repeated verbal and visual images creating its own discourse. Bougnoux (2000:49) states that "semiology is therefore a science of culture rather than a science of nature or better said a science of transit from nature to culture".*

*Advertising as a communicative approach is concerned with "the ethnography of communication, the questions of what a person knows about appropriate patterns of language use in his or her community and how he or she learns about it." (Hymes, 1972:54)*

**Keywords:** *cross-cultural values, semiotic communication, ethnography of communication, SPEAKING model*

### **1. Advertising as a part of marketing mix**

The idea of globalization was induced by the intense economic activities that generated not only the exchange of commodities and services but also the exchange of organisational models, promotion strategies, target customers oriented policies or extra-professional cultural patterns. All these activities have a linguistic component that has to be deeply considered and analysed.

"A fundamental shift is occurring in the world economy. We are moving progressively further away from a world in which national economies were relatively isolated from each other by barriers to cross-border trade and investment; by distance, time zones and language by national differences in government regulation, culture and business systems. And we are moving toward a world in which national economies are merging into an interdependent global economic system, commonly referred to as *globalization*." (Hill, 2002:4)

Almost every business in the world deals with advertising as an integral part of marketing strategy and any strategic thinking behind advertisements focus on the same principles: identifying the group(s) of customers, targeting them efficiently, positioning the brand according to their needs, persuading them to buy the products. In order to achieve these goals, both sides involved in the process must find a common channel of communication.

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\* University of Pitesti, [biancadabu@yahoo.com](mailto:biancadabu@yahoo.com)

Advertising the highly visible "tip of the iceberg of marketing" (Ferrell et al.2015:453) designing and placing advertisements in various media in order to reach a particular target audience. In order to identify the target audience the advertisers focus on location and geographic distribution of the groups, the distribution of demographic factors (age, income, ethnic origin, sex and education, lifestyle, etc.), achieving as a final goal the increase of sales. But advertising is more than that.

Mathur (2007:8) is convinced that "advertising creates value systems as people buy advertised products, which establishes a particular lifestyle for the users of the products. Such products are, at time, purchased only to become a member of that particular elite. [...] Product positioning and choice of media for the target market segment are all based on getting the right person to see or have the opportunity to see the advertisement."

Leiss (2005:5) confesses that: "Advertising is not just a business expenditure undertaken in the hope of moving some merchandise off the store shelves but is rather an integral part of modern culture. Its creations appropriate and transform a vast range of symbols and ideas; its unsurpassed communicative powers recycles cultural models and references back through the networks of social interactions. This venture is unified by the discourse through and about objects which bonds together images of persons, products and well-being."

Hofstede, as an expert in cross-cultural differences and management defines culture as "the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one human group from another...Culture, in this sense includes systems of values, and values are among the building blocks of culture."(1984:21) Hofstede's research on cross-cultural values in an employment context may be applicable to consumer behaviour and thus to advertising thinking. The four dimensions he is setting as essential are:

1. *power distance*

Hofstede defines power distance as "[...] the extent to which the members of a society accept that power in institutions and organizations is distributed unequally....People in Large Power Distance societies accept a hierarchical order in which everybody has a place which needs no further justification..."(p.83). In terms of consumer behaviour, Hofstede settles a correlation between the geographical latitude and technology from the point of purchase capacity and sophistication of the technology. The conclusion is that conspicuous consumption is an indication of social class. Therefore, advertising campaigns focusing on esteem goods, for example, could consider the needs of the targeted social groups

2. *uncertainty avoidance*

Hofstede considers the concept as a society's tolerance of ambiguity and uncertainty. A strong culture of uncertainty avoidance implies a higher interest for precision and punctuality or a higher willingness to take risks. The translation of these principles in the area of consumer's behaviour in the countries with higher uncertainty avoidance implies a higher degree of brand loyalty, more stringent consumer protection mechanisms, after-sales guarantees. In this respect advertising campaigns could consider safety needs, for example, for the targeted customers.

3. *individualism*

According to Hofstede, individualism and wealth are very tightly connected. High Individualism Societies will place more emphasis on "autonomy, variety, pleasure, and individual financial security"(1984:171). Therefore, consumers' behaviour

towards financial services or cultural events, travel or pleasure will be encouraged and developed in such societies. In such a circumstance, social needs could be envisaged by the advertisements.

#### 4. *masculinity*

Using Hofstede's conceptualization, masculinity is the only dimension that can be used outside of the work-related environment. 'Masculinity stands for a preference in society for achievement, heroism, assertiveness, and material success. Its opposite, Femininity, stands for a preference for relationships, modesty, caring for the weak, and the quality of life.'(1984:84). Thus gender-positioning advertisements focus on consumers' behaviour towards various traditional products:

- women-oriented products: food, fashion, grooming, and homemaking
- men-oriented products: automobiles, grooming, home-improvement, drinking.

Nevertheless, nowadays there is a gender-usage crossover for traditional products (Milner et al.1993). in such a case the advertisements could be applicable to any types of needs considering the products advertised.

Through these elements contribute to the dynamic economic relations and to the implementation of new business practices achieved not only through financial or material costs but with organizational and human resources costs, as well. Thus, the expanding cultures get to impose value systems and norms in non-native environments together with a new type of communication which facilitates the movement of a group of people towards the achievement of their own goals.

## 2. Advertising as a cultural and linguistic approach

The dynamics of a society infuses cultural patterns, which although non-characteristic to its structure on the whole, are readily accepted by reference groups and then spread around to the entire society. One of the most important factors that entails the change of values and norms is the relation between the group and the individual (De Coster, 1990:125). The individual awareness of belonging to a group (Baron, Byrne, 2001:434) gives a common sense of identity and generates interaction grounded on common behavioural expectations. The transfer of cultural patterns by expansive and dominant cultures implies the ritualization of knowledge, beliefs and actions presupposed to be necessary to its own effectiveness in accomplishing its goals.

Social life in itself is carried up on the life of social groups (Chelcea, 2008:184) irrespective they are formal, informal, professional, friendship or interest groups They are of a fundamental importance because they satisfy the social needs of their members providing them with safety, status, esteem, power or self-actualization.

Interaction at a social level is strongly supported by communication through a language adequate to a group of communicators or common to the entire society. "Whenever languages and other, perilinguistic semiotic systems are used in their ubiquitous human habitats, cultures as well as people can be said to be communicating." (Silverstein, 2004:621). The sociocultural frame of linguistic contact, the contact proper between cultures induces the diffusion of material and spiritual elements of culture and generates lexical and cultural interferences.

Silverstein brilliantly applies the ideas of index and reference to speech acts to delineate the difference between culture in language and in speech. By

applying semiotic principles to the study of culture in a way that is not classifiable strictly in the usual terms of structuralism or post-structuralism or linguistic, Silverstein creates an interesting new place for semiotics within communicative, linguistic, and cultural studies.

The process of cultural change, very complex, flexible and dynamic may be analysed from various perspectives the most recent one focusing on the idea of cultural globalization.

Barthes (1977) was hunting for the stereotype, the cultural artefact re-embodied in the minds of utilizers or changed in prefabricated discourses, applied to mythologies borrowed from the consumer society. A mass communication semiotic system as that of advertising is mystified and needs interpretation through the means of a language (Bougnoux, 2000:41). The decoding of semiotic symbols existing in advertising communication punts on an accessible penetrating language. "Accepting a natural language as sole communication instrument is nowadays an objective necessity compulsory for the contemporary social environment. This understanding means the deliberate acceptance of a language capable to work in the field of communication situation in which people must overcome the old competition mentality of linguistic supremacy" (C I r a u, 2003:324).

As a consequence, advertising involves a form of semiotic communication actively using repeated verbal and visual images creating its own discourse. Bougnoux (2000:49) states that "semiology is therefore a science of culture rather than a science of nature or better said a science of transit from nature to culture". From this point of view advertising turns into a vehicle of ritualization of consumption habits of consumers assigned to different levels of identifiable marketing features such as interest, income or access.

"All brand communication should play a role in build a relationship with the consumer, a relationship that should be developed and sustained across other points of contact with the brand. Though analysis of brand equities in print and television advertising is the most obvious application of semiotics, the methodology makes a science out of integrating brand communication across other marketing "occasions" such as packaging, retail display, media choices, and even sponsored events." (Oswald, Semiotics and Sencory Marketing: marketingsemiotics.com)

According to Jakobson's theory of communicative functions (1960:350-377) the advertising message has to accomplish the following functions, in three successive stages: (1) attract attention (the phatic function), (2) convince (the conative function), by appealing to reason (the referential function) or emotion (the emotive function), and (3) get people to act (the conative and referential functions). The third objective is clearly the most important, and the others are subordinate. Jakobson's contribution to brand strategy research is of outmost importance (Oswald, 1996:48-62) as the very notion of brand equity is testimony to the power of symbolic representation to capture the hearts and minds of consumers by means of visual, audio and verbal communication.

Oswald (2010:107) advances a general theory of advertising response based on the dialectical implication of the psychic drives, on the side of the consumer, and semiotic codes, on the side of advertising discourse. The dynamic of this relation would look like:

Consumer > Psychic Drives <> Semiotic Codes < Advertisement

Bell (1997:139) noted that the formality of a ritual is associated with “the use of a more limited and rigidly organized set of expressions and gestures, a restricted code of communication or behaviour in contrast to a more open or elaborate code”

Ritual performance in advertising involving emotional attachment to a certain brand is dramatized by highly visual imagery, dramatic sound, and extraordinary settings. These dramatized performances in ritual evoke intense emotions among participants by attaching specialness to the brand. Work on nostalgia in consumer behaviour research bears a similar definition, whereby a general preference toward objects from one’s younger days is observed (Holbrook 1993). Affective involvement of the receiver of the message is determined by an aesthetic mechanism symbolically forged on the general sensitiveness (Ruiti:2005:193). Artistic creation transcends and generates feelings, it is founded on well-known experiences and translates them for an average social conscience.

### **3. Advertising as a communicative approach**

Kenric Thompson (1994:43) describes the feedback relation between the language and society in terms highlighting the cultural change: “[...] There are three main sources of large-scale cultural change: alteration in the natural environment; cultural contact between groups whose norms, values and technology are different; and discovery and invention”. The contact between cultures entails the diffusion of material and spiritual elements of culture in a natural way because they generate the linguistic and cultural interference.

Hymes believes that communicative competence within a speech community is the essence of the ethnography of communication. Hymes defines speech community as a community connected by common linguistic norms, that is ‘a community sharing rules for the conduct and interpretation of speech, and rules for the interpretation of at least one linguistic variety’ (Hymes, 1972:54). The essence of the problem is not whether speakers have a common understanding of syntax and semantics, but also whether or not they share ideas about the use of silence, ideas about the meaning of irony or emphasis, speech taboos, ways of formulating requests or statements, and so on. Hymes frequently noted that ungrammatical utterances may be socially appropriate, just as grammatical utterances can be socially inappropriate

Farah (1998:125) agrees with Hymes ‘...that the study of language must concern itself with describing and analysing the ability of the native speakers to use language for communication in real situations (communicative competence) rather than limiting itself to describing the potential ability of the ideal speaker/listener to produce grammatically correct sentences (linguistic competence). Speakers of a language in particular communities are able to communicate with each other in a manner which is not only correct but also appropriate to the sociocultural context. This ability involves a shared knowledge of the linguistic code as well as of the socio-cultural rules, norms and values which guide the conduct and interpretation of speech and other channels of communication in a community ... [T]he ethnography of communication ... is concerned with the questions of what a person knows about appropriate patterns of language use in his or her community and how he or she learns about it.’

Hymes (1972:54-60) developed the well-known SPEAKING model to promote the analysis of discourse as a series of speech events and speech acts



within a cultural context. His model can be applied to advertising discourse observing the elements provided by Hymes according to the acronym (*setting and scene, participants, ends, acts sequence, key, instrumentalities, norms, & genre*):

**Setting and scene** refers to the time and place of a speech act and in general to the physical circumstances. Advertisements can thus be designed according to national particular features of the customers or, if the message can be internationalised, can be delivered as an international concept.

**Participants** are those assigned to two categories: the speaker and the audience. In advertising, the speaker is the company addressing to the customer interested in a product or other hearers that might become interested.

**Ends or purposes, goals, and outcomes** in advertising is the purchase of the product.

**Act sequence** represent the form and order of the event. The advert design, the structured sequence of characters, the message, other types of reactions is intended to appeal to the customer's needs and desires.

**Key** establishes the tone, manner or spirit of the speech. The usage of a certain voice, playful gestures, emphasis, and other devices can be used to have a better impact on the hearer.

**Instrumentalities** refer to forms and styles of speech. The casual register with many dialect features or a more formal register and careful grammatical "standard" forms can be part of a certain advertisement.

**Norms** concern social rules governing the basic story of the advertisement event and the participants' actions and reaction. Audience interruptions in an informal style, or a serious, formal way of behaviour.

**Genre** deals with the kind of speech act or event of the advertisement such as anecdotal stories, gossips, jokes, etc.

### **Conclusion**

The transfer of cultural patterns by expansive and dominant cultures implies the ritualization of knowledge, beliefs and actions presupposed to be necessary to its own effectiveness in accomplishing its goals. The promotion of goods and services becomes an imperative for the economic activity. In such a context, international business companies bring forth advertising thinking targeted at a specific group of consumers. Advertising involves a form of semiotic communication actively using repeated verbal and visual images creating its own discourse but the audience is appealed to decode the messages according to their own instruments.

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## COMPUTATIONAL LINGUISTICS AND PRAGMATICS IN SPECIALISED TRANSLATION

Ana-Maria IONESCU<sup>\*</sup>

**Abstract:** *The present article emphasizes several points of convergence between three distinct, yet inter-related, fields of research – computational linguistics, its subfield computational pragmatics and specialised translation and stresses the importance and benefits of interdisciplinary approaches for a more rigorous description and proliferation of the disciplines mentioned above.*

**Keywords:** *computational linguistics, computational pragmatics, specialised translation.*

Within current research, disciplines can no longer be considered closed monads and it becomes more and more obvious that they are not characterised by relations of opposition, nor need they follow parallel directions. On the contrary, they may complete one another and may, at the same time, gain depth through interdisciplinarity. It is only by establishing relations among the various fields of knowledge that we can build systems which could answer, as comprehensively and coherently as possible, to the questions about the world, or the particular and the universal. Besides, most current research recommends interdisciplinary and inter-related approach in the case of close or similar domains or disciplines, such as the ones involved in the present study: computational linguistics, pragmatics and specialised translation.

Computational linguistics, a discipline related to mathematics, computer science and linguistics is commonly defined as “the study of computer systems for understanding and generating natural language” (Ralph Grishman, 1986: 556). Or as “an approach to linguistics that employs methods and techniques of computer science. A formal, rigorous, computationally based investigation of questions that are traditionally addressed by linguistics: What do people know when they know a natural language? What do they do when they use this knowledge? How do they acquire this knowledge in the first place?”

(Shuly Wintner, <http://cs.haifa.ac.il/~shuly/teaching/08/nlp/intro.pdf> accessed on July 11, 2016).

Computational linguistics follows three different perspectives of research:

1. Human cognitive architecture, which focuses on how brain interprets and produces language;
2. The linguistic perspective, which emphasizes the study of linguistic phenomena across various languages;
3. The engineering approach, focused on building computerized systems capable to use human language.

Machine translation (MT), natural language interfaces, information extraction (IE), speech recognition, text-to-speech generation, automatic summarization, e-mail filtering, chat rooms, intelligent search engines (Web/IR), text categorization, clustering, text segmentation, part-of-speech tagging, parsing, word-sense disambiguation (WSD), anaphora resolution, spelling correction,

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<sup>\*</sup> University of Pite ti, [anamaria.ionescu@upit.ro](mailto:anamaria.ionescu@upit.ro)

plagiarism detection, etc., are among the most common applications and processes of computational linguistics while the infrastructure for language processing includes, among others, lexicons, dictionaries, shallow parsers, syntactic and morphological analyzers and generators, computational grammars (cf. R. Mitkov (Ed.) 2003).

The linguistic knowledge necessary to the application areas mentioned above are: phonetics and phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, pragmatics, first/second language acquisition, discourse analysis, language in synchrony and diachrony, social, cultural and regional variations of language (cf. G. Yule, 2008).

In order to produce language in an engineered system, one cannot neglect the purpose-oriented behaviour of language, the relation established between emitter and receiver, therefore the pragmatic dimension of language. Ideally, computerised systems, both language understanding programs and language generators, must recognize the emitter's (speaker, writer) *intentionality* and must use *strategic language* in order to achieve the desired goals and influence the receiver (hearer, reader).

Ever since the first half of the last century, pragmatics has been a privileged domain for the study of linguistic phenomena, pragmatic concepts and theories being often called upon in various types of analyses. However, the discipline, which is in connection with other interrelated philological fields of research such as semiotics, philosophy of language, discourse analysis, conversation analysis, theory of argumentation, the studies in communication, sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, etc., continues to offer new exploitation possibilities, especially in interdisciplinary investigations.

Irrespective of the multitude of theories and concepts implied<sup>1</sup>, pragmatics is defined by a few specific features:

- the central position of the context in generating meaning;
- the relation emitter – receiver;
- the intentional, rational and strategical character of communication;
- inferential mechanism.

Computational pragmatics is “concerned with the [...] relations between utterances and context [...] from an explicitly computational point of view” (Bunt, Black, 2000: 3). According to Bunt and Black, “this implies in the first place a concern for how to compute the relations between linguistic aspects and context aspects. There are, evidently, two sides to this. On the one hand, given a linguistic

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<sup>1</sup> The theory of enunciation (Benveniste [1966, 1974] 2000; Kerbrat-Orecchioni 1980; Ducrot 1984), the speech acts theory (Austin [1962] 2000; Searle [1969] 1970; Bach & Harnish 1979), the conversational principles and maxims/the laws of discourse (Grice [1975] 1996; Kerbrat-Orecchioni 1986; Sperber & Wilson [1986] 1995) – the main sources of pragmatics; the most important concepts: deictisation, modalisation (Parret 1983; Charaudeau 1992), enunciative heterogeneity (Authier-Revuz 1984), dialogism and polyphony (Bahtin [1963] 1970; Ducrot 1984), point of view (Ducrot 1984; ScaPoLine 2000, 2001, 2004; Rabatel 2007), direct and indirect speech acts (Searle 1975), implicatures (Grice [1975] 1996, [1975, 1978] 2001; Ducrot 1984; Récanati 1981), linguistic politeness (Brown & Levinson 1978; Kerbrat-Orecchioni 1992, 1996), etc.

expression, the question is how to effectively decode those aspects of it that encode context information, i.e. how to compute the relevant properties of the context. [...] On the other hand, when we consider language generation, where the task is to construct a linguistic expression that encodes the context information that the speaker (or writer) wants to convey, the question is how to compute the relevant properties of the linguistic expression to be generated given the relevant properties of the context". Researchers in the field of computational pragmatics emphasize that computational pragmatics, like general pragmatics, focuses on *indexicality*, the relation between *utterances and action* or *utterances and discourse*, between *utterances and situational context*, *inferential mechanisms* especially on *reference resolution*, the *interpretation and generation of speech acts*, the *interpretation and generation of discourse*, *coherence* and *abduction* (cf. *supra* and Jurafsky 2006: 578). Bunt and Black describe several of the most used systems which introduce the pragmatic dimension to computational linguistics applications (LUNAR, the SHRDLU system, PHLIQA, TENDUM, SPICOS, CLE, dialogue systems such as SUNDIAL and TRAINS, or the pragmatic-based language understanding systems – PLUS cf. *supra*, pp.25-31). It must be stated that computation applications have managed to insert contextual information only in part, the design of context representations being a very difficult and long-term task.

According to Susan Bassnett (2014: 3, 15, 12), translation is placed “at the heart of global communication and has played a central role in the transmission of ideas [...] over the centuries”, with “great changes in international communication” taking place in the contemporary world, especially in news gathering and websites, leading to an “increasing demand for translation”.

Specialised translation, the last domain under discussion, “is the translation of content which presents a high or very high level of specialisation in a specific area of knowledge” (Gotti, Sarcevic, 2006: 9). To come closer to our interest, specialised language pragmatics focuses mainly on the production (generation)/reception (interpretation) of specialised discourse (oral or written) in different types of formal communication contexts. The generation and the interpretation of a specialised text, therefore its translation also, “is a communicative act that takes place within a given setting, which can be defined in terms of a set of context-related pragmatic parameters linked to a set of inferential processes. Such texts thus can be said to have depth/vertical extension as well as width/horizontal extension” (P. Faber, 2009: 64).

Instead of a conclusion and in order to highlight the relation between computational pragmatics and specialised translation, as well as its possible practical applications, we must mention a few important aspects (cf. Bunt, Black, 2000: 22-25<sup>1</sup>):

1. Despite the large number and the complexity of computing, the meanings of an utterance, the specific setting (i.e. context) and the

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<sup>1</sup> According to Bunt and Black (2000: 23), the semantic machinery for computation of sentence meaning is a three stage process: “1. Compute the possible meanings of S (sentence) from the linguistic utterance information; 2. Apply physical utterance information to filter out unintended readings of S and to add pragmatic meaning aspects; 3. Use context information to select the most plausible and relevant readings of S, allowed by and enriched in step 2”.

- domain of specialised discourse (which are quite restrictive) permit avoiding ambiguity and inserting nonlinguistic contextual information at the beginning of the process, that is knowledge of the specialised field, in order to limit the meaning of lexical items and facilitate the task of translation. Moreover, in specialised terminology, lexical units, frequently, though not always, have one linguistic designation only;
2. The quite restrictive setting of specialised translation and specialised communication, in general, also restricts the number of contextual variables and the possible inferences which makes the design of computational pragmatic representations easier;
  3. In specialised communication and specialized translation, the attitudinal context (belief, intent, fear, etc.) is restricted, *representative speech acts*, (*cf.* Searle's classification) which predominate, being easier to generate computationally.

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## **VIRTUAL TEACHING IN THE MODERN EDUCATIONAL SETTING**

**LAURA-IONELA IONIC**

**Abstract:** *Cutting-edge technologies have quickly gained momentum in the field of virtual teaching. The teacher's role in the educational act is not only supported by the students' engagement, but also by innovative learning tools. Online environments stand for new challenges to be applied to blended and traditional environments as well. Implementing virtual tools and managing them appropriately is a step forward well-rooted and efficient instruction.*

*The present work aims to explore both the extent to which such virtual tools can be best utilized to deeply involve students in their learning and the impact of technologies on learners' performance.*

**Keywords:** *virtual teaching, engagement, learning tools.*

The instructional process in a technology-dependent society is highly diversified and brings about unexpected results both in terms of teaching and learning. These two dimensions of education are no longer dealt with in a conventional way, due to the emergence of a wide range of technologies whose role is to facilitate the learning process and to provide students with a broader horizon of knowledge.

Nowadays, exposure to technology in terms of communication easiness or information dissemination contributes to a better insight into the cognitive side of learning. Although perceived as superficial because of the huge flow of information, students acquire more complex abilities as regards selection or reflection on what they learn. Once they obtain chunks of information, they never stop exploring wider areas, analyzing them more thoroughly and reflecting on different possibilities of interpretation.

### ***Understanding the role of technology in virtual education***

Application of a framework for identifying when and why we should use technology in an educational setting is the first step towards a better understanding of technology usefulness. Many people wonder whether virtual teaching should replace traditional teaching or not. In order to make a point favourable to virtual teaching, there should be brought up the following ideas:

a. students are generally community-focused and social. Therefore, they prefer to interact with one another in the form of a continuum. They interact socially, accumulate experience and bring that experience back into the classroom.

On the other hand, they are feedback-driven. They always want to know how to carry out different tasks and receive the right feedback. In support to the idea of feedback, Bellon *et al.*, stated "academic feedback is more strongly and consistently related to achievement than any other teaching behaviour...this relationship is consistent regardless of grade, socioeconomic status, race, or school setting. Feedback can improve a student's confidence, self-awareness and

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\* University of Pitești, [lionica1976@yahoo.com](mailto:lionica1976@yahoo.com)

enthusiasm for learning. Effective feedback during the first year in university can aid the transition to higher education and may support student retention". (Bellon, J.J., Bellon E.C. & Blank, M. A., 1991, *Teaching from a Research Knowledge Base: a Development and Renewal Process*, Hall, New Jersey, USA).

b. despite being deeply social, students are also interested in working and rising individually in order to connect what they are learning with their lives. This type of connectedness, for example, helps students in engineering to relate their theoretical background to the practical side of their prospective qualifications.

c. being endowed with visual skills, learners are great multi-taskers and like getting in contact with all sort of devices and technologies that help them to make progress.

Implementing virtual teaching complies with students' familiarity with technology and comfort they create while activating into a virtual space. Before adopting virtual teaching we, as teachers should take into consideration the learning theory in terms of its social, collaborative, active, constructivist and problem-based aspects.

Learning acts as a social phenomenon that participants take full part in. It is collaborative in nature, since students equally contribute to accomplish their tasks. Heterogeneous groups in terms of ethnicity, social status, personality etc., work successfully because they harmonize one another. While working collaboratively, students become more self-confident and develop a higher level of tolerance for other people's opinions. For instance, a translation course is best dealt with by students, since personal contribution helps to create the most suitable text version. The more the variants, the higher quality the translation act.

Active learning insures that students are fully involved in activities. They are no longer passive recipients of information but highly dynamic and constructive.

Problem-based learning requires students to be thinking holistically about a problem or a concept and not very specifically about a task. Technology is not only a popular term; on the contrary it prevails in today's educational setting and is closely connected to positive outcomes. It helps a teacher collect important data about his students and their response to virtual teaching. Technology also increases collaboration and communication in order to create the suitable learning environment.

### ***When should or shouldn't we use technology?***

First of all, technology should be used to provide students with access to a wide range of materials, which otherwise cannot be accessible. Secondly, it improves learning outcomes and gives opportunities for continuous improvement. At this rate, teachers find it easier to explore students' skills, their experience and therefore, improve their teaching methods to comply with their students' needs.

However, there are times when technology shouldn't be used. Unless students are ready to use its tools appropriately, they won't be successful. Sometimes, due to lack of training in using technology or due to technical problems during the teaching process, students are prone to waste valuable time. Since teachers are most interested in maximizing every minute in terms of students' fulfilling or understanding tasks, it is vital for the latter to be at the same level in using technology and be able to face and solve any potential hindrance.



Distraction from the content and skills in the lesson stands for another drawback in using technology. Students may be so wrapped up in the tools that they simply forget about the real objectives.

In terms of privacy, students may not be fully protected irrespective of all the promises that technologies make. Therefore, teachers should pay much attention to security of information. Under the circumstances, an accurate evaluation of online educational services becomes a requisite prior to implementation. Therefore, legal agreements between the school and the source provider as well as access to free services that do not imperil students' privacy should be used on a large scale.

Watching different tutorials or interactive exercises without students' being obliged to log in may be a sign of security. On the other hand, the written consent of the students' parents is also necessary in order to avoid possible legal repercussions.

### ***Technology in context***

Teachers generally ask themselves when and how to use technologies in order to fully benefit from its advantages. Technology is used to present and distribute content. It also helps learners to collaborate. The foreign language class is known to be mostly based on collaborative work and students need to integrate into this format and cooperate with one another in search of the most expected outcomes.

Since technology is present in real-world applications such as communication, robotics, aerospace, medicine etc., it should be used appropriately in each of these contexts. For instance, students in *Machine Construction Technology* should be highly familiar with cutting-edge technology in terms of how to use robots or computerized commands to fix machines. Digitally focused activities have increasingly simplified work and reduced execution time in various fields of activity such as manufacturing, banking, designing etc. Part of car mechanics, for example, is no longer a palpable or hand-made problem, but a computer-based strategy, according to which accurate parameters and values are being established. Only some solid engineering knowledge and practical experience can help learners to identify and correct possible errors that occur during the manufacturing process.

There are times, though, when technology is detrimental to everyday context. A computerized car or plane that signals any board technical problems may become a real burden under different circumstances. On the other hand, any disturbance in the banking system may also create an instant economic disaster with irrecoverable consequences.

Student-teacher communication is another dimension of technology. This is useful for a teacher to find out whether his students understood and developed the concepts they work with. Most of the times, students respond correctly to newly-learned concepts, without stating their defining features. Take the concept *door*, for example.

If asked to locate or describe a *door*, any learner would do it without any trouble. On the contrary, the concept of *shaft* requires some technical preparation, since more difficult concepts need more accuracy, description of the main features and comparison.

Teachers realize whether students have understood a concept if the latter identify examples across a wide range of varying features and demonstrate this with examples presented during instruction or while learning the concept.

### ***Types of technology***

#### ***a. Devices***

In order to develop a virtual learning environment, teachers need to use some devices whose role is to increase learning efficiency and decrease time allotted to fulfilling tasks. Desktop computers, content books, laptops are specific devices used during the teaching process. They may be simple in their operational modes, but their usefulness in spreading information in real time is undeniable. Tablets and smart phones, on the other hand, help to operate with texts or to augment reality. Students in engineering make significant use of smart phones, which provide them with online dictionaries or corpuses useful to understand new concepts and apply them contextually. Visualization of a concept like *coil* has double benefits for the learner who thus knows its meaning and usage. In case familiarity with various concepts lacks, visual contact as well as examples provided by the online source are more than suitable to operate with when required by the context.

#### ***b. Communication and collaborative tools***

In order to avoid isolation in the virtual classroom, teachers give students the opportunity to interfere with their peers by developing discussions or group assignments whose prevalent role is to make them feel part of the academic community. It is no longer independent work, since students interfere with one another and with their teacher. Through collaboration, learners are more engaged in the educational process, because this triggers comparison, reflection, changes in the learning flow etc. Such a virtual environment creates more responsibility and engagement. Students are no longer single entities, but enlarged social networks based on information or expertise sharing.

Both psychological and social dimensions have a lot to gain from peer interactions. Psychologically, students who face difficulties in integrating socially, due to adaptation, family or health problems, find it more convenient to work in a virtual environment. In social terms, learners are more easily assimilated by groups and determined to get involved in certain activities.

Replacement of conventional teaching with the virtual setting will have long-lasting positive outcomes both for information providers and beneficiaries.

#### ***c. Assessment tools***

Such tools are used to evaluate students' skills and work, the course success, to align and report on outcomes and to provide peer-review. Peer-reviewing is a valuable way for learners to get a deeper understanding of their work. Subtle interpretations, commonly used mistakes, deviation from linguistic norms, are generally tackled with by specialists who, apart from having their limitations, provide learners with an accurate analysis of their work.

Gathering feedback is another way to establish how students feel about the learning experience. They find out whether they have grown or built new skills or if they have become more reflexive.

### ***Evaluating and implementing technology***

Implementing technology in the class triggers learners' engagement and contributes to changing the class dynamics. In a student-focused educational setting, it is necessary to use various tools to comply with the learning process, whether it is the way learners operate with newly-acquired concepts or the completion of assignments.

The major role of technology tools is to turn the learning process into an attractive target or a source of delivering a stimulating and exciting content.

The exploration of a country's geography, for instance, may become a unique experience by displaying topic-related videos or images by means of technology. An ordinary computer may bring the whole universe inside a classroom, and learners can take full advantage of the abundance of information which further provides new life experiences.

Unfortunately, access to information is sometimes limited due to learners' lack of interest or to teachers' incapacity of exposing them to a wide range of multimedia or digital content. Such limitation generally comes to the detriment of students because it prevents them from becoming creative or brings about discomfort in terms of tools' extensive usage. Teachers themselves are sometimes bewildered either because they do not fully understand the technology they make use of or they cannot keep the rhythm with technological advances. This leads to significant gaps between how to implement and how to use new tools in the classroom.

There are four dimensions of using technology: learning effectiveness, functionality and technical requirements, accessibility and provider considerations.

a. In terms of learning effectiveness, the first question that arises is whether the tool itself is appropriate to the goals of learning. It is imperative to explore and develop those technologies that contribute to the efficiency of learning. Do students learn for limited purposes such as improvement of the cognitive side or do they intend to extend their skills beyond the learning community?

How relevant is for a would-be engineer to explore mechanical processes in the absence of solid practice?

Another question to answer is whether skills emphasized by the tool are relevant to the learning outcomes. If we consider *writing*, for example, it might say that blogs are really important for students to practice on their ideas.

Does the tool provide learners with insight into how they understand new concepts? Unless the most appropriate dictionary or glossary is chosen, there is little likelihood for learners to operate and insert the terms contextually.

b. Functionality is closely related to tool availability in the educational setting. Teachers should pay close attention to copyright issues. Copyright includes exploitation rights and can be transferable. Computer programs are known to be protected as literary works and this protection covers the arrangement and selection of materials in databases. Students need to be informed about what is protected by copyright (paintings, sculptures, texts, films, photographs, computer programs etc.)

c. Accessibility refers to students' possibility to equally access the tool or a relevant equivalent. Does the tool require any special equipment? For example, 3-D printers may not be accessible to everyone. Is the tool stable and reliable or it is a public resource so as to protect students' accounts and data?

Technologies that work discontinuously or cannot be accessed when most required disrupts the teaching process and affects the students' thinking flow. Therefore, technology failures need to be dealt with quickly and efficiently so as to appropriately resume the educational activities.

4. The company providing internet services is another concern to be considered. Is the tool provided by a third-party producer or are these provisions for the tool technically supported? These are questions that both teachers and students deal with constantly. The extent to which they find the right answer depends on many unforeseeable variables.

### **Conclusions**

Technology seems to play a prevalent role in today's educational setting. Technology-related aspects have highlighted a few relevant aspects:

- technology integration triggers students' serious engagement, interaction and active participation in smaller or larger groups;
- adaptation to a virtual space is a key element to diversifying and enhancing the learning process;
- adaptation of technology to students' needs and contexts they operate in is essential in order to avoid discrepancies or gaps in learning;
- familiarity with a wide variety of tools helps students to broaden their knowledge horizon and to build a positive feedback.
- functionality, accessibility and sustainability of tools lead to the improvement of class management both in terms of students' conduct and their contact with diverse and up-to-date materials.

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## REMARKS ON TRANSLATION STRATEGIES – ISHIGURO’S “THE REMAINS OF THE DAY” AS A CASE IN POINT

Constantin MANEA\*

**Abstract:** *The paper aims to examine the text of the Romanian literary translation of Ishiguro’s famous novel, starting from punctual remarks based on a number of translation procedures and strategies, including the opposition ‘foreignization’ vs. ‘domestication’. The conclusions also relate to the current status of literary translation in this country, or the more or less official trends affecting standardization in the field.*

**Keywords:** *literary translation, mistranslation, False Friends, semantic and stylistic adequacy, Ishiguro.*

**1. Introduction:** Translation is conceived of as both a craft and an art, a skill and a technique, a process and a product. It would be needless to add that it represents a difficult human enterprise, the complexity of which is given by the many factors and influences (both theoretical and practical) involved. A number of oppositions are still being debated within the scope of translation studies, such as: possibility vs. impossibility of translating, literal vs. free translation, faithful vs. unfaithful translation, *Source-Language*-oriented translation vs. *Target-Language*-oriented translation. They formed the backbone of the long-standing preoccupation of famous experts in the field like Walter Benjamin, José Ortega y Gasset, I. A. Richards, Z. S. Harris, Edmond Cary, Theodore Savory, R. A. Browner, Georges Mounin, Roman Jakobson, George Steiner, John C. Catford, Jean-Paul Vinay, Jean Darbelnet, James S. Holmes, Eugene Nida, Louis Kelly, Umberto Eco, A. Neubert, P. Newmark, Gideon Toury, Mary Snell-Hornby, Roger T. Bell, Susan Bassnet, Mona Baker, L. Levičchi, A. Bantaş, who were mainly interested in equivalence, invariables, translating metaphor, irony, humour, punning, idioms, proper names, proverbs, poetry, modality, type and function in translation, the direction of the translation process, the diachronic-synchronic opposition, etc. A very interesting contribution to illuminating some aspects essentially having to do with the last opposition in the enumeration above is Lawrence Venuti’s influential 1995 book *The Translator’s Invisibility. A History of Translation*, where the author makes a case for the translator’s “greater visibility and recognition”, while suggesting two (relatively) new concepts in translation theory, i.e. *domestication* and *foreignization*. The author examines the method through which the foreign text is adapted and transferred to the cultural values of the target language, in opposition to the method that defends the “linguistic and cultural differences” of the source text, while paying less attention to the cultural values of the target language (Venuti, 20). Venuti claims that some translators’ indulging in an “illusion of transparency” is likely to lead to “ethnocentric violence”, which can harm the genuine cultural exchange between the two languages (and literatures). The opposite stand, he claims, i.e. *foreignization*, achieved through a set of “deviant translation strategies”, can be very useful (Venuti, 185). His claims were variously interpreted as encouraging unrestricted globalization and linguistic (as well as

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\* University of Pite ti, [kostea\\_m@yahoo.com](mailto:kostea_m@yahoo.com)

cultural) imperialism, virtually denying the readers' recognizing their own expectations in the translated text, given that today literary translation is generally perceived as more reader- than author-oriented.

This paper was suggested by the parallel reading of a novel in English (i.e. Kazuo Ishiguro's *The Remains of the Day*) and its translation into Romanian (authored by a relatively prominent Romanian writer and translator, R.P.). Our examination essentially regarded those qualities that make a good translation – i.e. accuracy, transparency and fluency, and probed the semantics, stylistics and cultural attitude evinced by the two versions, while having in mind the specificity of the *domestication* / *foreignization* choice. Some of our findings are presented below.

**2. Some cases of semantic inadequacy:** R.P.'s translation (*aceste întâmplări*) did not entirely render the semantic content of the term *development* (in the excerpt “to one not accustomed to committing such errors, *this development* was rather disturbing”), so we preferred to translate it as “pentru cineva care nu e obișnuit să comită asemenea greșeli, cursul evenimentelor era destul de deranjant”. Similarly, R.P. mistranslates the phrase *to entertain (...) theories* as *a emite teorii*, although the contextual meaning is “to cherish” (Romanian *a nutri*, etc.): so, we chose to translate it as either *să produc* or *să mă las influențat de teorii*. Translating *sinister* as *sinistru* is a serious mistake, in this context (“these small errors of recent months have *derived from nothing more sinister than a faulty staff plan*”) – cf. Eng. *sinister* “making you feel that something evil, dangerous, or illegal is happening or will happen” (<http://www.ldoceonline.com/dictionary>), so we chose to translate it as *alarmant* – though *necurat* would also have been possible. Also, the phrase *schema de personal* (in R.P.'s rendition) sounds rather “technical” in the context implied by a mere house, so we thought it more adequate to translate the phrase *a faulty staff plan* as *să părăsesc în planificarea angajării de personal*. R.P. mistranslated *perception* (in “employees of varying degrees of *intellect and perception*”) as *sensibilitate*: “angajații cu grade variate de *inteligență și sensibilitate*”, while we chose to translate it as *înțelegere*: “angajați cu niveluri foarte diferite de *inteligență și înțelegere*”. When rendering *allegation* (“a statement that someone has done something wrong or illegal, but that has not been proved” (<http://www.ldoceonline.com/dictionary>)) as *presupunere*, R.P. made a serious semantic mistake. We preferred to say *acuzăție*. R.P.'s translation of the adjective *unnerving* as *amenințătoare* is besides the point (it means “making one feel worried or uncomfortable” (<http://www.collinsdictionary.com>)), so we preferred to translate it as “*de (...) derut*”. Similarly, translating *engulfed with guilt* as “[*copleșit de*] *vină*” is wrong (“Those were [...] *strangely unnerving moments* during which he too [...] felt *engulfed with guilt*”): our choice was: “[...] în acele momente *de o stranie derută* chiar și el s-a simțit *cuprins de vinovăție*”. The phrase *arthritic troubles* was mistranslated as *necazurile legate de gută* (cf. *gout* “a painful disease that makes the joints (...), especially the feet, knees, and hands, swell” – *Cambridge Dictionary*); we chose to render it as *dureri de încheieturi* (the noun *arthritis* means “a serious condition in which a person's joints (...) become painful, swollen, and stiff” – *Cambridge Dictionary*). R.P.'s rendition of *to strive* as “a luptă și ...” lends an undesirable emphatic overtone (“a încât fiecare dintre noi se poate lupta mai bine ca să ajungă la “demnitate”). Our translation was “în a avea încât fiecare dintre noi se poate strădui mai mult ca să ajungă la “demnitate”. R.P. did not translate the meaning of the adjective

*prone to*, preferring to say *caracteriza i*; the exact Romanian sense of Eng. *prone* (“likely to suffer from an illness or show a particular negative characteristic: *I’ve always been prone to headaches. He was prone to depression even as a teenager*” (<http://dictionary.cambridge.org>) is *predispus (la/s)* . In the sentence “(...) that any resistance [...] to the taking on of duties beyond their traditional boundaries would be compounded by any notion that (...)”, R.P. mistranslated the auxiliary verb *would* (part of a Future-in-the-Past) as a “conditional-optativ” auxiliary (*s-ar combina*). Moreover, the contextual use of *to compound* implies the meaning “make (something bad) worse; intensify the negative aspects of [...]” (<http://english.stackexchange.com>), and yet R.P. mistranslated it as *a se combina* instead of “a fi influențat (negativ)”. R.P.’s version reads: “Mi-am dat seama [...] c orice încercare [...] de a se opune [...] *s-ar combina* cu...”, while we preferred to translate “Eram conștient [...] c orice tentativ [...] *avea s fie influențată*...”.

The phrase *in the face of* sees a mere literal rendition: “perseverau în fa a unor repetate obstacole”, though the phrase actually means “despite having to deal with a difficult situation or problem: *She left home in the face of strong opposition from her parents*” (<http://dictionary.cambridge.org>), and so it can be translated as *în ciuda / în pofida obstacolelor*. The auxiliary *will* is – in this context (“However, *if you will* consider the situation for a moment, you *may come* to see the...”) – a modal verb (cf. Rom *a fi amabil / bun s ...*, *a binevoi s ...*), just like *may*, which also carries an overtone of irony. Likewise, the Romanian adjective *impropriu* is hardly ever used for the contextual sense of Eng. *improper* (“FORMAL unsuitable or not correct for a particular use or occasion”) (<http://dictionary.cambridge.org>): “However, *if you will* consider the situation for a moment, you *may come* to see the *inappropriateness* of someone”, so we preferred to say “Îns , dac *e ti amabil s* analizezi situa ia mai atent, *ai putea s îi dai seama c este un lucru total nepotrivit* ca [...]”. R.P. mistranslated the (literary) absolute superlative form *most irritating* (meaning *very irritating*) as if it were a relative superlative (Rom. *cea mai iritant* ). We chose to say “gentlemanii *predispus i la* acea tr s tur de caracter *nepus de sup r toare* la un st pân”. The contextual meaning of *incidentally* (“*Incidentally*, I should before now have explained myself as regards my referring to...”) was erroneously rendered by R.P. as *întâmpl tor* instead of *Fiindc am adus vorba de asta* or *Fiindc (tot) am ajuns aici*. In the sentence “I turned away, the *decanter* of port *still* on my tray”, R.P. mistranslated the adverb *still* (which obviously means “as previously”, not “another”): “M-am întors ducând *înc o sticl* de vin de Porto pe tav ”, instead of “M-am întors, ducând tava pe care *înc* mai aveam *carafa* de vin de Porto”; obviously, the noun *decanter* (“a vessel, usually an ornamental glass bottle, for holding and serving wine, brandy, or the like” (<http://www.dictionary.com>) should have been translated as “caraf ” rather than “sticl ”. R.P. mistranslated the adjective *congenial* (“(Of a person) pleasing or liked on account of having qualities or interests that are similar to one’s own” ([english.stackexchange.com](http://english.stackexchange.com)) as *s ritor* (although, in the context, there is no evidence that the local people were *ready to lend a hand*, or *to be supportive / helpful* to Stevens). So we chose to render it as *de treab* . R.P.’s rendition of the expression “*the cook at Darlington Hall through much of the twenties and thirties*” did not actually include the whole scope of the period in the original: “*buc t reasa pe care o avusesem la Darlington o bun bucat de timp prin perioada anilor treizeci*”. Our own variant reads: “*care fusese buc t reas la Darlington Hall o bun bucat de timp, în anii dou zeci i treizeci*”. R.P.’s mistranslated the phrase

*to have somebody's ear* (which was rendered as *să-l ascult pe rerile*), when it actually means the opposite (“to know someone with power or authority who will listen to you: *He has the director's ear*“ (Cambridge). We chose to translate the original (*it was my good fortune to have had their ear on many great issues of the day*) as *am avut ansa rar ca vorbele mele să se asculte trecere referitor la multe chestiuni importante ale vremii*. The sentence “Most conspicuously, in virtually the central spot of the [...] floor, lay the dustpan Miss Kenton *had alluded to*” was translated by R.P. as “Absolut la vedere, în *virtualul* punct central al podelei [...], se afla faza despre care *pomenise* domnișoara Kenton”, which can be accounted for by the translator’s misunderstanding the adverb *virtually* (meaning “almost”, “practically”, “effectively”), and also the verb *to allude*. We chose to say: “A ezat cum nu se poate mai la vedere, *practic* în punctul central al podelei [...], stătea faza la care *facea aluzie* domnișoara Kenton”. In translating the excerpt: “This latter – a stone *construct complete with a tiled roof* – looked very *sturdy*, as indeed it needed to be, *standing as it did in a highly exposed position* against a background of empty fields. Inside, the *paint* was peeling everywhere”, R.P. made the following semantic mistakes: (1) (*stone*) *construct* was translated as *construcție*, instead of *structură*, a word more adequate for a “bus stop”, and also more stylistically consistent with Stevens’s type of speech; (2) *complete with a tiled roof* was simply translated as “*acoperit de țiglă*” (where we chose to say “*având în acoperiș din țiglă*”); (3) *sturdy* was rendered as *impunător*, instead of *solid* (plus the illogicality of the adjective in this context: “*arta foarte impunător, cum se încheie*”); (4) *standing as it did in a highly exposed position* was translated as *fiind foarte izolat*, instead of *fiind cu totul expus intemperiilor*; (5) *the paint* was translated as *tencuiala*, instead of *zugrăveala*. The English expression *It is not as though (I had expected)*, which is frequently used to say that something did not occur, because it could not have logically occurred, was only partially translated by R.P., as an intensive negation: *Nu așteptam niciun fel de...*, while our own choice was the stylistically underlined expression *Nu cămăști așteptat ca...*. R.P. mistranslated *For all that* as *Aa stând lucrurile*, though the phrase has an obvious concessive sense – cf. *though, nevertheless, all the same*, etc., which entitled us to prefer the variant *Cu toate acestea...*

**2.1. Cases of mistranslating False Friends:** R.P. mistranslated the English term *operative* (a notorious *False Friend*) in the excerpt: “Almost all the attractive parts of the house could remain *operative*”, using its Romanian sound-alike, *operativ* (which is actually a synonym of *eficient, eficace, prompt, expeditiv, activ*, etc.). The correct translation is no doubt *funcțional* (v. Eng. *operative* “working and able to be used” (<http://www.ldoceonline.com>)). R.P. mistranslates *downs* as *vale*, although its actual meaning is “(usually *downs*): A gently rolling hill: *the gentle green contours of the downs* (Oxford)”. We chose to render it by *deluroare*. One of the most serious mistakes R.P. was generated by not grasping the contextual meaning of the noun *fare* (i.e. “A passenger paying to travel in a taxi: *the taxi driver was anxious to pick up a fare*” – Oxford), which he mistranslates as “costul transportului”; then he mistranslated *to address* as *a anunța*. So, the original excerpt: “a taxi driver in New York regularly *addressed his fare* in a manner which if repeated in London would end in...”, was rendered by R.P. as “un taximetrist din New York avea un fel de *a anunța costul transportului* care, dacă ar fi fost repetat la Londra, s-ar fi încheiat cu...”, should have read: “un serviciu de taxi din New York care *se adresa clienților* în mod



obi nuit într-o manier care, dac ar fi fost repetat / reproduș în Londra, s-ar fi sfâr it cu...”. R.P. mistakes *touchstone* (which he renders as *piatra de încercare*, denoting ‘a very tough challenge’) for *cornerstone* (Rom. “piatr de temelie”, “culme/apogeu (al perfec iunii)”, or even “cheie de bolt ”). So, the sentence “the ability to *draw up a good staff plan* is the *cornerstone* of *any decent butler’s skills*” (which was translated as “*piatra de încercare a dib ciei fiec rui majordom corespunz tor este capacitatea de a redacta o schem de personal adecvat*”) should have read “tocmai capacitatea de a *elabora un plan de angaj ri corespunz tor* reprezint *piatra de temelie a competenței unui bun majordom*”. The much too similar, almost imitative translation of the verb *to tend to* [*concern myself*] as *a avea tendin a s* [*m ocup*], in such contexts as “*I tended to concern myself with international affairs more than domestic ones*”, which imply prevalence or frequency (v. <http://www.ldoceonline.com>: “if something tends to happen, it happens often and is likely to happen again”), is definitely erroneous. So, we chose to render it as “[*m-am ocupat*] *mai degrab* ” – instead of “*am avut tendin a s m ocup mai mult de probleme interna ionale decât domestice*” (R.P.)

**2.2. Cases of ambiguity:** The phrase used by R.P. to render “Your father’s *days of dependability* are now passing” (i.e. “*Zilele de siguran ale tat lui dumitale*”) is at least ambiguous. We believe the following variant would be much more specific: “*Vremea când tat l dumitale era un om pe care te puteai baza total începe s apun*”.

**2.3. Sheer howlers:** Translating Amer. Eng. *gas* (meaning “petrol”) as Rom. *gaze*, instead of *benzin*, is an incredibly gross semantic mistake. P.R.’s error is certainly due to the phenomenon of negative linguistic interference: Eng. *gas* and Rom. *gaz(e)* are well-known *False Friends*. In spite of the rather explicit context (“She put her vase down on the table in front of me, then [...she] said: “If you wish, Mr Stevens, I might bring in some more *cuttings* for you”), R.P. mistakes *cuttings* (“a piece cut off from a plant that can be used to grow another plant of the same type” – *Cambridge online*) – which can also mean (“an article that has been cut from a newspaper or magazine”) – for *clippings* (“an article cut from a newspaper”), and so he translated: “Ea a pus vaza pe mas în fa a mea i apoi [...] a spus: – Dac dori i, domnule Stevens, a putea s v aduc i câteva *t ieturi de prin reviste*”. The correct variant should be: “A a ezat vaza pe mas în fa a mea i apoi [...] a spus: – Dac dori i, domnule Stevens, a putea s v *mai aduc flori proasp t t iate*”. One of the worst howlers in R.P.’s translation was rendering *to be dust-sheeted* as *a terge praful (undeva)*, instead of *a fi acoperit cu huse / cear afuri pentru a nu se pr fui*. So, “the extensive servants’ *quarters* [...] would be *dust-sheeted*”, translated by R.P. as “în *înc perile* întinse ale personalului de serviciu [...] urma s *fie ters praful*”, should have sounded: “în *spațiul*, destul de mare, rezervat personalului de serviciu [...] tot *mobilierul avea s fie acoperit cu huse împotriva prafului*”. P.R. mistranslated “she *swooped up* the hen in her arms and *proceeded to cradle it*” as “ea *s-a n pusit asupra g inii*, a luat-o în bra e i a *început s-o legene*”, instead of “ea *s-a repezit spre g in i* a ridicat-o în brațe, *ținând-o apoi strâns la piept*”. The official phrase *National Health* (a shorter variant for *National Health Service*, acronymed as *NHS*), occurring in “What did he lecture you on last night? The Empire? The *National Health*?”, was mistranslated as *îns n to irea Na iunii*, as though it had been used in reference to an abstract (and preposterous) notion. Our variant was: “Ce conferință v-a (mai) inut asear ? Despre Imperiu? Despre *Sistemul (Național) de Sănătate*?” The

entire semantics of the following fragment (“The *footmen* looked relieved to see me, and I immediately signalled *them* to get to their positions”) is marred, in R.P.’s variant, by his not having correctly identified the actors of the scene (“*Valetul a p rut u urat când m-a z rit i le-am f cut imediat semn tuturor celorlal i subalterni s treac fiecare la locul lui*”). It seems the mistake arose from pure lack of attention – using the singular (*valetul*) instead of the plural (see the pl. form in the original text: *the footmen*), and so the plural form *them* came to be interpreted as designating... *other individuals* (!). Our proposed variant reads: “*Valeții au p rut u urați când m-au rev zut, iar eu le-am f cut imediat semn s treac la locurile lor*”. A similar error occurred in translating the fragment: “His lordship emerged to meet him [Ribbentrop] and *the two gentlemen appeared to exchange* complicit glances before disappearing together into the drawing room” – as “În l imea sa a ie it s -l primeasc , înso it de cei doi gentlemeni care au schimbat priviri complice înainte de a disp rea împreun în salon”, which distorts the very message of the fragment: the result is that, in R.P.’s variant, there appears a *third* gentleman (!), who joins Ribbentrop, and then the two accompany Lord Darlington into the room (cf. *înso it de cei doi gentlemeni*). It seems that this *qui-pro-quod* arose from R.P.’s failing to grasp the actual meaning of the verb *appeared* in the context, i.e. ‘to seem’. So we proposed the variant “Domnia sa a ie it ca s -l întâmpine [pe Ribbentrop] i ambii gentlemeni aveau aerul c schimb priviri complice...”

**2.4. Omission.** In rendering the sentence “he had just that moment *finalized* plans”, we believe that the choice that R.P. made (“c tocmai *pl nuis* s ...”) missed the information expressed by *finalizes*. Therefore, we chose to say “c tocmai î i *definitivase planurile* de a...”. The phrase *for ourselves* (in “so that each of us may better *strive* towards attaining ‘dignity’ *for ourselves*”), which I rendered as “*prin propriile forțe*”, was left untranslated by R.P. R.P. omitted to translate the phrase *ever increasing* (though he admittedly tried to supplant it by adding the intensifying adverb *efectiv*) – so we considered it appropriate to have an equivalent progressive intensification in the Romanian version “ideea unei c l torii în West Country a ajuns s ocupe un loc *din ce în ce mai însemnat în gândurile mele*” (“the notion of a trip to the West Country *took an ever increasing hold on my thoughts*”). In rendering “and I would underline *that it was a preoccupation with these very same professional matters* that led me to consider...”, R.P. failed to render the emphasis (which English syntax conveys by means of the emphatic structure *It is/was... that...*) affecting the subject, while seemingly shifting thematic stress to the Direct Object (i.e. *probleme*), by using an intensifier (*absolut identice*), which is comparable to that of the original (*these very same [...]* *matters*). Our proposed version reads: *tocmai preocuparea pentru înse i aceste chestiuni*. The word *ceialți* instead of *celți* (“Continentalii – [...] i *ceialți*”) seems to have been a mistype; our rendition of the original excerpt (“Continental – and [...] the *Celts*”) reads: “Continentalii – i [...] *neamurile celtice* [...]”. R.P.’s variant loses semantic information by not translating the adj. *final* (in the phrase “*this final crucial lap*”, which we preferred to translate as “*acestei ultime i hot rătoare etape*”). In the excerpt “I thus set about preparing for the days ahead *as, I imagine, a general might prepare for a battle*”, the modal verb *might* (which expresses a hint of assumption, added to the comparative structure introduced by the conjunction *as*), no less than the verb *imagine*, were left untranslated by R.P. (“am început s m preg tesc pentru zilele care m a teptau, *la fel ca un general care se preg te te de b t lie*”). We translated them by “*la fel cum îmi închipui c*

*s-ar preg ti un general pentru o b t lie*". The fragment in the book which begins "I hurried up to the first floor and on turning at the landing was met by a strange sight...", and ends ... "and my father was transported up to his room" was left untranslated by R.P. The sentence *It really was immaterial whether it was Miss Kenton or a complete stranger who had walked in at that moment* was left untranslated by R.P., so I translated it as: *La drept vorbind, conta prea puțin dacă atunci ar fi intrat domni oara Kenton sau un om complet str in*. The sentence "Then their footsteps separated, his lordship's going towards his study, Mr Cardinal's towards the library" was left untranslated by R.P.

**2.5. Adding unnecessary information:** The set phrase *margin of error* is translatable into Romanian word for word, using the standard equivalent *marj de eroare* (cf. also *marj de siguranță*); anyway, the term *toleranță* seems rather out of place here – so it virtually represents a stylistic gain. The phrase *any notion (that...)* was erroneously translated as *cel mai neînsemnat indiciu (c )*, where both *cel mai neînsemnat* and *indiciu* slightly overdo the respective meanings. We preferred to render it by means of Rom. *pân i de ideea (c )*.

**3. Inadequate or false cultural information:** R.P. made a glaring mistake, by not recognizing the sense of the proper noun *Home Counties* – which means "the counties of England that surround London; the counties generally included in the list are Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Kent, Surrey, and Sussex (although Sussex does not border London)" (<https://en.wikipedia.org>) – and rendering it as "*comitatele din Londra*". In translating "a man of some six feet three inches" as "un om înalt de aproape doi metri", R.P. makes a very approximate equivalence of the British measuring units. When we tried to convert feet and inches into meters and centimeters, the result was "*vreun metru i nou zeci*". (As a matter of fact, the issue of using or not metrical conversion in translating from English seems to be still a matter of debate). The expression *conflictului cu Africa de Sud* involves a semantic mistake that was generated by the translator's failing to check the historical and cultural information carried by the phrase *the Southern African conflict*: indeed, the so-called Boer Wars had not been waged *against South Africa* (which did not actually exist then, as a political or state entity), but rather *in South(ern) Africa*. We consider that, in translating "Sir Richard Fox, a colleague from his lordship's *Foreign Office* days" as "Sir Richard Fox, un coleg de serviciu din perioada când în l imea sa lucra la *Foreign Office*", R.P. misused the proper name *Foreign Office*. As a rule, proper names that are used with their original form should be carefully selected, mainly in view of their relative frequency and prominence in use; anyway, they ought to be used very cautiously, primarily because they pose real problems of understanding to the reading public. Given that *Foreign Office* simply means "*Ministerul de Externe [al Marii Britanii]*", we preferred the latter variant. R.P. fails to recognize – in the proper noun *Rally*, which he mistranslates as *regrupare a trupelor* – the well-known event that the historical literature in English calls *the Nuremberg Rally* (an annual mass meeting that the Nazis staged between 1923 and 1938). We rendered the word *Rally* as *miting național* (the attribute *național* was added to render the necessary amount of cultural information, without however using the place name *Nürnberg*). R.P. failed to (recognize and) translate the proper name *Rhineland*, which is another case of failure to capture cultural and historical information; the noun *Rhineland* is merely the English counterpart of the Romanian noun *Renania* or *regiunea renan* (the

region that Hitler reoccupied in 1937, in spite of the terms of the Versailles Treaty).

**4. Cases of stylistic inadequacy:** From the point of view of stylistic equivalence, R.P.'s translation (*Dând cu ochii de mine* – compare with the original text: *On seeing my person*) fails to observe the standards of formal, educated and rather affected verbal expression that characterize Stevens (and also underlie his *narrative voice*); hence, we considered that the best Romanian rendition (i.e. one in keeping with Stevens's classy appearance and *persona*) should include neologisms, and also avoid directly designating *him*; consequently, we chose to translate it as *Observându-mi prezența*, a variant that comes much closer to the style and register quality of the original text. The verb *to take a break* (in "I really think you should *take a break*") lends itself to a more natural-sounding and stylistically adequate rendition if we use a phrase like "a(- i) lua liber / concediu" (etc.). instead of R.P.'s "Z u c ar trebui s te odihne ti pu in". In rendering the sentence "As so often occurs in these situations, *I had become blind to the obvious*", R.P. used an expression that comes very close to the idea of the original text, but he unfortunately overdid it, by an excess of (traditional) idiomaticity (i.e. *nu am v zut p durea din pricina copacilor*), which is far from matching the type of speech of the character in the original text. We think the Romanian equivalence has to be more neutral in tone, e.g. *îmi sc pase evidența*. In translating "This 'staff' he referred to was, of course, *nothing more than the skeleton team of six* kept on by Lord Darlington's relatives"), we preferred to render the phrase *skeleton team of six* through *un grup de baz , format din ase persoane*, instead of *un nucleu de ase*, which sounds like a strangely 'technical' expression. R.P.'s rendition of the excerpt "What I saw was *principally field upon field rolling off into the far distance*", as "Ce am v zut mai întâi au fost mai multe p uni învecinate pierzându-se în dep rtare" primarily and visibly lacks literariness, mainly in view of the original – so we chose to render it as "Am v zut cu prec dere câmpuri, urmate de alte câmpuri, unduindu-se pân se pierdeau în zare". When translating *many a time* merely as *de multe ori* ("îmi amintesc c de multe ori am fost nevoit..."), R.P. missed a rather important stylistic nuance, given that the English phrase is used in literary contexts. Thus, we chose to translate it as *de nenum rate ori*. The excerpt "*It does us great discredit to treat a defeated foe like this*" should be rendered as "*Nu ne face deloc cinste s ne purt m astfel cu un adversar înfrânt*", rather than "*E mai mare ru inea s tratezi un adversar învins în felul sta*" (R.P.). The latter Romanian variant implies an emotional tinge, which represents a stylistic gain on the original. Furthermore, a phrase like *E mai mare ru inea s ...* tends to express an emotional hint very close to passionate rebuke. R.P.'s rendition of the sentence "It is, I believe, a quality that *will mark out* the English landscape to any objective observer" – as "Cred c este o însu ire care va indica oric rui observator obiectiv") – is rather awkward in terms of style and register, while also missing a grammatical marker (the aspect auxiliary verb *will*), which is used in a frequentative/habitual sense (www.yourdictionary.com: "used to express habit or customary practice: they *will* talk shop for hours on end"). We opted for the adverb *întotdeauna*: "Este, sunt convins, o însu ire care *distinge întotdeauna* / f r gre peisajul englezesc, în ochii oric rui privitor obiectiv...". When translating "Whatever do you mean, Mr Stevens?" simply as "Ce vre i s spune i, domnule Stevens?", R.P. fails to render the overtone of rhetorical emphasis evinced by the interrogative pronoun *whatever*, which we tried to make

up for by using a stylistic-rhetorical *dar*: “Dar ce vre i s spune i, domnule Stevens?” The rendition of “The letter does not make specific *the details* of the matter, *as one would hardly expect it to do...*” as “(...) *i nici nu te-ai a tepta s o fac*” seems too literal, so we considered it more appropriate to translate the original sentence as “Scrisoarea nu l mure te *detaliile* acestei probleme, *i nici n-ai avea cum s te aștepti la asta...*” Translating the English intensifying expression “But this small episode is *as good an illustration as any of...*” by “*o ilustrare la fel de bună ca oricare alta*” is marred by too much literality, so we preferred the Romanian superlative variant “Îns acest episod neînsemnat *ilustrează cât se poate de bine...*”. Similarly, translating the phrase *uttering witticisms* as *lansării unor vorbe de duh* does not sound too natural; we preferred to say “pericolele care te pândesc când *emiți* vorbe de duh”.

**5. Inadequate use of the Romanian language:** The sentence “*This was not the first time my employer had raised such a question*” contains a few censurable semantic, usage and stylistic nuances, in R.P.’s translation (*Nu era prima oară că st pânul meu ridică această problemă*): firstly, Romanians do not usually say *prima oară* *că*, but rather *prima oară când*; secondly, the verb *a ridica* collocating with the direct object *problemă* implies the idea of “generating (a problem)”, not “invoking (a question)” – so we preferred the variant *puneă această problemă*. Translating the sentence “But let me make it immediately clear – *what I mean by this*; what I mean to say is that [...]”, R.P. tries to avoid repeating the verb *to mean* (and his Romanian counterparts “*a vrea să spun / să zică*”), thus producing an ambiguous, clumsy structure: *să-mi l muresc chiar acum tâlcul vorbelor*. We chose to say: “Îns permiteți-mi să *clarific* chiar acum în ce sens *spun* asta. Ceea ce vreau să zică este că [...]”. The expression “*având drept rezultat existența unor angajați care au nepermis de mult timp liber la dispoziție*” sounds rather odd in Romanian (aiming to render Eng. “*employees having an unhealthy amount of time*”), so we preferred to translate that sequence as “*faptul că angajații au la dispoziție anormal de mult timp liber*”. R.P.’s translation of the excerpt “[I] expended a significant amount of thought to [...]” as: “*am depus mult muncă de gândire pentru a mă asigura că [...]*” is too literal, and also debatable from a stylistic angle. So we chose to translate it as “*am depus un efort însemnat meditănd asupra ideii că [...]*”; also, we rendered “*ensuring that [...]*” by “*trebuia făcut tot posibilul ca [...]*”. R.P.’s version in translating the excerpt “*in his attempt to fulfill the role expected of him by his customers*” (i.e. “*în încercarea de a-și îndeplini rolul conform așteptărilor*”) is too literal and un-Romanian, because the phrase *în încercarea de a...* is obviously a calque based on the English phrase *in an attempt to*, although it tends to be frequently used by relatively recent press and media writing in Romania. Our rendition preferred the verb *a se strădui* (*să*). R.P. rendition of the sentence “I have heard people describe the moment, when setting sail in a ship, *when one finally loses sight of the land*” was done rather artificially, even automatically: “I-am auzit pe unii oameni descriind momentul în care, după ce vasul a întins pânzele, *pânza dispărea într-un târziu din vedere*”. We preferred the variant “Am auzit pe unii oameni descriind clipa în care, după ce corabia și-a întins pânzele, *în cele din urmă nu mai vezi deloc țărâmul*”. The association of *îns* and *totuși* is commonly believed to be non-standard in Romanian, as it conveys a sense of redundancy: “*îns totuși* nu neglijașem să strecor „*toleranță*” oriunde era cu puțin ” (translating the original “*but I had nevertheless not been neglectful to incorporate ‘margins’ wherever possible*”). We

chose to say “*de i* nu trecusem cu vederea s adaug astfel de „*marje*” oriunde era cu putin ”. R.P.’s rendering the sentence “It was *this realization*, along with the fact that he was in M. Dupont’s room” as “*Con timentizarea acestui lucru*, precum i faptul c dânsul se afla în camera lui Monsieur Dupont” admittedly sounds rather artificial. We preferred to translate it as: “*Faptul c mi-am dat seama de acest lucru*, dar i c se afla în camera lui Monsieur Dupont”. The set phrase (in fact, a proper name equivalent) (*American/US*) *administration* is, by way of tradition, rendered into Romanian as *guvernul american* or *conducerea Statelor Unite*. Using instead *administra ia american* / *Administra ia american* (a phrase that the Romanian media have long been using) seems to be quite erroneous in this context (“the attitude of the present *American administration*”).

**6. Conclusions:** As a result of our modest analysis of, and commentary on R.P.’s Romanian translation of Kazuo Ishiguro’s *The Remains of the Day*, we can say that a good (i.e. essentially faithful) translation of a book can illuminate some rather unspectacular, yet very valuable aspects of translation studies. It is a fact that R.P.’s translation was good overall (as a matter of fact, the author is a *certified* writer), managing to observe stylistic adequacy, provide an insight into the characters’ speech and personality, as well as a sense of the general propensities of the author’s personal style (or narrative voice). Actually, most of the translated text could be quoted for appropriacy and stylistic virtuosity. However, it was sad to find a number of mistakes, some of which were due to superficiality in tackling some of the (rather common) challenges of English vocabulary, grammar, usage, style and general cultural information, and some other were due to mere lack of alertness or patience in negotiating various pitfalls and (more or less subtle) nuances of English – which are as many “flies in the ointment”, as one could say... The final conclusion could be that the right balance should be kept with regard to *domesticating* and *foreignizing* the translated text – mainly in point of (linguistic) intelligibility and cultural (as well as literary) identity.

A few words ought to be said about the efforts devoted to the “domestication” of the original text, through the filter (i.e. the commonsensical approach) of the translators’ own linguistic and literary competence and cultural affiliation. We personally knew the (quite unbelievable) case of a translator who “practiced and polished” her *Romanian* language capabilities and skills, by reading, in keeping with an *educated guess* (somewhat chronologically and empirically, to be frank), whole chapters from Nicolae Filimon – though, in our opinion Duiliu Zamfirescu or Alexandru Vlahu would have been a better choice – before embarking on a translation from a 19<sup>th</sup> century Spanish author (i.e. Galdós)... What she was earnestly seeking was the certification, or the confirmation of her own sense of language and linguistic usage – a (translatorial and cultural) skill that (a lot of translators believe) has to be *practiced and refreshed*. By “brushing up” her literary Romanian, she wanted to have a corroboration of her own mental “19<sup>th</sup>-century idiom”, shifted into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. So, she was breaking the ground for getting both a yardstick and a model usable in her prospective translation activity. Such endeavours can actually be seen as the manifestation of a type of identity, both linguistic and cultural, of the real existence of a language (rather than postulating or imposing a construct, a concept, a sort of “artistic counterfeiting” of reality – as one might ultimately consider the above-mentioned strategy of *foreignization* –, widely perceived as tolerant and globalizing). The scruples of this kind do not – we believe – boil down to a mere

“competition” between the synchronic and diachronic planes: in other words, if a translator does not (over)use neologisms, or if he/she tries to also use more or less “vernacular” or “traditional” expressions, that does not necessarily mean they are opaque to “synchronicity”, i.e. they are against novelty...

Similarly, we consider that *standardization* is, in this context, at the very heart of the (translators’ and readers’) awareness of this “linguistic spirit”, essentially by means of a set of rules, standards, norms and regularities which represent as many (minimal) standards of linguistic expression itself – rather than of an invented / prefabricated / engineered kind of expression or lingo, a (would-be) idiom, usually labelled as *translatese*. Such standards are basically acting as the matrix of a genuine, demonstrably historical and cultural experience. It would be quite risky to let the free course of creative imagination, in the field of both literature and literary translation, lead to the concoction of an entirely new type of expression or lingo... Whom would such an idiom or *language* belong to, in the last analysis? We should also add that some further research in this area, involving other more or less recent translations from English and American authors (e.g. Hardy’s *Tess of the d’Urbervilles*, Melville’s *Moby Dick*, Salinger’s *The Catcher in the Rye*), would be a desirable direction in Anglo-Romanian linguistic and translatorial studies.

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## LE CRÉDO DE L'ART DE LA TRADUCTION D'ARCHAG TCHOBANIAN

Astghik MARGARYAN\*

«Les écrivains font la littérature nationale et  
les traducteurs font la littérature universelle.»

José Saramago

***Abstract:** The topic of this article is literary translation. It discusses the issue of equivalence in translation, with specific focus on translations of the works of Armenian writers conducted by Archag Tchobanian-writer, politician, translator and auto translator who has dedicated his life to the development and promotion of Armenian culture worldwide, especially in francophone societies. Having the privilege to master French as his mother tongue Archag Tchobanian, possessing strong analytical and writing skills, managed to communicate the genius of Armenian literature to the French reader.*

***Keywords:** development, promotion, Armenian culture.*

Traducteur, publiciste, poète, essayiste, critique littéraire, homme politique arménien, Archag Tchobanian consacre toute sa vie à la propagation de la culture, de la littérature et de l'art arméniens dans le monde francophone. Grand est son rôle dans le développement de la culture française, le mouvement arménophile, la propagation de la littérature et de la culture arméniennes, en France. Et c'est pour ces activités menées à la fin du XIX<sup>ème</sup> et au début du XX<sup>ème</sup> siècle qu'en 1924 le gouvernement français l'a récompensé de la médaille de la Légion d'honneur. Ses activités sont hautement appréciées aussi en Roumanie, et il est également décoré d'une médaille par le gouvernement roumain.

Archag Tchobanian s'était proposé la tâche suivante: transmettre au lecteur francophone les perles du patrimoine littéraire arménien en lui offrant régulièrement des quatrains, des contes, des chants populaires, des poèmes anciens, ainsi que ceux de son époque au public francophone, des monuments de la littérature arménienne du Moyen-Âge au XX<sup>ème</sup> siècle.

Ayant le privilège de maîtriser le français au niveau de sa langue maternelle, Archag Tchobanian, qui possédait l'esprit analytique ainsi que les qualités d'écriture, a réussi à transmettre au lecteur francophone le génie de la littérature arménienne, accomplissant, ainsi comme il le dit dans son poème «L'ange», la mission que le Dieu lui avait confiée.

À moi le Seigneur a confié les plus nobles missions:  
Renouveler la vie par des chants enflammés...<sup>1</sup>

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\* Université des Langues et des Sciences sociales d'État V. Briousov d'Erevan, [astghik.margaryan90@gmail.com](mailto:astghik.margaryan90@gmail.com)

<sup>1</sup> Tchobanian Ar., L'ange, Poèmes, Paris, Société du Mercure de France. p. 47.



Les œuvres qu'il a traduites en un excellent français ont été réunies pendant de longs intervalles et sous des ciels divers; les premières ont été écrites à Constantinople avant 1894, les autres à Paris, où les événements tragiques, qui se sont abattus sur la nation arménienne ont fait du poète un exilé. Archag Tchobanian a consacré une part considérable de sa vie à la découverte et à la classification des chants folkloriques médiévaux dans les monastères arméniens et dans les bibliothèques de différents pays en les présentant au peuple arménien et plus tard aux lecteurs étrangers.

Voilà ce que le célèbre écrivain belge Emile Verharne écrit dans la Lettre-préface du recueil *La Vie et le Rêve*:

«Votre œuvre est toute de sensibilité et d'imagination, mon cher poète, et votre pays respire en vous. Vous avez traduit maint chant populaire et maint poème que le peuple arménien a sacré à force de les redire en des jours tragiques. Vous en savez l'angoisse et le désespoir tout comme vous n'ignorez pas la douceur de certains lieds d'amour. Il n'est rien de votre race que vous n'avez pas fait vôtre, si bien qu'on entend un peuple entier parler, aimer, souffrir, agoniser, mais sans jamais mourir»<sup>1</sup>.

La traduction est intimement liée à la culture écrite et lettrée. C'est un art de l'écriture, et elle est aussi ancienne que l'écriture. Dans l'Antiquité grecque et romaine, on s'occupait de traduction, et l'importance des échanges économiques et culturels demandait l'intervention de traducteurs. À Rome, tout homme instruit devait savoir traduire! Mais c'est vraiment avec la conversion de l'Occident au christianisme que la traduction deviendra un enjeu identitaire.

Traduire c'est d'abord et avant tout lire et comprendre, lire correctement avec l'œil de l'exégète averti, avec l'oreille de l'interprète musical, avec la sensibilité déployée de l'artiste dont les cinq sens sont aux aguets. C'est aussi lire avec l'œil multiple de la mouche, un œil qui capte toutes les lectures possibles dans un souci de fidélité polysémique, la seule qui soit valable<sup>2</sup>.

Le but de la traduction c'est de passer un texte rédigé dans une langue («texte source» ou «texte de départ») dans une autre langue («texte d'arrivée», «texte cible» ou «texte de traduction») en mettant ainsi en relation au moins deux langues et deux cultures, parfois de la même, parfois de différentes époques. Le traducteur agit donc comme un médiateur entre les usagers de la langue source et ceux de la langue cible. Il ne s'agit alors pas simplement de traduire des mots mais également des concepts, souvent propres à une civilisation possédant sa propre façon de penser. Et ceux-ci peuvent s'avérer très difficiles à traduire. En effet, lors de la traduction de ces derniers, le traducteur doit faire en sorte de préserver l'identité du terme culturel tout en étant conscient de ne pas pouvoir intégrer l'ensemble du concept dans sa spécificité.

À la différence de la traduction spécialisée, appelée traduction technique qui concerne tout domaine d'activité spécifique scientifique, technique, médicale, juridique, audiovisuelle, informatique, etc. la traduction littéraire, celle de textes de fiction (romans, nouvelles, récits), de poésie, de théâtre, d'essais ou encore de sciences humaines (philosophie, psychologie, psychanalyse, sociologie, musicologie, histoire, anthropologie, sciences sociales, art en général, etc.) est une

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<sup>1</sup>. Tchobanian Ar., *La Vie et le Rêve*, Paris, Société du Mercure de France, p.V.

<sup>2</sup>. Wuilmart F., (2000), *Traduire c'est lire, Ecrire et Traduire*, Editions Luc Pire, Bruxelles.

des tâches les plus recherchées, les plus raffinées, les plus aristocratiques, les plus exigeantes pour un traducteur.

La première traduction arménienne est attestée en 405, l'année de la création de l'alphabet arménien par Mesrop Machtots, c'est la traduction de la Bible.

La première traduction proprement «littéraire» française date de 1370 et c'est la traduction des *Œuvres* d'Aristote, faite par N. d'Oresme, précédée d'une préface. Cette traduction est faite selon un programme dans lequel la lisibilité, c'est-à-dire, la clarté et l'élégance du texte d'arrivée, doivent en être les qualités principales<sup>1</sup>.

Le but final du traducteur est de rendre le contenu sémantique du texte d'origine, rester fidèle aux jeux polysémiques propres aux écrits littéraires, étant donné le fait que derrière chaque phrase, chaque mot il y a toujours des couches de sens que l'écrivain cherche à transmettre de façon subtile, et que le bon traducteur tient à passer aux lecteurs le style propre à l'auteur, le rythme, la métrique et la mélodie du texte particulièrement sensible en poésie, le défi des sonorités d'un texte littéraire (assonances, allitérations, asyndète, etc.). La traduction littéraire est considérée comme une énonciation dans une autre langue (ou langue cible) de ce qui a été énoncé dans une langue (la langue source), en conservant les équivalences sémantiques et stylistiques.<sup>2</sup>

Le grand principe de la traduction littéraire est le respect du texte: pas d'omissions, pas d'ajouts. Si le texte d'arrivée contient les mêmes éléments référentiels, culturels et multisémantiques que le texte de départ, on pourrait constater qu'une création égale au texte-source est réussie.

Pendant la traduction, le traducteur rencontre des mots qui, sans qu'ils se distinguent dans l'original, sont facilement traduisibles dans un autre langage par les moyens usuels: certains de ces mots passent dans le texte de la traduction sans changement de forme, ils sont transcrits, d'autres conservent partiellement leur structure morphologique ou phonique, d'autres encore sont substitués par des unités lexicales d'une valeur totalement autre. Parmi ces derniers, on peut mentionner la présence des dénominations d'éléments reflétant la vie quotidienne, l'histoire, la culture etc. d'un peuple ou d'une communauté linguistique différents qui n'existent pas ailleurs. Ce sont ces mots-là qui ont reçu le nom de «realia».

Le mot «realia» a son origine du Latin, non pas le langage parlé par les Romains, mais bien celui utilisé par les érudits du Moyen-Âge dans plusieurs pays Européens et qui était le langage de la science, de la recherche, de la philosophie. Puisqu'en Latin le nominatif pluriel neutre d'un adjectif se transforme en un nom, «realia» signifie «les vraies choses», à l'opposé de mots qui sont considérés n'être ni «choses» ni «réels».

Les realia sont utilisés pour désigner une réalité particulière à telle ou telle culture, faire référence aux concepts correspondant à une culture source donnée, ce qui relève du concret, local par opposition à l'abstrait. Ce phénomène résulte du fait que les cultures des différentes nations construisent la réalité de façon

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<sup>1</sup> Oseki-Dépré In., (2003), Théories et pratiques de la traduction littéraire en France, Le français aujourd'hui, (n 142), <https://www.cairn.info/revue-le-francais-aujourd-hui-2003-3-page-5.htm>.

<sup>2</sup> Dictionnaire de français LAROUSSE <http://www.larousse.fr/dictionnaires/francais/traduction/78911#UeZbbe6v7ZsEIVOH.99>.

différente. Selon Ritva Leppihalme (Université de Helsinki), ce sont des «éléments lexicaux (mots ou phrases) qui se réfèrent au monde «en dehors du langage».<sup>1</sup>

S. Florin, traducteur bulgare, définit les *realia* comme des mots et des combinaisons de mots qui recouvrent les objets et les concepts caractéristiques de la façon de vivre, de la culture, du développement social et historique d'une nation étrangère. Ils expriment une nuance locale ou historique et n'ont donc pas d'équivalent exact dans les autres langues. Le terme *realia* sousentend aussi des problèmes liés à la culture, objets culturellement spécifiques, références extralinguistiques culturelles ou références culturellement spécifiques.<sup>2</sup>

Pendant la traduction, le traducteur rapproche deux langues et deux cultures différentes. Une différence importante entre deux cultures peut être le concept qu'on a du monde. Wilhelm von Humboldt a déjà constaté au XVIII<sup>ème</sup> siècle que la langue crée en fait une certaine perspective entre le regard et ce qu'on voit. Le concept qu'on a du monde est donc dans un sens prédéterminé par la langue. Ceci a pour conséquence que les gens ne voient pas ce qu'ils ne savent pas nommer, donc ils distinguent seulement ce qui est connu dans leur langue. De cette façon, le concept du monde diffère d'une culture à l'autre. Le problème qui surgit, c'est la difficulté de traduire ces différents concepts du monde. Le problème est encore plus grand dans le cas où il faut traduire un mot qui est inconnu dans la langue cible.<sup>3</sup>

Étant donné le fait qu'ils représentent des éléments de la couleur locale et historique, les *realia* se rencontrent surtout dans les textes scientifiques descriptifs ainsi que comme des dénominations d'objets décrits ou comme des termes purs.

La traduction de la poésie apparaît comme un moyen de dégager non seulement une méthode qui permettrait d'effectuer des créations poétiques mais également d'identifier les caractéristiques de la poésie. Archag Tchobanian n'admet pas la traduction littérale. Il trouve que lors de la traduction d'une langue à l'autre il est indispensable de garder, de respecter l'originalité, les idées, le style et les nuances verbales ainsi que les expressions figurées de l'auteur. L'examen, l'analyse de nombre de traductions lui ont permis de constater que parfois le traducteur concentre son attention sur la forme de la traduction en essayant de présenter tous les éléments tels qu'ils sont dans la version originale en ignorant les particularités conceptuelles principales du texte source. Souhaitant présenter le texte d'une belle manière le traducteur s'éloigne parfois du texte. Dans ce cas la traduction est échouée. Selon lui, pendant la traduction des œuvres populaires les changements sont autant inéluctables que lors de l'élaboration des œuvres folkloriques inédites. Il est à noter qu'Archag Tchobanian montre une approche souple à l'égard de la traduction. Il attache une grande importance à la nature et à la qualité de l'œuvre. Ici nous voudrions souligner que les œuvres traduites par

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<sup>1</sup> Leppihalme R. (2001), «Translation strategies for *realia*», dans Kukkonen, P. & Hartama-Heinonen, R. (eds.), *Mission, Vision, Strategies, and Values: A Celebration of Translator Training and Translation Studies in Kouvola*, Helsinki: Helsinki University Press, p. 139–148.

<sup>2</sup> Vlahov S., Florin S., *Neperovodimoe v perevode. Realii*, in *Masterstvo perevoda*, n. 6, 1969, M. *Sovetskij pisatel'*, 1970, p. 432-456.

<sup>3</sup> Wendy van Mourik, Comment parler de «*corrida*» aux Pays-Bas? <http://www.thesis.net/corrida/corrida.htm#ftn45>.

Archag Tchobanian que nous avons choisies à étudier appartiennent surtout au Moyen Âge.

Dans cette partie de notre travail nous procédons à l'analyse de la traduction d'une des poésies de Nahapet kouchak, un poète du XVI<sup>ème</sup> siècle à l'origine des trouvères arméniens (les achours ou achoughs).

Ճրագ, երանի կտամ քեզ,  
Իմ յարի առջեւը կվառվես,  
Չէ որ դու զվարթ ես, ուրախ,  
Երեսն ես նրա միշտ տեսնում,  
Ճրագ, թե քեզ ականջ լիներ,  
Գանգատներս կասեի քեզ,  
Գնայիր յարիս պատմեիր,  
Խոռով է, հաշտվեր ինձ հետ:

Lampe, je t'envie, tu brûles  
devant mon aimée  
Grand est ton Bonheur,  
tu peux contempler son visage  
Lampe tu devrais avoir des oreilles  
pour entendre mes plaintes  
Tu les transmettrais a mon aimée;  
si elle est fachée,  
elle se reconcilierait avec moi.

Comme nous l'avons déjà mentionné, les transformations lors du processus de la traduction sont inévitables. Ces transformations peuvent survenir à des niveaux différents de la langue étant d'ordre grammatical, stylistique et d'ordre lexical.

Dans la poésie que nous avons examinée, Tchobanian a traduit le mot arménien *ճրագ* par le mot *lampe*, un mot, qui, selon nous, étant un équivalent lexicographique ne reflète pas pleinement les sens connotatifs de celui-ci.

Le mot *lampe*, selon le dictionnaire Larousse signifie 1. *Source de rayonnement construite en vue de produire de la lumière visible ou des rayonnements infrarouges ou ultraviolets*; 2. *Appareil d'éclairage constitué par l'ampoule et l'appareillage*; 3. *Partie du luminaire qui produit la lumière*; 4. *Dispositif produisant une flamme*.<sup>1</sup>

Le lexème *ճրագ* outre son sens dénotatif, 1. *նավթով կամ ձեթով լցված անոթ, որի մեջ դրված պատրույզը վառում են, լսմպ կանթեղ*: 2. *Լույսի աղբյուր* comporte aussi un sens *connotatif* qui a non seulement le sens de la «chandelle, veilleuse»<sup>2</sup> mais il désigne quelqu'un, quelque chose qui est très précieux et unique, une étoile brillante, un espoir 3. fig. pl. Աստղեր: 4. fig. *ճանապարհ ցույց տվող մարդ, առաջնորդ*: 5. fig. ծնողների միակ զավակ<sup>3</sup>, surtout dans les expressions հոգու ճրագ, ճրագը մարել, ճրագով ման գալ,

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.larousse.fr/dictionnaires/francais/lampe/46085#lf0XTQq6pro8OVw.99est>.

<sup>2</sup> Aram Barlézizian, (2009), Dictionnaire arménien-français, Erevan, p. 371.

<sup>3</sup> ., (1976) ., p. 948, .

où il est accentué le sens de l'espoir, de la tendresse et de l'amour qui proviennent d'une source inépuisable de la lumière traduite par le mot *ճրագ*.

Dans le fragment suivant

Զէ որ դու՛ զվարթ ես, ուրախ,

Երեսն ես նրա միշտ տեսնում,

(littéralement: *tu es «hilarant» et «heureux», puisque tu la vois toujours*)

Grand est ton Bonheur,

tu peux contempler son visage

Archag Tchobanian a traduit les adjectifs զվարթ «*hilarant*» et ուրախ «*heureux*» par le substantif *Bonheur* et l'adjectif *grand en procédant à la transposition et à la équivalence*.

L'analyse de cette traduction nous permet de relever aussi quelques divergences connotatives: *Երանի տալ estimer qn heureux il* a transformé par un seul verbe *envier*.

Archag Tchobanian a traduit le verbe տեսնել «voir» par le verbe *contempler* en renforçant et accentuant ainsi l'admiration inclus dans le verbe.

Comme nous voyons en utilisant différents procédés de traduction, telles que la transposition, la modulation, l'équivalence et l'adaptation, Archag Tchobanian a essayé de rapporter à la traduction une sonorité française. Mais, comme le disait son contemporain Emile Verharne, dans ses traductions Archag Tchobanian a cessé d'être lui-même pour devenir «l'âme humaine d'une contrée». Il cherchait à mettre son âme dans ses traductions, et le plus grand éloge qu'on ait pu lui faire c'est de lui dire qu'à travers ces traductions on sentait toujours les traces de sa race, du peuple arménien, de ses traditions.

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## **TRADUIRE LES RÉFÉRENCES CULTURELLES : ENTRE FIDÉLITÉ ET TRAHISON**

**Carmen MUNTEANU\***

***Abstract:** This article focuses on theoretical and practical aspects of the translation of cultural references. The theoretical part of the study is based on the theory of translation regarding the fidelity and the betrayal in translation. The practical part provides us with the analysis of some examples from Romanian and French literature.*

***Keywords:** translation, culture, cultural references.*

Le traducteur en tant que négociateur interculturel ne veut pas surprendre son public avec des termes incompréhensibles. Il aboutit à des modifications flagrantes, telles que : « roumaniser » les noms propres, supprimer les détails, atténuer la signification et ajouter des périphrases explicatives. Pourtant, il peut se tromper en exagérant avec tous ces changements. Nous considérons que le traducteur est porteur d'un masque, mais il s'agit d'un masque qui peut tromper, en faisant ainsi référence à la boutade italienne « traduttore, traditore ». C'est pour cela que nous parlons assez souvent d'un traducteur comme d'un « traître » parce qu'il est le seul responsable de la fidélité parfaite qui doit exister entre les deux langues pendant l'acte de traduction.

La « fidélité » représente la conviction que l'acte de traduction est toujours possible à condition que le texte source soit interprété avec une complicité passionnée. Elle est aussi l'engagement à identifier ce que représente pour nous le sens profond du texte. En ce qui concerne les outils du traducteur, d'un côté, il y a les dictionnaires et les encyclopédies et d'autre côté, c'est la faculté de s'interroger sans cesse. Ajoutons aussi l'opinion de Valéry Larbaud sur les outils du traducteur. Il soutient que le plus important instrument dans le processus traductif est « la balance des mots ». Parmi les autres outils de traduction, il faut noter « les Dictionnaire unilingues, véritables *livres consulaires* que nous devrions consulter d'abord et sans cesse ».<sup>1</sup>

Pendant le processus de traduction, le traducteur doit opter pour l'une des solutions suivantes :

- **reproduire la forme** (la syntaxe et le lexique) ou **reproduire le contenu sémantique du texte original** (les idées du TO) ;
- **conserver le style original** ou **adopter un style nouveau** (par exemple, traduire une poésie en vers ou en prose) ;
- **préserver la dimension historique du style de l'œuvre originale** ou **choisir une forme nouvelle** (par exemple, traduire Dante en anglais médiéval ou en anglais moderne) ;
- **produire un texte original** dans la langue cible ou **produire un texte ayant le statut de traduction** ;

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\* Collège Technique « Edmond Nicolau » de Foc ani, [munteanu.carmen2010@yahoo.com](mailto:munteanu.carmen2010@yahoo.com)

<sup>1</sup> Mugura Constantinescu, *Pratique de la traduction*, Suceava, Editura Universit ii din Suceava, 2002, *op. cit.* p. 162

- **ajouter / omettre** des termes / des expressions ou **transférer en totalité** le texte de la langue source dans la langue cible ;

**Il faut être fidèle au TS**, c'est-à-dire reproduire la forme, le style, le contenu sémantique du TS dans le TC. Il faut nous donner l'impression que le texte d'arrivée est un texte original et non pas une traduction. Après avoir opté pour la variante la plus appropriée, le traducteur doit choisir la méthode de traduction.

Toute traduction entraîne **des pertes et des gains** et le traducteur doit résoudre ce problème par des termes qui peuvent « équilibrer » et « compenser » la situation. Par exemple, lorsque nous devons sacrifier les connotations d'une telle forme linguistique par un équivalent potentiel dans la langue cible, nous devons les « regagner » dans l'unité équivalente cible afin de ne pas détruire le sens général du texte. Le concept **d'entropie** apparaît sous la théorie d'une **perte du contenu de la situation référentielle**. Le choix du traducteur concerne la finalité de la traduction, le lecteur du système linguistique cible et le niveau de culture de la langue d'arrivée. Un autre piège dans l'acte de traduction s'actualise par un texte de la langue cible plus long que celui du texte de départ et ce fait renvoie à la tentation de « trop traduire ». Dans cette situation, le traducteur peut se tromper en exagérant avec son désir d'expliciter un mot ou une expression qui ne sont pas perceptibles même pour le lecteur de la langue source. Il s'agit peut-être d'une situation dans laquelle l'auteur cultive l'ambiguïté dans son œuvre et c'est seulement après avoir bien pesé tous les détails et les circonstances que le traducteur doit adopter la solution la plus appropriée.

Dans son ouvrage, *Qu'est-ce que traduire ?*, Marc de Launay soutient qu'une traduction ne reproduit jamais le texte original dans toutes les dimensions qu'il a eues pour le public initial. Selon lui, le travail même de la traduction vise une destruction du TS : « la combinaison singulière des deux dynamiques, sémantique et sémiotique, est défaite, autrement dit, l'essentiel de ce qui constituait l'originalité de l'original vole en éclats »<sup>1</sup>.

L'histoire de la traduction tourne autour du couple « fidélité / trahison » et « respect / irrespect » envers le texte à traduire qui vient avec toute sa spécificité d'une autre langue-culture. Dans cette situation, nous parlons du problème de l'hospitalité de la langue d'arrivée et du dialogue entre la langue-culture base et la langue-culture cible. Il est à remarquer le fait que la fidélité au sens s'oppose à la fidélité à la lettre, c'est-à-dire que la fidélité au sens est infidèle à la lettre.

La fidélité du traducteur doit être maximale dans le cas d'un texte objectif tandis que pour un texte littéraire, la fidélité à la lettre représente un vrai échec dans le processus traductif. La « fidélité » dont nous parlons est presque impossible parce qu'une langue a sa propre structure lexicale et phrastique et chaque langue découpe sa réalité environnante d'une manière différente.

Une autre distinction qui est signalée par Marianne Lederer est celle qu'une traduction linguistique vise un simple transcodage de mot-à-mot tandis que la traduction interprétative suppose l'interprétation du sens et elle fait appel le plus souvent à la pratique de l'équivalence. Il faut faire aussi une distinction entre la traduction littérale suivant le principe de la fidélité au mot (la traduction mot-à-mot) et la traduction littéraire visant la fidélité au sens (la traduction libre). Ainsi,

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<sup>1</sup> Marc de Launay, *Qu'est-ce que traduire ?*, Paris, Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 2006, p. 40.



pouvons-nous parler de la littéralité et la littéarité, c'est-à-dire de la fidélité à la lettre et de la fidélité à l'esprit.

« La traduction libre » est proche de l'adaptation, stratégie de traduction qui suppose des substitutions, des omissions et des ajouts. Dans certains cas, cette stratégie de traduction est très proche de la trahison tout en justifiant le plus souvent le dicton italien « traduttore, traditore » qui a été engendré par la dichotomie « fidélité vs. liberté » dans l'acte de traduction. Cette dichotomie dont nous parlons situe le traducteur sur une double position dans la pratique du traduire. « Le traducteur – traduttore » est celui qui rend le contenu informationnel d'une langue vers une autre tandis que « le traducteur – traditore » est celui qui « trahit » le texte de départ afin de le rendre compréhensible au public cible, en ajoutant des renseignements nouveaux. Pour interpréter un texte, il faut le comprendre. Dan Sperber envisage deux étapes dans la compréhension d'un texte. « La première consisterait à comprendre la langue du texte, la seconde à *inférer* le sens à l'aide des connaissances extralinguistiques »<sup>1</sup>. Le modèle interprétatif de Lederer rejette la pratique de la traduction linguistique parce qu'il est possible que la dégradation d'une langue cible puisse engendrer une idée fautive du style de la langue de départ.

Selon l'opinion d'Irina Mavrodin, l'expérience d'un traducteur est semblable à celle d'un pianiste qui interprète un morceau musical en faisant de son mieux afin d'en lui donner la vie pour son auditeur. À côté du fait qu'il ressemble à un pianiste, le traducteur est « déchiré entre **servitude et liberté**, entre **fidélité et trahison**, il est comparable également à un sculpteur qui modèle le texte traduit comme on pétrit et on repétrit une pâte, longuement, pour en obtenir la forme désirée »<sup>2</sup>. Si le système linguistique et culturel de la langue d'arrivée est dépourvu des termes équivalents, le traducteur a la tâche de les insérer dans la langue cible, de leur offrir un vêtement linguistique qui leur convient, en contribuant de cette manière à l'enrichissement des formes linguistiques si nécessaires pour un dialogue interculturel. Il est évident que les problèmes soulevés dans l'acte de traduction sont nombreux et les solutions diverses. Ces dernières essaient de mieux se prêter au contexte culturel de la langue d'arrivée.

Le concept de « fidélité » a toujours engendré des questions telles que : « Être fidèle au texte de départ ? » ou « Devenir fidèle au texte d'arrivée ? ». De cette double perspective, nous pensons que **la fidélité doit être double**. D'un côté, le traducteur doit respecter la langue-culture de départ, et d'autre côté, il doit devenir fidèle à la langue culture réceptrice. Pourtant, quelle attitude doit adopter ce médiateur interculturel qui est le traducteur ? Être fidèle au texte de départ ou être fidèle au texte d'arrivée ? Le traducteur qui traduit pour le public cible se trouve dans la situation de trahir le texte source et de préférer son lecteur, de lui donner un texte « arrangé ». Nous verrons dans les chapitres suivantes que les comportements des traducteurs sont hétérogènes lors d'une traduction littéraire.

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<sup>1</sup> Sperber, D. Et Wilson, D. (1986): *Relevance, Communication and Cognition*, Basil Blackwell, Londres, traduction française par Gerschenfeld, A. Et Sperber, D. (1989): *La pertinence – communication et cognition*, Les Editions de Minuit *apud* Marianne Lederer, *La traduction aujourd'hui*, p. 25.

<sup>2</sup> Mugura Constantinescu, *Pratique de la traduction*, Suceava, Editura Universit ii din Suceava, 2002, p. 152: « Quoique *peine* et travail minutieux qui suppose une patience et une modestie, la traduction est source de *joie* et de *jubilation*. »

C'est pour cela que nous pensons qu'il n'y pas une règle stricte que le traducteur doit respecter.

Il est évident que tout traducteur doit penser à son lecteur ou à la **lisibilité du texte traduit**. Effacer la trace étrangère d'un texte afin de faciliter sa lecture par le public cible, n'aboutit qu'à le fausser et le déformer. En définitive, le traducteur risquera de tromper le public qu'il prétend servir. Il est vrai que dans tout processus traductif, nous insistons sur **la fidélité et l'exactitude**. Ces deux mots fondamentaux portent sur l'expérience de la traduction. Dans son domaine, le traducteur **conserve son esprit de fidélité et d'exactitude**. De là vient sa **passion éthique**. L'éthique de la traduction se fonde sur l'identification et la reconnaissance de l'Autre en tant qu'Autre.

La tâche d'un traducteur est apparemment simple, parce qu'à première vue, il cherche un sens et une tonalité du texte à traduire, mais en fait, il s'agit d'un travail infatigable et jamais fini de sa part. D'un texte à l'autre, d'un auteur à l'autre, son travail est ravageur. Afin de démontrer la « fidélité » dans la pratique du traduire, nous pouvons remarquer un emploi intentionnel de la part du traducteur par rapport à l'emprunt, au calque, au mot acclimatés à la langue d'arrivée dont le but est de rendre perceptible le contenu culturel de la langue source, mais aussi de rendre hommage à son étrangeté. Au respect de l'Etranger qui s'actualise par la fidélité au texte source, on ajoute le respect du futur lecteur cible pour lequel le traducteur est obligé d'éclairer l'obscur du texte original.

Le processus traductif ne suppose pas seulement un contact entre deux langues, mais un rapprochement entre deux cultures différentes (culture source – culture cible). Dans l'exemple suivant, les traducteurs se trouvent devant une expression qui n'est pas perceptible pour le public roumain, mais faute d'un équivalent fonctionnel, ils la traduisent littéralement dans la langue cible :

... *quand les servantes jouent au volant sur le seuil des portes* ... . (Flaubert)

« ... când servitoarele *joac volantul* în fața porții ... . »  
(trad. Botez)

« ... când servitoarele *joac „volanul”* în fața porților... . »  
(trad. Courriol)

« ... când servitoarele *joac volantul* în fața ușilor ... . »  
(trad. D. T. Sarafoff)

En ce qui concerne l'étymologie du terme « volant », nous partons d'une attestation obscure du XIII<sup>ème</sup> siècle qui renvoie à une « aile de moulin à vent ».<sup>1</sup> Après avoir consulté le dictionnaire, nous avons constaté que l'entrée « volant » donnent plusieurs acceptions possibles à prendre en considération, mais notre intérêt porte sur une seule. Etant donné que le contexte nous aide à la compréhension de l'effet original, il est assez facile de se rendre compte qu'il s'agit d'un jeu et non pas d'une roue. Mais, quel type de jeu ? Un jeu qui se joue avec des raquettes et un volant. Ce dernier est un « petit morceau de liège, de bois léger, muni de plumes en couronne, et destiné à être lancé et renvoyé à l'aide d'une

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<sup>1</sup> Alain Rey, *Dictionnaire culturel en langue française*, Paris, Robert, 2005, p. 1989.

raquette. »<sup>1</sup> Par exemple, nous pouvons parler du volant de badminton. La solution adoptée par les trois traducteurs crée un sentiment inconfortable pour le futur lecteur cible parce que la présence d'un mot à caractère étranger appartenant à un espace mal connu et l'absence d'un terme plus familier qui puisse diriger le lecteur vers le déchiffrement textuel renforce ce sentiment. Le lecteur non-avisé n'est pas capable de saisir la signification que voulait faire connaître l'original. Dans cette situation, c'est très difficile pour le traducteur d'expliquer ou d'introduire une phrase explicative à l'intérieur du texte parce que nous considérons que trop de domestication pourrait produire trop d'obscurité. Dans cet exemple, la traduction littérale ne garde pas l'effet original parce que le lecteur roumain ignore l'expression « joac volanul ». La seule qui essaie de rendre perceptible l'effet du texte source, sans trahir l'esprit de l'original, est Florica Courriol Ciodaru qui considère l'emploi du report assorti d'une explicitation de sens dans une note en bas de la page comme la meilleure solution pour guider le destinataire vers le déchiffrement textuel. Elle précise dans sa note qu'il s'agit d'un jeu qui ressemble au badminton, en soutenant la définition que nous avons trouvée dans le dictionnaire culturel. Pour les deux autres versions, le lecteur cultivé sera apte à découvrir tout seul le sens du terme que nous considérons comme culturel. La traduction littérale entraîne une sorte de confusion dans la perception du lecteur roumain parce qu'une telle expression « a juca volanul » (roum.) n'existe pas dans la langue de destination ce qui nous fait croire que l'original est trahi justement par l'absence d'une solution pertinente. Partant de l'idée d'une absence de solution pertinente, nous pouvons soutenir que « traduire » et « retraduire » dans l'espace roumain ne représente pas une chose assez facile.

Un autre type de jeu qui a attiré notre attention pendant la lecture du roman et qui fonctionne aussi comme un vrai référent culturel est le « jeu de bouchon » qui évidemment ne connaît aucun équivalent potentiel en roumain.

Voyons maintenant le texte en français qui comprend ce type de jeu avec ses versions en roumain :

*Quand on était trop fatigué d'être assis, on allait se promener dans les cours ou jouer **une partie de bouchon** dans la grange, puis on revenait à table. (Flaubert)*

« Când erau oboseți de stat pe scaun, mai ie eau s se plimbe prin curte sau s joace **dopul** în ur , i pe urm se întorceau iar la mas . » (trad. Botez)

« Când invitații oboseau de-atâta stat jos, se duceau s se plimbe prin curte sau s joace **”de-a dopul”** în ur , dup care reveneau la mas . » (trad. Courriol)

« Când oboseau de atâta stat, mergeau s se plimbe prin curte sau s joace **dopul** în ur , apoi se întorceau la mas . » (trad. D. T. Sarafoff)

Comme dans l'exemple précédant, nous pouvons observer que lors d'un manque d'équivalent potentiel dans la langue cible, le traducteur fait appel à une traduction littérale de l'unité linguistique en question : *a juca dopul* (roum.). Il s'agit d'un jeu ancien originaire de l'Ouest (Bretagne, Normandie). Au début,

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibidem*

c'était un jeu pour les adultes (jeu d'argent) ayant ses variantes pour les enfants. « Le jeu de bouchon » était appelé aussi « jeu de Galine » ou « jeu de Galoche ». Ces deux termes « galoche » et « galine » désignent la quille dans le dialecte de l'ouest. Ces quilles étaient en bois et les palets pouvaient être des galets. Il y a une hésitation entre la dénomination « jeu de bouchon » et « jeu de palets ». Afin de donner une définition plus simple, sans entrer en détails, nous soutenons le fait qu'il s'agit d'un jeu dont le but est de renverser, à l'aide des disques lourds lancés à la main (« les palets »), un morceau de liège ou de bois (« le bouchon ») sur lequel sont ramassés les enjeux (les pièces de monnaie). Comme nous avons signalé antérieurement l'incertitude concernant la dénomination de ce type de jeu, il est évident que ce jeu s'actualise dans la plupart des noms qui sont attribués, par exemple, en Normandie. Cette variété des noms du jeu peut exister dans la même localité. La dénomination « jeu de bouchon » s'emploie à Bourth, à Serquigny et à Saint-Martin-des-Besaces. Il y a aussi une forme linguistique au féminin, c'est-à-dire « jouer à la bouchonne », mais celle-ci nous la rencontrons à Argences, Bénouville, Caen, Mesnil-Clinchamps. Nous avons précisé la-dessus les accessoires du jeu qui sont : une cible (le bouchon) et les projectiles (les palets). Concernant le terrain, il n'est pas nécessaire un emplacement spécial. Il faut un terrain plat et dur et pour ce qui est de nombre des joueurs, nous ne parlons pas d'un nombre déterminé des joueurs. Selon nos connaissances, un tel jeu n'existe pas dans l'univers culturel roumain et c'est assez difficile pour le traducteur à négocier la solution qui nous semble la plus pertinente. Comme dans l'exemple antérieur, il y a des cas où le traducteur ne peut pas reproduire dans la langue de destination les significations de la langue source. Les deux syntagmes « jouer une partie de bouchon » (fr.) – *a juca dopul* (roum.) ne peuvent pas être considérés comme équivalents parce qu'ils ne renvoient pas au même référent culturel. En France, plus précisément en Normandie et en Bretagne, nous connaissons ce jeu que les Roumains ignorent. Nous voudrions nous arrêter sur le fait que la correspondance culturelle entre les deux textes n'est pas assurée à cause du manque d'un référent culturel potentiel dans la langue cible. En employant la traduction littérale, le traducteur risque de déformer les aspects socioculturels de la langue-culture source. Il crée une fausse impression qu'il n'y a pas de différence civilisationnelles entre les deux peuples. Pourtant, la seule qui soit vraiment consciente de l'impossibilité de rendre perceptible ce type de jeu dans la culture cible est Florica Courriol Ciodaru. Elle utilise les guillemets dans les deux types de jeu : *joac „volanul”* (roum.) et *s joace „de-a dopul”* (roum.). Outre le fait que les guillemets sont utilisés pour mettre en relief une expression ou un terme, dans ce cas, l'emploi des guillemets veut indiquer le fait que l'unité linguistique dont nous parlons n'a pas sa signification littérale ou habituelle. En roumain, ces syntagmes sont dépourvus de sens. Le public roumain a certainement déformé le sens du texte d'origine parce que cet équivalent ne convient pas du tout à la sphère culturelle de la langue cible. Dans la version de Courriol, nous trouvons une explicitation du référent d'origine. Plus précisément, dans la note en bas de la page, elle explique au public roumain, en employant de nouveau les guillemets („jocul cu dopul”) qu'il s'agit d'un jeu qui consiste à abattre les pièces de monnaie ramassées sur le bouchon.

Les maisons des paysans roumains comportent une « prispa » (roum.), par laquelle on entre dans la « tinda » (roum.) pour arriver dans l'« odaia » (roum.). Dans cette situation, la traductrice Iv nescu considère comme nécessaire de garder

le référent culturel roumain pour sa sonorité étrangère et pour la préservation de la couleur locale. Elle se sert des notes en bas de la page pour expliquer le terme culturel au destinataire francophone. Voici le texte en roumain avec sa version française :

Paraschiv st tea pe **prisp** i rânjea. (Marin Preda)  
« Paraschiv assis toujours sur la **prispa** ricanait. (trad. Iv nescu)  
Catrina Moromete se terse pe frunte de sudoare i intr în **tind** . (Marin Preda)  
« Catrina Moromete essuya son front de sueur et entra dans la **tinda**. » (trad. Iv nescu)  
**Odaia** în care st teau era curat , cu p turi de fier cu tablii. (Marin Preda)  
« **La pièce** où ils se trouvaient était propre, avec des lits aux montants de fer. » (trad. Iv nescu)

Dans les deux premiers exemples, la traductrice s'est rendu compte que les culturèmes «tind » et « prisp » posent des problèmes pendant le processus traductif. La difficulté de la traductrice est de trouver un équivalent exact des termes en question. Etant donné que ces mots appartiennent au vocabulaire des paysans roumains, il est impossible d'établir une équivalence fonctionnelle entre les deux langues-cultures. On croit que la plupart des traducteurs emploient ces mots sous forme de report doublé d'une explicitation de sens, parce que les raisons sont évidentes. Premièrement, dans les pays francophones l'architecture des maisons des paysans est différente de celle de la Roumanie, et par conséquent, en français il n'y a aucun mot équivalent pour rendre une réalité purement roumaine. Deuxièmement, si la traductrice veut garder l'élément d'authenticité de la langue-culture de départ, elle transpose le terme tel quel dans la langue de destination.

Dans la note explicative en bas de la page, Maria Iv nescu décrit aux lecteurs français la « prispa » (roum.). Il s'agit d'une terrasse plus ou moins large, couverte et soutenue par de la maçonnerie qui entoure les maisons des paysans roumains. En ce qui concerne la « tinda » (roum.), elle désigne une pièce de la maison paysanne, vestibule et salle de séjour où se trouve l'âtre et où la famille prend ses repas. Dans le roman de Marin Preda, les scènes de famille les plus importantes se déroulaient dans la « tinda ».

Pour ce qui est du terme culturel « odaie » (roum.), celui-ci est rendu en français par un mot plus général. Il s'agit d'une pièce de la maison des paysans roumains qui a un lit et nécessairement une table. On s'y réunit pour recevoir les invités ou pour fêter un certain événement. La traduction adaptation que Maria Iv nescu a employée entraîne une perte culturelle pendant le processus traductif : « odaie » (roum.) – « pièce » (fr.). Elle substitue le référent culturel roumain par un terme générique. Par conséquent, sa solution neutralise le terme marqué du roumain. On admet que les difficultés du traducteur augmentent dans le cas du transfert des culturèmes de la langue-culture source dans la langue culture cible. Il doit être un bon connaisseur de la région où se déroule l'histoire pour réussir à proposer des termes équivalents différents.

Pour ce qui est du référent culturel roumain « b t tur », celui-ci désigne la cour de la maison des paysans roumains. Ce mot est synonyme de « ograd ».

Pourtant, le roman est truffé de désignateurs de référents culturels qui embarrassent la traductrice pendant l'acte de traduction. Dans l'exemple qui suit, on verra si elle a réalisé le transfert interculturel pour aboutir à un effet analogue :

*R mas singur în mijlocul b t turii, Moromete, tat l,  
tr sese c ruța sub umbra mare a celor doi salcâmi de  
lâng poarta gr dinii și apoi ieșise și el la drum cu țigarea  
în gur . (Marin Preda)*

« Resté seul au milieu de **la cour**, le vieux Moromete, le père, tira le chariot à l'ombre vaste de deux robiniers, près de la porte du jardin, et alla dans la rue, cigarette à la bouche. » (trad. Iv nescu)

Iv nescu procède, de nouveau, à la neutralisation des sèmes pour le référent culturel « b t tur ». Elle utilise simplement le mot « la cour » qui en roumain est traduit par « curte ». Ainsi, l'équivalent fonctionnel en roumain est-il « curte ». Notons que les deux termes génériques « la cour » (fr.) et « curte » (roum.) sont dépourvus de toute connotation culturelle dans les deux langues. Elle aurait dû trouver un équivalent culturel français qui puisse rendre le mieux la réalité roumaine, mais elle a fini par entraîner une perte sémantique dans la sphère culturelle de la langue cible. On observe que dans son acte de traduction, elle a perdu l'effet de réversibilité sur le plan du contenu du texte littéraire.

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## **STRATÉGIES ARGUMENTATIVES DISSOCIATIVES COMME MOYEN DE DÉTOURNEMENT DE LA PERCEPTION COMMUNE DANS LE DISCOURS PUBLICITAIRE**

**Marius Octavian MUNTEANU\***

***Abstract:** Our paper intends to study the argumentative strategies applied to the discourse of advertising taking into account not only the linguistic elements, but also (and especially) the semiotics of the static image. Dissociation, a linguistic concept less studied by Francophone linguists (even less used as an argumentative strategy in advertising) proves to be a very efficient one when applied to this type of discourse. Our theoretical frame is represented by the famous treatise by Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, "The New Rhetoric", but also by the latest research in the field of dissociation led by A. van Rees and T. Konishi. The commercial posters analyzed are part of a successful advertising campaign led by Unilever company (Dove) in 2004, campaign having as a main topic the feminine beauty as seen in the contemporary public sphere. We analyze the dissociative discursive processes used to change the perception and especially the semantic core of the concept of "feminine beauty". The semiotics of the static image and the polemic definitions given will be the conceptual battlefield of two different ways of seeing feminine beauty – the stereotyped perception, widespread in the public sphere, and the new perception, as presented by the advertising agency. The opposition between the two perceptions will be analyzed in terms of dissociation, argumentation and rhetoric.*

***Keywords:** discourse analysis, argumentative dissociation, discourse of advertising.*

### **Introduction. La dissociation argumentative**

En tant que concept argumentatif, la dissociation est définie et analysée pour la première fois par les chercheurs belges Ch. Perelman et L. Olbrechts-Tyteca dans leur « Traité de l'argumentation » paru en 1958. Tous les chercheurs ultérieurs (A. van Rees<sup>1</sup>, A. Găță<sup>2</sup>, T. Konishi, P. Breton parmi les plus importants) intéressés de ce concept mentionnent leurs noms et l'importance de leur recherche dans la délimitation théorique de la dissociation.

Quand même, il faut préciser que le noyau philosophique de ce concept, la dichotomie Réel vs Apparent<sup>1</sup>, se retrouve dans la philosophie idéaliste de Platon et de son mythe de la caverne, reposant sur l'opposition entre l'Essentiel, réalité ultime, et l'Apparent, manifestation falsificatrice des essences. Au fait, en termes de rhétorique, on pourrait raffiner cette assertion initiale, la dissociation

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\* Université « Dun rea de Jos », Gala i; [marius.munteanu@ugal.ro](mailto:marius.munteanu@ugal.ro).

<sup>1</sup> « Dissociation is one of the two main categories that Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca distinguish in their influential taxonomy of argumentative techniques (the other being association) » (Rees, 2003 : 887) – « La dissociation est une des deux catégories principales que Perelman et Olbrechts-Tyteca distinguent dans leur fameuse taxonomie des techniques argumentatives (l'autre étant l'association) » (n.t.).

<sup>2</sup> « L'intérêt conceptuel de la dissociation dans la théorie de l'argumentation repose sur la place qui lui est donnée dans La Nouvelle rhétorique » (Găță, 2007 : 249) ; « La technique de dissociation est identifiée d'un point de vue conceptuel et discutée pour la première fois par Perelman et Olbrechts-Tyteca (1958) dans leur Nouvelle Rhétorique (NR) » (Găță, 2009: 4).



argumentative privilégiant non la Réalité comme principe objectif, rationnel, au-delà de la sphère de l'humain, elle ne se propose pas cela, mais essaie de faire la distinction entre une Réalité antérieure au discours, perçue comme telle par une communauté sociale et linguistique, et la Réalité du locuteur, celle qu'il considère pour vraie, réelle, l'imposant donc discursivement dans le champ argumentatif. Le Réel issu des stratégies dissociatives<sup>2</sup> représente le Réel de l'univers discursif, tel qu'il est conçu, perçu, par le locuteur.

Selon A. van Rees, la dissociation sert à éliminer une inconsistance, à résoudre une incompatibilité, contradiction ou un paradoxe et à rendre son raisonnement et donc son discours plus cohérent.

La même chercheuse néerlandaise nous fournit une image complète de la manière dans laquelle opère cette technique ou stratégie argumentative :

...dissociation is an argumentative technique in which, in order to resolve a contradiction or incompatibility, a unitary concept expressed by a single term is split up into two new concepts unequally valued, one subsumed under a new term, the other subsumed either under the original term, which is redefined to denote a concept reduced in content, or under another new term with its own definition, the original term being given up altogether »<sup>3</sup>.

#### **La beauté est-elle une question de...**

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<sup>1</sup> v. Jasinski : « the various two-part schemes used in dissociation argument emanate from the fundamental opposition of appearance and reality » (Jasinski, 2001: 176) – « les divers schémas à deux éléments dérivent de l'opposition fondamentale entre Apparence et Réalité » (n.t.).

<sup>2</sup> Ou, dans la théorie des auteurs du Traité, « schème argumentatif », « schème d'arguments » (Perelman, Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1958: 251, t. 1) ; ou bien encore - « techniques de rupture » (Perelman, Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1958: 255-256). Ces hésitations terminologiques sont remarquées aussi par van Rees (« Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca do not give a more precise definition of dissociation » ((Rees, 2003: 887) – « Perelman et Olbrechts-Tyteca ne fournissent pas une définition plus précise de la dissociation » (n.t.).

<sup>3</sup> « ...la dissociation est une technique argumentative dans laquelle pour résoudre une contradiction ou une incompatibilité un concept unitaire exprimé par un seul terme est séparé en deux nouveaux concepts valorisés inégalement, l'un exprimé par un nouveau terme, l'autre soit par le concept original, redéfini pour rendre un concept réduit sémantiquement, soit par un nouveau terme avec sa propre définition, le terme original s'effaçant complètement » (n.t.).



Figure1



Figure2



Figure3



Figure4

Les affiches analysées ne font pas partie d'une campagne publicitaire proprement-dite, mais elle tiennent à une campagne de responsabilisation sociale, la portée de celle-ci dépassant l'objectif à court terme, à voir une hausse des chiffres de vente. Cette campagne ne vise pas nécessairement la construction de l'image d'un produit et l'implémentation de celle-ci dans la conscience publique, ce n'est pas strictement une démarche commerciale, mais surtout une démarche par laquelle l'entreprise présente ses valeurs sociétales au grand public. C'est pourquoi cette campagne a un fort caractère polémique, elle est dressée pour mettre en cause un problème social qui touche exclusivement sa clientèle féminine – la perception de la femme et de la beauté féminine dans l'espace public. La publicité commerciale est dissimulée donc au-delà de ce débat que la société Unilever lance à sa clientèle féminine, la promotion de ses produits se réalisant non par des arguments tenant aux qualités mêmes du produit, mais par les valeurs soutenues publiquement par l'annonceur, valeurs qui leur seront associées ultérieurement par le puballocataire - destinataire du message et participant au débat public.

Les structures dissociatives explicites de la campagne d'Unilever sont reprises, sous la forme de quelques définitions persuasives-dissociatives implicites. Ces structures dissociatives implicites ont le rôle de définir le destinataire du message, par suite elles visent la dissociation au niveau du destinataire.

Le concept de *beauté* est mis en question, de manière polémique et dissociative, dans les quatre affiches. Le message prend la forme d'un sondage simulé où les traits qui pourraient être associés à ce concept sont à cocher dans des cases vides et la question suit la réponse. Toutes ces affiches présentent le même énoncé injonctif qui pousse à l'expression de l'opinion relative au sujet du *sondage* : « Rejoignez le débat ».

Donc:

Figure 1 : « Plate? Pétillante?»

La beauté est-elle une question de tour de poitrine? »

Figure 2 : « Grisonnante? Séduisante?

La beauté est-elle une question d'âge? »

Figure 3 : « Ronde? Rayonnante?

La beauté est-elle une question de poids? »

Figure 4 : « Tâches de rousseur? Touches de beauté?

La beauté est-elle une question d'uniformité? »

On devrait souligner que de point de vue rhétorique les messages linguistiques sont construits sur les mêmes figures de style : assonance (*plate / pétillante, ronde / rayonnante, grisonnante / séduisante*), paronomase (*tache / touche*). Un phénomène intéressant est représenté par la présence de cette question de la première affiche, « Plate? Pétillante? », question à connotations commerciales évidentes, renvoyant à une question typique utilisée dans le domaine de la restauration, visant le type d'eau à servir aux clients. L'utilisation de cette question dans une affiche provoquant un débat public sur la beauté féminine n'est pas du tout arbitraire ; celle-ci a le rôle de diriger le processus de décodage, d'interprétation chez son destinataire. Comme l'objet de la question est représenté graphiquement par une entité humaine, à voir une femme, et non par un inanimé (une bouteille d'eau), on pourrait avoir deux interprétations possibles de ce rapprochement question visant un inanimé / représentation graphique humaine :

a) une attente réceptive contrariée, intriguée, par suite plus attentive au sujet du débat ;

b) une allusion à fort impact social renvoyant à l'image stéréotypée, telle qu'on retrouve dans l'espace médiatique, de la femme-objet, entité statique, douée d'un certain trait définitoire, un cliché socio-culturel définissant. De ce point de vue il faudrait remarquer, au-delà de la stratégie dissociative pragmatolinguistique (Comment une femme plate, même pétillante, pourrait être considérée belle ? Le trait définitoire de la beauté féminine en tant que concept médiatique tout fait, *le tour de poitrine impressionnant*, est absent au cas du sujet féminin représenté), une stratégie dissociative pragmasémiotique, utilisant des arguments multimodaux<sup>1</sup> (texte et image) ayant le rôle d'affranchir une opposition terminologique et permettant une acception plus large, renouvelée, du concept de *beauté féminine*.

Ces messages *publicitaires* contribuent, chacun d'eux, à expliciter le concept général *vraie femme* dont le trait sémique essentiel serait la *beauté* (réelle et non apparente).

Le message linguistique fait confronter deux éléments définitoires de la personne présentée en avant-plan dans l'affiche publicitaire. Ainsi, à l'adjectif *plate* on oppose *pétillante*, à *grisonnante, séduisante*, à l'adjectif *ronde, rayonnante*, et au lexème composé *tâches de rousseur* le sémantème poétique

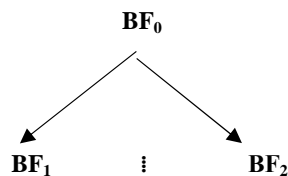
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<sup>1</sup> « When I write about 'multimodal arguments', I am referring to arguments that are composed of more than one medium. By 'medium', I mean text, image, video, or audio » (Anderson, 2014: 6) – « Par arguments *multimodaux* je comprends arguments composés de plusieurs moyens. Par *moyen* je veux dire texte, image, vidéo ou audio » (n.t.)

*touche de beauté*. Chacun des deux éléments sont le résultat de l'appréciation réalisée par l'acte illocutoire de deux énonciateurs différents, les énoncés étant polyphoniques de ce point de vue. Les éléments lexicaux de la première catégorie, adjectifs et noms ayant le trait [+concret] utilisés de manière dénotative, sont les résultats discursifs d'un locuteur différent de ceux de l'annonceur, du publicateur. La plupart en sont des stéréotypes utilisés pour décrire les personnes de sexe féminin dans les discours quotidiens, stéréotypes ayant à la base des appréciations d'ordre physique et plus précisément, des caractéristiques principales de celles-ci. Si l'on reconstruisait l'énoncé comprenant ces éléments linguistiques on pourrait arriver à des structures du type *On dit qu'elle est...* Au-delà de ces éléments explicites on retrouve l'opinion commune, généralement induite et admise, conformément à laquelle ces personnes ne peuvent pas être considérées belles puisque le concept de beauté présuppose le respect de quelques critères – âge, poids, tour de poitrine, aspect de la peau.

Les lexèmes de la deuxième classe, adjectifs et noms [+abstrait] ont le rôle de définir le concept de la vraie beauté. Le processus dissociatif implicite marque les traits de la première classe pour faux, apparents, et ceux de la deuxième comme réels, caractérisant la vraie beauté féminine. C'est un processus polémique exprimé d'une manière évidente par l'interrogation (réelle ou strictement rhétorique) « La beauté est-elle une question de... ? ». Au niveau discursif on met en évidence le deuxième terme, puisqu'il caractérise la beauté réelle, la beauté intérieure, psychique, ne se conformant à aucun stéréotype uniformisateur physique ou biologique.

Mettant à nu la structure logique de ces énoncés créés par des techniques dissociatives il en résulte:



**BF<sub>1</sub> = Terme1 (apparent, accidentel, inférieur, négatif)**

*Beautéféminine1* (concept induit par la presse, canonique, stéréotypé, mettant accent sur l'extérieur, sur l'apparence physique).

L'énonciateur : doxastique, collectif (*on dit que...*)

La structure de l'enthymème : « X est en surpoids / âgée / présente des défauts physiques » donc « X n'est pas belle » (Prémisse majeure – argument *ad populum*, paralogisme : « Toutes les femmes en surpoids / âgées / présentant des défauts physiques ne sont pas belles » ; Prémisse mineure : « X est en surpoids / âgée / présente des défauts physiques » ; Conclusion : « X n'est pas belle »).

**BF<sub>2</sub> = Terme2 (réel, essentiel, supérieur, positif)**

*Beautéféminine2* (concept dissocié du Terme I, soutenu par des raisons rhétorico-pragmatiques, commerciales).

Énonciateur : le publicateur, l'annonceur (le pronom déictique NOUS représentant la société Unilever, un paralogisme *ad verecundiam* de l'autorité du nom du producteur et du nom de la marque DOVE, du respect de la tradition de ces produits cosmétiques destinés surtout à la clientèle féminine). L'énonciateur

joue le rôle de Support (S) (dans l'acception de la théorie toulminienne<sup>1</sup>) qui vient soutenir la thèse « C'est bien cela, la vraie beauté » (« Puisque nous, Unilever, le disons »)

La structure de l'enthymème est la suivante : « Quoiqu'en surpoids / âgée / présentant des défauts physiques, la femme X est pétillante / séduisante / rayonnante » *donc* « La femme X est belle » - la prémisse majeure est « Toutes les femmes pétillantes / séduisantes / rayonnantes sont belles. » ; la prémisse mineure : « X est pétillante / séduisante / rayonnante », la conclusion « X est belle ». La structure dissociative implique un connecteur concessif implicite *quoique* qui vient réduire l'importance des arguments soutenus par le protagoniste (les représentations collectives des certains concepts humains). L'antagoniste (le publicateur) présente ces images collectives en premier, parce qu'elles font partie de la *doxa* collective, et l'association de l'image, de l'élément iconique, à la description linguistique de celle-ci se réalise par un processus psychique automate conditionné par la répétition de cette association définitoire dans l'espace public assurée par les moyens publics d'information.

L'antagoniste (le publicateur) présente une autre manière de définir la beauté féminine se délimitant nettement de la position du protagoniste, provoquant par cette mise en cause de l'acception du concept de beauté féminine une attaque de son point de vue (au cadre d'une *discussion critique*, telle qu'elle apparaît dans la théorie pragmadialectique<sup>2</sup>). Cette attaque du point de vue, même simulée (le tout présenté comme un dialogue philosophique mis en scène de manière théâtrale) n'est présentée en tant que discussion critique que dans son étape d'ouverture. Le conflit discursif et conceptuel simulé entre les deux acteurs virtuels (protagoniste *vs* antagoniste), une fois provoqué, est laissé apparemment ouvert, au fait le locuteur imposant d'une manière subtile, mais aussi évidente, la solution rhétorique de celui-ci. Le publicateur est poussé, en cochant l'une des cases vides, à cocher toutes les deux, au fait aucun des traits composant la définition de la beauté féminine n'entrant pas dans une relation de disjonction oppositive, mais de conjonction.

Le concept de beauté féminine redéfini (pas la beauté telle qu'elle est présente dans l'espace médiatique, mais celle qui devrait être<sup>3</sup>) présuppose une

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<sup>1</sup> v. Dans la théorie de la logique substantielle de S. Toulmin (« The Uses of Argument », 1958), le chercheur américain considère l'implicite comme trait définitoire de la logique non-formelle, discursive, le champ argumentatif prenant la forme d'un « un modèle en six étapes, révélateur de la manière dont on passe d'une assertion de fait à une conclusion, par l'intermédiaire d'une loi de passage (angl. *warrant*) » (Tu escu, 2005: 51). Les six éléments mentionnés sont : D = Données, C = Conclusion, F = Indicateur de force, R = Restriction, L = Inférence, (*warrant*), S = Support, Justification.

<sup>2</sup> « ...la pragma-dialectique considère le discours argumentatif comme destiné à résoudre un conflit d'opinions via la production d'un certain nombre d'actes de langage échangés par des locuteurs dans le cadre d'une interaction normée par les exigences de l'idéal de la *discussion critique* » ((Doury, 2004: 60).

<sup>3</sup> A voir aussi la précision faite par E. Schiappa visant les questions-définitions telles « Qu'est-ce que c'est X ? » (question philosophique, ontologique et axiologique) et les réponses rhétoriques données par des arguments dissociatifs : « ...in short, the question is not what 'X' is but what 'X' ought to be, given the needs and interests of a particular community of language users » (Schiappa, 1985: 79) – « ...bref, la question n'est pas ce que X représente, mais ce que X devrait représenter vu les besoins et les intérêts d'une certaine

valorisation supérieure de point de vue qualitatif, l'argument fort étant celui que la beauté devrait être l'expression d'un état psychique de bien-être, de joie de vivre en harmonie et paix totales avec soi-même.

Dans cette *discussion critique* (en termes pragmadialectiques) implicite, simulée, le protagoniste collectif se manifeste par l'énonciation de l'une des prémisses inférant la thèse attaquée par le publocuteur antagoniste, le concept de *beauté féminine apparente*. Cette prémisse se trouve en premier lieu contrebalancée par une autre tenant à un autre raisonnement dissociatif (où la thèse défendue est celle de la *vraie beauté féminine*) mis ensuite en cause. Par suite, le trajet argumentatif dissociatif suit les étapes classiques de cette stratégie discursive – en premier le *concedo* (la concession) ouvre cette attaque discursive, ensuite c'est le *nego* (la négation) qui intervient, éliminant les éléments ne faisant pas partie du concept dissocié, et enfin le *distinguo* (la distinction) vient ordonner les deux concepts considérant le concept initial comme apparent, inférieur, incapable de rendre la vraie réalité, et le concept dissocié par des stratégies rhétoriques comme réel et supérieur. Le concept de beauté féminine est redéfini par des moyens rhétoriques par la question finale même, adressée au puballocutaire considéré comme persuadé de la légitimité de son point de vue.

Quant à l'aspect pragmasémiotique du message, il faut mentionner la structure des arguments multimodaux (texte et image) suivant un algorithme simple, répété dans toutes les affiches analysées. L'espace argumentatif se déploie sur un axe vertical, à gauche se trouvant l'image de la femme présentant un certain trait physique qui ne conviendrait pas à la définition de la beauté féminine, mais aussi un trait psychique qui redéfinirait, de manière dissociative, ce concept. À droite, dans toutes les affiches analysées on retrouve le message linguistique. La verticalité spatiale de l'image transmet l'idée de force, de vérité et de dignité – éléments pouvant s'ajouter au concept dissocié de beauté féminine, de *vraie beauté*. L'image de chaque femme est au fait un argument supplémentaire faisant partie du raisonnement implicite sous-tendant le processus de redéfinition conceptuelle. On déduit de l'attitude des femmes représentant *la vraie beauté* que le fait d'accepter la diversité de l'apparence physique a comme effet le surgissement de la beauté intérieure et cela représente la source du pouvoir, du courage et de la dignité d'affronter les stéréotypes sociaux et même la force d'essayer de les combattre au niveau conceptuel. La question rhétorique peut être attribuée aussi à la femme représentée dans l'affiche, s'adressant en même temps à toutes les femmes qui s'y identifient. Deux éléments se répètent aussi dans les affiches analysées. On remarque en premier lieu la neutralité de la couleur - le blanc représentant aussi le nom de la marque (Dove), mais aussi le fond de chaque *modèle* photographié, fait qui contribue à la clarté et à la simplicité du message adressé à un public large (à cela s'ajoutant le nom du site, *pour toutes les beautés.com*). Un deuxième élément à prendre en considération serait

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communauté linguistique » (n.t.). Donc, le concept de *beauté féminine* n'est pas traité de manière dissociative pour en trouver son sens *essentiel* (même si les inférences pourraient mener à cette idée), mais, attaquant un point de vue largement accepté, une *doxa*, de convaincre le puballocutaire de la légitimité du point de vue du publocuteur (la société Unilever) et d'atteindre son but, celui de persuader ses clientes, actuelles et potentielles, d'une part, de la sincérité de sa démarche de responsabilisation sociale et d'autre, d'acheter ses produits.

les positions naturelles des femmes présentées dans ces affiches – un autre défi polémique adressé à l’industrie de la beauté promouvant surtout l’artificiel, le non-naturel, l’insolite choquant, une sorte d’art contre la nature.

Le publicateur propose cette définition de la beauté tenant compte de la philosophie contemporaine des notions vagues, relatives, pleinement conscient de l’impossibilité d’une définition ultime et catégorique d’un concept esthétique variable, dépendant de la configuration socio-historique de l’humanité. De ce point de vue, strictement philosophique, elle représente une attitude polémique implicite, une démarche critique visant une définition impropre de ce concept atemporel, impossible de le figer par des expressions canoniques, par des stéréotypes à caractère universel, transnational, valables partout dans la société contemporaine.

### Conclusions

Les affichées analysées présentent l’importance des stratégies dissociatives utilisées dans le discours publicitaire porteur de valeurs sociétales, discours à fort caractère polémique. Mettant en scène une discussion critique, la dissociation argumentative a le rôle de fortifier la prise de position de l’antagoniste, réussissant à surmonter toute incompatibilité logique dans la conceptualisation de l’objet du débat, ouvrant de nouvelles voies d’interprétation du concept en question, renouvelant la connaissance encyclopédique, la *doxa*, telle qu’elle se présente à un moment donné dans l’espace public.

On a remarqué l’habile mise en scène des deux locuteurs présentant leurs points de vue sur un sujet vivement disputé dans la société globale, la définition de la beauté féminine. L’antagoniste correspondant à la voix de l’annonceur soutient une définition de ce concept dont les traits principaux seraient la relativité humaine, la beauté intérieure, psychique, l’harmonie entre l’intérieur et l’extérieur humain. Le résultat ? Une beauté qui soit une source de bonheur et non d’angoisse, comme précisent les réalisateurs de la campagne, une beauté taillée sur la mesure de chacun, la beauté bienveillante de tout homme qui se sent bien dans sa *peau*.

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## **WEB 2.0 IN TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGES. THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL LANDMARKS**

**Nicoleta S M RESCU\***

***Abstract:** Formal or non-formal Web 2.0 is or should be part of all programmes, starting from the school programmes to the higher education ones, whose aim is that kind of teaching seen as “that happiness of rising creative and intellectual expressions” (Enstein). Web 2.0 may be considered an element oriented to the students, who are no longer the passive receivers, but creators of their own materials and knowledge.*

*Apart from other subject matters, as the specialists consider, when teaching a foreign language, we need the new technologies in order to rise the motivation, stimulate the student-centered learning and provide a different and wide range of materials.*

*Thus, this article presents, in the first part - called Theoretical Landmarks-, the learning theories which form the base of the teaching process which involves the use of new technologies. The second part- Practical Landmarks- tries to provide the teachers of all ages with the wide range of applications which are generically called Web 2.0, which is also necessary for the training of the 21<sup>st</sup> century generation.*

*The designed Web 2.0 brief handbook sustains and encourages foreign languages learning which goes beyond the memorized grammar rules. The students must be involved in developing their vocabulary and understanding the respective language culture.*

***Keywords:** Web 2.0, teaching foreign languages, electronic tools.*

### **1. Theoretical landmarks**

We start from the teaching process which was summarized by Baumgartner in three ways:

- a) The first teaching model refers to the **knowledge transfer** ( it is based on factual knowledge, transferring it through sentences, producing correct answers, memorizing, verbal explanations);
- b) The second teaching model is realised by means of the **tutoring model** (it consists in procedural knowledge, how something is done, how something is practiced, in determining the right solutions and using them; its base is formed by observation and demonstration);
- c) The third model is known as **the coach model** ( it is based on teaching by means of real situations, cooperation and support) (Baumgartner, 2004: 4).

We may observe that the last model is the one who seems to correspond to the ideal teaching-learning foreign languages process, because it is the representative of the nowadays generation- Homo Zappiens – (as Wim Veen and Ben Vrakking called it) is used to learn by means of games, permanent communication 24/7, a continuous incoming of text or audio-visual (compulsory) information. Hereafter, we start from their opinion: Homo Zappiens represents “an opportunity to contribute to the future restructuring of education” (Veen, Vrakking, 2006:6).

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\* University of Pitesti, [nicoleta.samarescu@gmail.com](mailto:nicoleta.samarescu@gmail.com)

In order to highlight how the new technologies are supported by the new learning theories, we will summarize the theories which advanced or crossed with technology.

But, as the progress means little changes which are based on already known principles, we may say that the old theories progressed and transformed in a new one, called *connectivism*. We may not criticize the old theories, as George Siemens (the parent of connectivism) does in his paper *Connectivism: A Learning Theory for Digital Age*, because behaviorism, cognitivism and constructivism elements are included in the teaching-learning process, even if in a quite small percent.

Siemens said that the central dogma of the old theories is that learning happens in the inner side of the individual, even the socio-constructivism focuses on the way of thinking, despite the fact that learning is achieved in the collectivity (Siemens, 2004). As we got used to, any theory has its supporters and opposers. In the last category we may find Plon W. Verhagen from University of Twente – Netherlands, who supports the fact that we actually do not have a theory but a pedagogic phenomenon (*Connectivism: a new learning theory?*), even if Siemens demonstrated step by step and according to the definitions, that it is a theory.

It is definitely accepted that this new theory/ trend contains principles regarding learning depending on network working, on using the new technologies. Thus, we are able to consider that it is the base of the eLearning phenomenon. The great variety of evidence which support this fact are the opinions and the serious scientific demonstrations about *Connectivism: A Learning Theory for Digital Age*.

G. Lowrinson, R. Côté, P.C. Abrami i M.C. Lavoire in the article *Revisiting Learning theory for e-Learning*, presents the connectivism as a theory for the digital era, where the individual works in a network environment. We should mention here the principles which have to be respected in order to develop the eLearning materials: the learning actors must know how to get to the new information, how to become independent and autonomous in order to build up an effective knowledge; using the Internet is an ideal way of learning in a network environment; the learning actors should have the ability to identify the important information and to take it from a variety of sources, in order to illustrate the network thinking (Lowrinson, Côté, Abrami i Lavoire in the paper *The E-Learning Handbooks: Past Promises, Present Challenge*) (Lowrinson et alii, 2008: 433).

George Siemens considers that “the nowadays learning theories must justify the richness, dynamics, interconnection and the complexity of the systems in which the knowledge is created and shared”. We may observe that Siemens also uses the term *learning ecology*. It appears in the article *Connectivism: Creating a learning ecology in distributed environments*: “metaphors of learning ecologies and learning networks provides the basis of the future educational models, more connected to the nowadays context and knowledge – randomly, with crossing disciplines, ascending, non-hierarchical as it is reflected by the present approach of designing the courses and the curriculum”. *Ecologies* is defined as “an environment which promotes and sustains the creation of a community”, in other words a flexible Web 2.0 environment (software, platform, program etc.) which helps the individual to learn and to not stop him because of a difficulties encountered when accessing or searching for information. It refers to a rethinking of the two basic aspects for the teaching-learning process: of the learning

environment “moving from the class to an ecologic place” and of the learning structures “from a hierarchical content to one which is adapted to the networks” (Siemens, 2003).

Web 2.0 encourages the student-centered approach and encourages the teacher, motivating and provoking the students to search for additional information. These statements are supported by many Web 2.0 environment researchers from China (Liu, 2012), Italy (Pieri, Diamantini, 2014), France (Duthoit, 2012), Czech Republic (Hubackova, 2015), Malaysia (Shabudin, Aisyah, Darus, Mimiko, 2014).

## **2. Practical landmarks**

Web 2.0 contains a variety of applications. For a structured vision of the elements this environment provides, we should remind the classification realized by Ban and Summers (adaped from McGee and Diaz): communicative (blogs, instant messaging tools), collaborative (wikis, VCoP), documentative (blogs, e-portfolios), generative (virtual worlds, gaming), interactive (social networking) (Ban, Summers, 2011). We should add that the applications which build-up the Web 2.0 may be classified by the support they provide (visual, auditory, audio-video, or just text), by the type of the provided applications (for beginners, advanced users of the respective languages), by the type of content the websites provide (formal or non-formal), by the animation degree, interactivity, by the objectives which are pursued (learning grammar, learning vocabulary) or by the applications availability (online, offline) etc.

### **2.1. Web 2.0 application biref handbook**

The selected resources, which we consider to be the most relevant and the teacher may use during the foreign language teaching-learning or evaluation lessons, are:

- FilmEducation (Filmeducation.org- it contains movie sequences which are used as teaching materials, accompanied by pdf documents which guide the teacher in his activity during the classes);
- VisuWords (visuwords.com- it is a wonderful software which quickly realizes a mind map for the requested word, letting us know its synonyms, antonyms by means of graphic design);
- Fun English (funenglishgames.com- it contains games, activities, worksheets, quizzes, videos and fun stuff for children);
- Pinterest (pinterest.com- an international catalogue containing useful, innovative, practical ideas, a proper source for the activities which are run with children/students);
- Tes (tes.com- it helps you to design your own lessons having a Web support; it is useful because it organizes the information as different windows containing questions, texts or movies etc.);
- ToonDoo (tondoo.com- you may learn everything through comics which are created by yourself or by the others);
- Prezi (prezi.com- one of the very useful tools for teachers, tools of lesson presentation, which helps to catch the attention; thus, the lesson is accomplished in perfect conditions).

## 2.2. Advantages and limits of the Web 2.0 applications

The Web 2.0 environment is composed by programs which allows the users to do a series of things such as teaching the curricular content, saving the information in text or film form, editing the information, sending it and collaborating with persons who share the same interest. If the available tools are properly integrated in the lesson, then we may get to a maximal efficiency. There is also the risk that the individual could not control the electronic devices which are useful for the learning environment, using them with fear or could not present/ integrate them properly in the lesson, leading to the decrease of the educational effect. It means that it does not represent a real support for teachers anymore.

In this way, in order to benefit and educate the digital native in the schools, faculties, the teacher should continuously train themselves regarding the new technologies, control their tutoring role during the lessons based on technology and should not avoid the electronic tools even in the daily life.

## 3. Conclusions

The economic, technological changes lead the teaching-learning-evaluation process to new approaches. Learning and teaching in a connected environment undoubtedly draw a permanent/ continuous training for the educators, no matter their level.

Nowadays teachers have access to Web 2.0 (soon Web 3.0), by means of which they train and lead their students to reliable learning experiences, stimulate their creativity and support them in solving their own targets.

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## **TENDENCIAS ACTUALES EN EL DISCURSO: EL FEMENINO DE LAS PROFESIONES EN ESPAÑOL**

**Andreea Ruxandra C PRARU\***

***Abstract:** In the current context of social changes caused by the continuous creation of new jobs and professions, a very strong tendency can be noted towards the integration of women in technical, intellectual and highly specialized professional fields. The past few decades have shown a constant increase in womens' interest towards jobs that, until recently, had only been occupied by men. The need that native speakers began to notice in order for them to be able to reflect this social change in discourse and speech has led to grammatical gender alternations in nouns that designate jobs titles and professions. Consequently, investigating the effects of the use of grammatical gender in such nouns on current language and discourse has become a highly important task. The main purpose of this article is to analyze the way in which several native Spanish speakers interviewed in Spain viewed the implications of using certain words or expressions in oral speech in order to avoid generic masculine terms while referring to mixed-gender groups of people.*

***Keywords:** gender, language, discourse.*

### **Introducción**

La alternancia de género en los sustantivos que designan cargos, profesiones, títulos y actividades humanas en español es un tema que ha sido debatido con mucha frecuencia en las últimas décadas. Dado el hecho de que las mujeres están mostrando un interés cada vez más alto en ocupar cargos que hasta fechas relativamente recientes habían sido privativos de los hombres, los sustantivos en masculino que ya existían en la lengua y que se usaban para designar a hombres que tenían ciertos cargos u oficios empezaron a necesitar formas femeninas.

No obstante, aunque haya muchos debates acerca del uso correcto de estos femeninos, la situación se complica aún más a la hora de referirse a un grupo de personas que contiene tanto hombres como mujeres. El español ofrece varios recursos lingüísticos para estos contextos, entre los cuales el masculino genérico cuyo usa ha sido criticado por los grupos feministas a lo largo del tiempo.

Sin embargo, no conviene dejar de lado la importancia del *idiolecto* o del modo de hablar propio de cada hablante y su opinión acerca del modo correcto de emplear este tipo de nombres de persona. Visto que la lengua hablada va cambiando continuamente no solo por causa de los rasgos internos del sistema de la lengua, sino también bajo la influencia de varios factores sociales extra-lingüísticos, se vuelve una tarea prioritaria la investigación de ciertas variables sociolingüísticas con relación al uso de los femeninos de los nombres de persona.

### **Marco teórico**

En las últimas décadas se ha escrito muchísimo en cuanto a la diversidad del español, bien sea sobre la diversidad fonética, la diversidad léxica o sobre la

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\* Universidad de Bucarest, [ruxandra.capraru@gmail.com](mailto:ruxandra.capraru@gmail.com)

diversidad morfológica o sintáctica. A la hora de hablar sobre diversidad en un idioma, hay que tocar también el tema del *variacionismo*. En este sentido, se ofrece primero una definición propuesta por Martín Butragueño hace más de dos décadas (Martín Butragueño, 1994: 33):

Variacionismo es la teoría o perspectiva que defiende que el argumento cuantitativo tiene alguna importancia en el estudio del lenguaje.

Argumento cuantitativo es, al menos,

a.El que se apoya en la asignación de cantidades  $x_1, x_2 \dots x_n$  a variantes  $[y_1], [y_2] \dots [y_n]$  de una variable  $\langle y \rangle$ :  $[y_i] \quad x_i$

b.El que se construye asignando jerarquías entre variantes  $[y_1], [y_2] \dots [y_n]$  de una variable  $\langle y \rangle$ . Por ejemplo,  $[y_3] > [y_1] > [y_2]$

c.El que se construye asignando valores de presencia [1] o ausencia [Ø] a las variantes  $[y_1], [y_2] \dots [y_n]$  de una variable  $\langle y \rangle$ . Por ejemplo,  $[y_1] \quad [1]; [y_2] \quad [Ø]; [y_3] \quad [1]$

O sea, según el autor, podemos hablar de variacionismo cuando el argumento cuantitativo es relevante para el estudio lingüístico, es decir si una variable tiene un cierto número de variantes, si esas variantes tienen una jerarquía y si dichas variantes pueden aparecer o no en el habla.

Tomando como base los estudios hechos por Pedro Martín Butragueño, otros lingüistas empezaron a realizar inventarios de diferentes variables gramaticales en español para encontrar los procesos de variación más relevantes en este idioma. Además, comenzando por los trabajos de Labov, los sociolingüistas ya habían empezado a preocuparse por el uso real en la lengua y por los idiolectos o los modos de hablar propios de los individuos, en un intento de descubrir las causas de la variación y del cambio en la lengua. De esta forma fueron identificados dos tipos de factores que contribuyen al variacionismo: los *intra-lingüísticos*, o los que tienen que ver con el sistema interno de la lengua, y los *extra-lingüísticos*, o los factores de tipo social, pragmático, cultural, etc. Es más, se puede hablar sobre variación y cambio no solo en la fonología de un idioma, sino también en la semántica, en la morfología y hasta en la sintaxis. Por consiguiente, se trata de un fenómeno muy amplio que abarca varios aspectos dignos de investigar.

Uno de estos aspectos es, indudablemente, el estudio sociolingüístico de la variación en el género gramatical de los nombres de persona que designan títulos, cargos y oficios en español. En cuanto a las variables intra- y extra-lingüísticas que pueden influir en el habla, “no es posible reconocer de antemano qué tipo de variables sociales van a actuar sobre la variación lingüística” (Blas Arroyo, 2005: 157 *apud.* Moreno Fernández, 2008: 32-33), aunque se han identificado tres variables sociales que suelen ser significativas en los estudios de sociolingüística: *sexo*, *edad* y *clase social*. Varios estudios hechos hasta el momento actual han comprobado la mayor rigidez y tradicionalismo en el modo de hablar de los individuos mayores de edad en comparación con los niños o los adolescentes que suelen aceptar más innovaciones. (Moreno Fernández, 2008: 47) También se ha demostrado que el nivel de educación influye en la variación, dado el hecho de que los hablantes que tienen competencias lingüísticas más elevadas suelen prestar más atención a la norma lingüística. (Moreno Fernández, 2008: 61) Hay que hacer, también, una distinción entre *clase social* y *nivel de instrucción*,

visto que el estatuto social abarca varios factores (económicos, culturales, etc.) que a lo mejor no tienen nada que ver con la educación del individuo. (Moreno Fernández, 2008: 53-55)

En cuanto a la variable social *edad*, el modo de hablar de los hombres en comparación con las mujeres ha sido un tema muy debatido a lo largo del tiempo, aunque muchos lingüistas han afirmado que son otros factores los que más influyen en la variación. No obstante,

los estudios sobre el habla de hombres y mujeres se han ido perfilando en diversos ámbitos de interés, diferentes del estudio específico de la variación. [...] De todos ellos, el de mayor tradición, peso y significación social tal vez sea el de la sociolingüística feminista. (Moreno Fernández, 2008: 45-46)

En otras palabras, se trata de estudios sobre el sexismo en el lenguaje, un tema muy debatido en el momento actual no solo en cuanto a las variables sociolingüísticas, sino también en lo que concierne a la formación de los femeninos de los nombres de persona que designan profesiones y oficios. Estos estudios parten de la idea de que los idiomas son intrínsecamente sexistas, lo que lleva a la existencia del sexismo en la sociedad. Los grupos feministas también aconsejan eliminar el masculino genérico del idioma y denuncian la discriminación de las mujeres en el lenguaje. Por otro lado, hay un sinnúmero de estudios lingüísticos y de trabajos empíricos según los cuales el idioma no es sexista por naturaleza, sino que son los hablantes los que utilizan la lengua para formular ideas y expresar sus opiniones según sus intenciones comunicativas. (Moreno Benítez, 2012: 220)

## **Metodología**

El análisis que se presentará más adelante se basa en 30 entrevistas individuales tomadas en el año 2015 en Alicante. Para la realización de estas entrevistas, primero se han formulado algunas preguntas sobre los sustantivos que designan profesiones en español, sobre la formación de los femeninos de este tipo de nombres y sobre el uso correcto o incorrecto del masculino genérico y las alternativas que se pueden emplear para evitarlo. Todas las personas entrevistadas eran hablantes nativos del español que habían vivido gran parte de sus vidas en Alicante.

En lo que concierne a los grupos sociales, se han tenido en cuenta tres variables extra-lingüísticas: el sexo, la edad y el nivel de educación. También se ha hecho una distinción entre los informantes que solían hablar más valenciano que castellano en casa y los que preferían el castellano como lengua de comunicación, con el propósito de ver si estas diferencias tenían alguna influencia en los idiolectos.

Las conversaciones entabladas con los informantes tuvieron tres metas principales. En primer lugar, se han tenido en cuenta las formaciones de los femeninos de los siguientes nombres de oficio: bombero, canciller, cartero, médico y presidente. El segundo objeto fue un análisis de las percepciones que tenían los hablantes nativos del español acerca del uso del masculino genérico en la lengua. Finalmente, se ha prestado atención a los recursos lingüísticos propuestos como alternativas para el masculino genérico.



Antes de formular sus opiniones acerca del uso correcto de los masculinos genéricos, los informantes escucharon varias frases que contenían palabras en masculino plural para designar a grupos mixtos de personas. Después de oír las frases, los entrevistados tuvieron que decir si el masculino genérico empleado era correcto desde su punto de vista, si el masculino plural se podía usar en cualquier situación para referirse a un grupo de personas formado tanto por hombres como por mujeres o si podía haber alternativas o modalidades para evitarlo. Las frases incluidas en las entrevistas fueron las siguientes:

1. Solo hay dos mujeres entre *los bomberos* del Ayuntamiento.
2. Solo participaron dos mujeres al encuentro político de *los cancilleres*.
3. Entre todos *los carteros* de esta ciudad, ella es la más diligente.
4. Casi la mitad de *los médicos* que trabajan en la provincia son mujeres.
5. Solo el 17% de *los presidentes* de empresas españolas son mujeres.

### Análisis

El presente análisis tratará sobre las formaciones de los femeninos de los nombres de oficio *bombero*, *canciller*, *cartero*, *médico* y *presidente* y sobre los masculinos genéricos y las alternativas que los entrevistados encontraron para evitar el uso del masculino plural a la hora de referirse a grupos mixtos de personas. Un total de 30 informantes fue escogido para el análisis y los hablantes fueron divididos en grupos según las variables sexo, edad, nivel de educación y lengua hablada en casa (valenciano o castellano).

La primera tabla presenta la clasificación de los 30 informantes según las variables intra- y extra-lingüísticas, utilizando los siguientes símbolos: - hombre; - mujer; <25 – menos de 25 años de edad; entre 25-50 años de edad; >50 – más de 50 años; I – educación básica o secundaria; II – educación superior o carrera universitaria; v – valenciano; c – castellano.

En cuanto a las cinco palabras escogidas para el corpus, se trata de sustantivos en masculino usados con mayor o menor frecuencia en la lengua hablada cuyos femeninos pueden producir ciertas dudas o confusiones para los hablantes. Como ya se sabe, el femenino de un nombre en español puede formarse a través de un cambio de artículo, si la palabra es invariable, o a través de un cambio de artículo y un cambio de terminación, si se trata de una palabra variable. Por consiguiente, dado el hecho de que los hablantes tienen dos opciones a la hora de formar un femenino y ya que muchos de los femeninos de los nombres de persona designativos de cargos o profesiones son formas recientemente añadidas en los diccionarios de lengua española, es natural que haya fluctuaciones en su uso, por lo menos hasta que se establezca y se imponga una norma estándar clara y muy bien conocida y seguida por los hispanohablantes. De todas maneras, los femeninos que figuran en la más reciente edición del Diccionario de la Real Academia (2014) son los siguientes: *la bombera*, *la canciller*, *la cartera*, *la médica*, *la presidenta*, aunque en algunas situaciones pueda ser utilizada también la terminación común en cuanto al género.

En lo que concierne al corpus, para la primera palabra (*bombero*), los dos femeninos posibles serían *la bombero* y *la bombera*. Sin duda, se trata de una situación bastante complicada debido a la muy reciente integración de las mujeres a esta carrera, lo que se refleja también en los datos de la tabla. La segunda pareja de femeninos, *la canciller* y *la cancellera* contiene una forma que no figura en el

Diccionario de la Real Academia Española como nombre de oficio: *la cancillera*, visto que se trata de una palabra común en cuanto al género gramatical. Sin embargo, la lectura que se desprende de la tabla 2 muestra la aparición de esta forma en algunos idiolectos.

El femenino de *cartero* también tiene dos posibles variantes: *la cartero* y *la cartera*. Según los datos ofrecidos por los informantes, se puede notar mucha vacilación entre las dos variantes, a lo mejor por causa del doble sentido de la segunda forma, que puede denominar tanto a una mujer que trabaja como cartero, como a un billettero.

Las fluctuaciones de uso también se pueden observar en la cuarta situación, donde se oscila entre *la médico* y *la médica*. El último par de femeninos, *la presidente* y *la presidenta* contiene el mayor número de opciones por la terminación en *-a* propia de una palabra variable, lo que tal vez se pueda explicar por la frecuente inclusión de esta palabra en las noticias, en los artículos de prensa o en otros medios de comunicación en masas.

1	♂ <25 I v	16	♀ <25 I v
2	♂ <25 I e	17	♀ <25 I v
3	♂ <25 II v	18	♀ <25 I e
4	♂ <25 II e	19	♀ <25 II v
5	♂ <25 II e	20	♀ <25 II e
6	♂ <25 II e	21	♀ <25 II e
7	♂ 25-50 I v	22	♀ <25 II e
8	♂ 25-50 I e	23	♀ 25-50 I v
9	♂ 25-50 II e	24	♀ 25-50 II e
10	♂ 25-50 II e	25	♀ 25-50 II e
11	♂ 25-50 II e	26	♀ 25-50 II e
12	♂ 25-50 II e	27	♀ 25-50 II e
13	♂ 25-50 II e	28	♀ 25-50 II e
14	♂ >50 I v	29	♀ >50 I v
15	♂ >50 I e	30	♀ >50 II e

Tabla 1. Clasificación de los informantes

La segunda tabla contiene datos sobre la frecuencia de uso de cada femenino según las respuestas ofrecidas por todos los hablantes:

	la hombro	la hombrera	la canciller	la cancillera	la cartero	la cartera	la médico	la médica	la presidente	la presidenta
Frecuencia absoluta	21	9	25	5	15	15	18	12	8	22
Frecuencia relativa	70	30	83.3	16.6	50	50	60	40	26.6	73.3

Tabla 2. Frecuencia absoluta y relativa de uso de cada variante

Para resumir las opciones expresadas por los entrevistados, la tercera tabla muestra las formaciones de los femeninos de las cinco palabras incluidas en el corpus, según la clasificación establecida más arriba. Particularmente interesante es el análisis de la formación de los femeninos en correspondencia a cada variable intra- y extra-lingüística. Para la variable *sexo*, destaca la tendencia que han tenido los hombres a usar solo el artículo en femenino. Por otro lado, las mujeres han preferido modificar tanto el artículo como la terminación de la palabra para formas

los femeninos, lo que ocurre también en la formación de *la cancellera*, palabra considerada incorrecta según la Real Academia Española.

Dos de los tres grupos de edad incluidos en el análisis mostraron tendencias muy distintas en los idiolectos: el grupo de entrevistados de menos de 25 años mostró una preferencia por palabras variables, modificando tanto el artículo como la terminación, mientras que los informantes de más de 50 años de edad modificaron solo el artículo. La variable *educación* también implicó algunas diferencias, visto que el grupo de hablantes con un nivel más bajo de educación ha preferido mantener la terminación común de los sustantivos. El segundo grupo, formado por los informantes con un nivel alto de educación, se acercó más a la norma lingüística, ya que sus respuestas suelen coincidir con las formas de femenino que figuran en los diccionarios del español. La lengua hablada en casa no parece haber influido en la formación de los femeninos según los datos de la tabla 3.

Es oportuno aclarar que en todas las situaciones expuestas más arriba hay oscilaciones en la formación de los femeninos. No obstante, puede constatarse una preferencia general muy alta por los femeninos que cambian solo el artículo en las palabras *la bombero* y *la canceller*. También resulta más frecuente el empleo de *la médico* en comparación con *la médica*, pero en menor medida en comparación con las palabras anteriores. La forma considerada incorrecta según la norma lingüística impuesta por la Real Academia, *la cancellera*, fue escogida cinco veces por los hablantes de Alicante, mientras que la mayoría prefirió mantener la terminación común en cuanto al género. La misma cantidad de personas optó por *la cartero* o *la cartera*, y en la última pareja de palabras se pudo notar por primera vez una preferencia sobresaliente por la terminación en *-a*: *la presidenta*.

No.	Informante	Formaciones de femenino				
1	♂ <25 I v	la bombero	la canceller	la cartero	la médico	la presidenta
2	♂ <25 I c	la bombero	la canceller	la cartera	la médica	la presidenta
3	♂ <25 II v	la bombero	la canceller	la cartera	la médico	la presidenta
4	♂ <25 II c	la bombero	la canceller	la cartera	la médica	la presidenta
5	♂ <25 II c	la bombera	la canceller	la cartero	la médico	la presidenta
6	♂ <25 II c	la bombero	la canceller	la cartero	la médico	la presidenta
7	♂ 25-50 I v	la bombero	la canceller	la cartera	la médico	la presidente
8	♂ 25-50 I c	la bombero	la canceller	la cartero	la médico	la presidente
9	♂ 25-50 II c	la bombera	la canceller	la cartera	la médica	la presidenta
10	♂ 25-50 II c	la bombera	la canceller	la cartera	la médico	la presidenta
11	♂ 25-50 II c	la bombero	la canceller	la cartero	la médico	la presidenta
12	♂ 25-50 II c	la bombero	la canceller	la cartero	la médico	la presidenta
13	♂ 25-50 II c	la bombero	la canceller	la cartero	la médico	la presidente
14	♂ >50 I v	la bombero	la canceller	la cartero	la médico	la presidente
15	♂ >50 I c	la bombero	la canceller	la cartero	la médico	la presidente
16	♀ <25 I v	la bombera	la cancellera	la cartera	la médica	la presidenta
17	♀ <25 I v	la bombero	la canceller	la cartero	la médico	la presidenta
18	♀ <25 I c	la bombero	la canceller	la cartero	la médica	la presidenta
19	♀ <25 II v	la bombera	la cancellera	la cartera	la médica	la presidente
20	♀ <25 II c	la bombera	la cancellera	la cartera	la médica	la presidenta
21	♀ <25 II c	la bombero	la canceller	la cartera	la médico	la presidenta
22	♀ <25 II c	la bombero	la canceller	la cartero	la médico	la presidenta
23	♀ 25-50 I v	la bombero	la cancellera	la cartera	la médica	la presidente
24	♀ 25-50 II c	la bombera	la cancellera	la cartera	la médica	la presidenta
25	♀ 25-50 II c	la bombera	la canceller	la cartera	la médica	la presidenta
26	♀ 25-50 II c	la bombero	la canceller	la cartera	la médica	la presidenta
27	♀ 25-50 II c	la bombero	la canceller	la cartero	la médico	la presidenta
28	♀ 25-50 II c	la bombero	la canceller	la cartero	la médico	la presidenta
29	♀ >50 I v	la bombero	la canceller	la cartero	la médico	la presidenta
30	♀ >50 II c	la bombera	la canceller	la cartera	la médica	la presidente

Tabla 3. Formación de los femeninos según cada tipo de informante

La cuarta tabla enseña las opiniones de los hablantes sobre el uso correcto o incorrecto del masculino genérico y las alternativas propuestas por cada informante:

No.	Informante	Masculino genérico	Alternativas
1	♂ <25 I v	Correcto	Desdoblamiento
2	♂ <25 I c	Correcto	Desdoblamiento
3	♂ <25 II v	Correcto	Sustantivo abstracto
4	♂ <25 II c	Correcto	Sustantivo abstracto
5	♂ <25 II c	Correcto	Sustantivo abstracto
6	♂ <25 II c	Correcto	Sin alternativa
7	♂ 25-50 I v	Correcto	Desdoblamiento
8	♂ 25-50 I c	Correcto	Desdoblamiento
9	♂ 25-50 II c	Correcto	Sustantivo abstracto
10	♂ 25-50 II c	Correcto	Sin alternativa
11	♂ 25-50 II c	Correcto	Sin alternativa
12	♂ 25-50 II c	Correcto	Sustantivo abstracto
13	♂ 25-50 II c	Correcto	Sin alternativa
14	♂ >50 I v	Correcto	Desdoblamiento
15	♂ >50 I c	Correcto	Sustantivo abstracto
16	♀ <25 I v	Correcto	Desdoblamiento
17	♀ <25 I v	Incorrecto	Desdoblamiento, Vocal final -e
18	♀ <25 I c	Correcto	Sin alternativa
19	♀ <25 II v	Incorrecto	Arroba (lengua escrita), Vocal final -e
20	♀ <25 II c	Correcto	Sustantivo abstracto
21	♀ <25 II c	Correcto	Sustantivo abstracto
22	♀ <25 II c	Correcto	Sin alternativa
23	♀ 25-50 I v	Correcto	Desdoblamiento, Vocal final -e
24	♀ 25-50 II c	Incorrecto	Sustantivo abstracto, Arroba (lengua escrita), Vocal final -e
25	♀ 25-50 II c	Incorrecto	Vocal final -e
26	♀ 25-50 II c	Correcto	Sin alternativa
27	♀ 25-50 II c	Correcto	Sustantivo abstracto
28	♀ 25-50 II c	Correcto	Sin alternativa
29	♀ >50 I v	Correcto	Desdoblamiento, Sustantivo abstracto
30	♀ >50 II c	Correcto	Sustantivo abstracto

Tabla 4. Masculino genérico y alternativas

Las observaciones que se desprenden de la tabla son las siguientes: primero, en casi todos los casos, el masculino genérico fue considerado correcto, aunque algunos hablantes encontraron modalidades para evitarlo. Hubo cuatro informantes que consideraron el masculino genérico incorrecto en las frases proporcionadas para la entrevista. Desde el punto de vista de las categorías sociales, se trata de mujeres, dos de ellas con menos de 25 años y la otra mitad entre 25 y 50 años de edad, y un 75% pertenecientes al grupo social con educación alta. En cuanto a la lengua más usada en casa, dos de ellas hablan valenciano y las otras dos utilizan el castellano. Conviene añadir que algunos entrevistados encontraron más de una alternativa para el masculino genérico, aunque lo

consideraron correcto, mientras que otros hablantes prefirieron no reemplazarlo mediante ningún otro recurso lingüístico.

Las alternativas propuestas fueron de varios tipos. La más frecuente fue el empleo de un sustantivo abstracto o colectivo antes del nombre de oficio o de una expresión del tipo *persona / gente / individuo que trabaja como [...]*. Casi todos los grupos sociales prefirieron esta alternativa, aunque los informantes que pertenecen a los dos primeros grupos de edad con bajo nivel educativo parecen haber recurrido más a la anteposición del término *persona* en este tipo de construcciones. Se puede notar también una prevalencia de los desdoblamientos (*los bomberos y las bomberas, los médicos y las médicas, etc.*) en todos los grupos de edad, en ambos sexos, y ambos idiomas, pero en el grupo social con educación baja. En cuanto a las alternativas menos utilizadas, cabe mencionar la arroba (@s bomber@s) solo en la lengua escrita, identificada por dos hablantes con un nivel alto de educación.

Finalmente, merece, indudablemente, atención especial la última alternativa propuesta por los entrevistados: el reemplazo de la vocal final *-o* o *-a* por una *-e* (*les bomberes, les carteres, etc.*) para referirse a grupos mixtos de personas. Muy interesante es el hecho de que todos los cinco hablantes que mencionaron esta variante eran mujeres pertenecientes a los primeros grupos de edad y a ambos niveles de educación. Entre ellas, había tres hablantes de valenciano y dos mujeres que hablaban más castellano que valenciano en casa. Sin embargo, no cabe dejar de lado el hecho de que las entrevistas fueron tomadas en Alicante, y la influencia del valenciano en los idiolectos puede ser muy fuerte, lo que tal vez pueda explicar la aparición de estas alternativas tan exclusivas.

## Conclusiones

Los cambios que se produjeron en la lengua después de la integración de las mujeres en el ámbito laboral son una prueba de la adaptabilidad del idioma a la realidad social. Los datos recogidos y analizados en el presente trabajo han mostrado la existencia de fluctuaciones en la formación de los femeninos de los nombres de persona. Además, se han comprobado la importancia y la influencia de los factores intra- y extra-lingüísticos en la variación y en el cambio. De esta forma, tanto la variable social sexo, como la edad de los hablantes y su nivel de educación influyeron en los idiolectos. En cuanto a la variable del idioma hablado en casa, es posible que el uso del valenciano en Alicante haya favorecido la aparición de una nueva alternativa para evitar el masculino genérico: la vocal final *-e* como alternativa para las terminaciones tradicionales en *-o* y en *-a*.

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## **IMÁGENES, REPRESENTACIONES Y SENSACIONES DE LOS ESTADOS UNIDOS EN CONSTANCIA DE CARLOS FUENTES**

**Diana-Adriana LEFTER\***

***Abstract:** Our paper proposes an analysis of the political dimension of one of Carlos Fuentes' novellets, *Constancia*. We show that beyond the magic realistic elements that appear clearly in the love story between Hull and *Constancia*, there is a very important political discourse focused against the United States of America. On one hand, it is the materialisation of Fuentes' constant interest for political issues, on the other, and this one is far more important on our point of view, it touches Fuentes' recurrent discourse about identity related to origins and roots.*

***Keywords :** Estados Unidos, raíces, vulgaridad, identidad.*

### **América del Norte o la historia como una miniserie de televisión<sup>1</sup>**

El interés de Carlos Fuentes para los Estados Unidos de América, para la situación política y cultural de este país es muy conocido, constante y duradero. Se trata sobre el interés manifestado a través del ojo crítico de un *insider*, porque Fuentes es, por un lado un excelente conocedor del inglés y por el otro lado un apasionado del mundo político, siendo hijo de un diplomático de carrera y ocupando él mismo, después, funciones políticas y diplomáticas.

Con los Estados Unidos tiene una relación tumultuosa, marcada por los fuertes acentos críticos que esconde, criticando abierta y públicamente, la política externa de Reagan, la anti-terrorista de Bush o la que concierne la inmigración.

*Fuentes tuvo siempre una relación tempestuosa con los Estados Unidos, un país que lo formó pero que era para él siempre el país de la mezcla, de lo migratorio por excelencia.* (Palou, 2012 : 134)

Aunque pasa una buena parte de su vida en territorio norte americano - entre 1934 y 1940, durante el mandato de su padre como embajador de Estados Unidos vive en Washington D.C. y frecuenta escuelas americanas – aunque haya sido profesor en las más grandes universidades americanas – entre las cuales Harvard, Columbia, Princeton, Fuentes nunca fue bienvenido a los Estados Unidos, siendo sometido a unas tergiversaciones en vista de la obtención de la visa, hasta prohibiéndosele la entrada al país.

Pero a su estancia a los Estados Unidos, Fuentes le debe el despertar del sentimiento de la identidad mexicana y de la pertenencia a esta cultura ancestral. En 1938, en medio de la nacionalización de las posesiones extranjeras de petróleo en México, incluyendo las americanas, Fuentes empieza a ser visto con real antipatía por sus colegas estadounidenses, lo que le hace tomar consciencia de su identidad mexicana.

*Constancia* es la historia de una extraña relación de amor y adicción entre Withby Hull, un médico de Savannah, Estados Unidos y *Constancia*, su esposa andaluza y no hablante de inglés. Llegado al umbral de los sesenta años, Hull

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\* Universidad de Pitesti, Rumania, [diana\\_lefter@hotmail.com](mailto:diana_lefter@hotmail.com)

<sup>1</sup> (Fuentes, p. 52-53).

descubre poco a poco elementos insospechados, inquietantes, incluso misteriosos justo de la vida de su esposa, Constanca. La aparición en este ambiente del ex actor ruso *monsieur* Plotnikov, ahora inmigrante en los Estados Unidos, no hace más que ahondar el misterio de Constanca, hasta de su verdadera identidad. En este contexto, donde la realidad, el sueño y la ficción tienden a confundirse se hace sentir fuertemente, a través de las voces de Hull y Plotnikov, un discurso con evidente compromiso político, dirigido sobre todo en contra de la sociedad, de la política y de la producción cultural de los Estados Unidos de América.

Algunos críticos han observado las implicaciones políticas de *Constancia*, elementos al menos igual de importantes, según nuestra opinión, como aquellos de realismo mágico o como la historia de amor, que puede cautivar al lector. Alfonso González, por ejemplo, recuerda estos envíos de natura política de los escritos de Fuentes, que define como a una “novelette, (is) a love story with supernatural happenings and social implications which are subsequently developed in other narratives in this collection”(Gonzalez, 1990: 148), pero se detiene a observar las alusiones más o menos directas a las persecuciones políticas que han sufrido los judíos durante la segunda guerra mundial y durante la guerra civil de El Salvador. Steven Boldy observa la presencia de los elementos de cultura contemporánea, de las imágenes íconos, en *Constancia*, pero sólo relacionadas al mundo hispánico y mexicano (Boldy, 2001: 18).<sup>1</sup> Georgina García Gutiérrez recuerda la presencia recurrente de los datos y las ideas políticas y sociales en muchos escritos de Fuentes (García Gutiérrez, 2011 : 8)<sup>2</sup>, pero sin hacer una relación explícita al discurso crítico hacia la cultura de los Estados Unidos. Pero mucho más importantes son, en nuestra opinión, los acentos críticos e irónicos a la política y cultura contemporánea de los Estados Unidos de América, recurrentes en *Constancia*, y situados, sorprendentemente, a fondo de la confrontación amorosa entre el americano típico, culto, y la andaluza semianalfabeta Constanca. De hecho, en la creación literaria de Carlos Fuentes se hizo notoria desde los primeros textos la crítica social a partir de la literatura; éste es el mensaje que el mismo Fuentes resume tan bien en 1994, tan solo algunos años después de la publicación de *Constancia*, hablando, con la ocasión de la distinción con el Premio Príncipe de Asturias, sobre la identidad cultural y el arraigo.

*Quisiera introducir una muy breve nota personal para finalizar estas palabras. Interpreto todo premio que se me da como un premio para mi país, México, y la cultura de mi país, fluida, alerta, no ideológica, parte inseparable del dramático proceso de transición democrática y afirmación de los valores de la sociedad civil, que vivimos hoy, con esperanza decidida, 90 millones de mexicanos. A mi patria y a sus valores hago acreedores del Premio Príncipe de Asturias de las Letras*<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> *La materia prima de estas novelas es densamente cultural: los iconos y simulacros más evidentes y notorios del mundo hispano: español y mexicano.*

<sup>2</sup> *De hecho, toda la producción de Fuentes es crítica y se origina en lecturas, en reflexiones sobre la sociedad, la economía, la política, la Historia, el género novelesco, la literatura y las artes en general. Reflexiones documentadas, de largo alcance.*

<sup>3</sup> Fragmento del discurso de Carlos Fuentes en 1994, en la ocasión de la entrega del Premio Príncipe de Asturias.



El narrador de *Constancia* es un médico sudista, con una formación cultural distinguida, profundamente atado a los valores del Sur<sup>1</sup>. Para él existen dos períodos en la historia de los Estados Unidos: la época marcada por el tradicionalismo y la que sigue a la Guerra Civil – momento cuando *nuestro orgullo ha sido más poderoso que el sentido de la realidad* (Fuentes, p. 42) y que se concretiza en la generalización, en América, de los valores del Norte traídas por los *carpetbaggers* (Fuentes, p. 48): valores, comercio, vulgaridad: *imperativos mercantiles* (Fuentes, p. 49).

Los valores del Norte, representados por Atlanta y convertidos mientras tanto en los valores estadounidenses circunscriben, por lo tanto, a la vulgaridad, al fragmentario, resultado de la falta de las raíces históricas y de la pérdida de identidad mediante la destrucción, arrasando el campo de la historia. La destrucción de Atlanta, capital de Georgia, en 1864, y el nacimiento, en las ruinas de una historia arrancada de las raíces, de un mundo nuevo/ nuevo mundo, formado exclusivamente en vertical, sin arraigo y sirviendo solamente al mercantilismo, es un ejemplo lamentable. Igualmente, la pérdida de una perspectiva histórica a fondo tiene como resultado, además de la desacralización de algunos valores culturales, el avasallamiento del hombre por la nueva sociedad, su transformación en aquel *prisionero feliz* que aparentemente goza del bienestar de primera instancia, de hecho, siendo atrapado y sólo el espectador (no el actor) en *la historia como una miniserie de televisión* (Fuentes, p. 52-53).

La metáfora del fracaso con apariencia de riqueza deslumbrante se construye mediante de una enumeración cinematográfica por medio de la cual Fuentes localiza todas las componentes del éxito, del sueño americano, de hecho, los mismos valores tradicionales destruidos: la imagen de la casa que se convierte en rascacielos, el comercio y su arte, reducido a los supermercados, la comunicación interpersonal y el acercamiento, convertidos en carreteras periféricas, la naturaleza, representada por magnolias de plástico, la gastronomía, reducida al helado de fresa<sup>2</sup>.

El narrador, el médico Hull, tal como un héroe mítico es consciente de la culpa de su raza, que se asume, aunque no haya sido su autor.<sup>3</sup> Su discurso es evidentemente dual, hasta doble, sobre todo en la problemática clave de la identidad y de los valores. Destaca el problema de la sinceridad de este discurso que, frente al otro, por ejemplo el de Plotnikov, proclama, aunque de una manera disminuida, los valores oficiales estadounidenses, pero que, en la soledad<sup>4</sup>, se convierte en crítico, irónico, sarcástico, despojando – a virtud de algunos valores

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<sup>1</sup> Savannah = *En Atlanta paso los martes, miércoles y jueves y el viernes regreso a disfrutar el fin de semana en mi hogar. Es mi refugio, mi asilo, sí. Es mi morada.* (Fuentes, p. 53-54).

<sup>2</sup> *Rascacielos, supermercados, periféricos urbanos, ascensores como jaulas de vidrio subiendo, hiedra quebradiza, por la piel helada de los edificios; magnolias de plástico; derrotas con sabor a helado de fresa; la historia como una miniserie de televisión.* (Fuentes, p. 51-53)

<sup>3</sup> Él admite, por ejemplo, el comercio con esclavos, practicado sobre todo en el Sur ante Guerra Civil y lo califica como *infame*, aunque, evidentemente, no se hace participante de esta práctica. *Los nobles edificios de nuestra ciudad son el símbolo de dos comercios, uno famoso y el otro infame. Algodón y esclavos; negros importados, blancas fibras exportadas.* (Fuentes, p. 42-44).

<sup>4</sup> la prueba de la aceptación de este discurso crítico es la utilización del plural de la primera persona, *nosotros*.

apropiados – la falsedad, el sincretismo epidérmico, el vacío, brevemente la falta de una verdadera identidad americana, causada justo por la falta de unas raíces culturales y valores.

El acento el más crítico del discurso de Hull denuncia la disminución de la gente a la condición de idiotez, rompiendo sus valores culturales profundos, los únicos capaces de generar en realidad otros valores. El desarraigo del estadounidense común de las raíces culturales - el elemento que los distingue fundamentalmente de los europeos – tiene como resultado el agotamiento de los orígenes culturales y la adopción de unos valores epidérmicos, incluso falsos, destinados sólo para satisfacer su conveniencia cultural. Fuentes resume brillantemente esta nivelación a la baja de los valores culturales por el sintagma *trunfo del más bajo común denominador*. (Fuentes, p. 202-203).

El discurso crítico del personaje - narrador denuncia la destrucción de los símbolos de representación política – el conductor guía y el poder de la gente – y el envilecimiento de la gente a través del desarraigo cultural.

*Elegimos presidente a un retrasado mental como Reagan para probar que todos los hombres son iguales. Preferimos reconocernos en un ignorante que habla como nosotros, viste como nosotros, hace nuestras bromas, padece de nuestras amnesias, prejuicios, obsesiones y distracciones, justificando nuestra vulgaridad mental: ¡qué consuelo! Un nuevo Roosevelt, un nuevo Kennedy, nos obligan a admirarlos por lo que nosotros no somos, y ése es un incómodo desconsuelo.* (Fuentes, p. 203-206)

Por el otro lado, también existe el discurso del alógeno sobre la sociedad estadounidense y más aun sobre la interacción entre éste y el inmigrante, el extranjero. Portavoz de este discurso, monsieur Plotnikov remarca primero el desarraigo de histórico de esta sociedad y de la cultura norte americana, por la eliminación o la incorporación hasta el achatamiento de ciertos elementos identitarios constitutivos – el pasado indio, o negro, o hispánico – a favor de uno solo: *la historia del éxito blanco*.

*Me miró con humor para decirme que la historia norteamericana le parecía demasiado selectiva, era la historia del éxito blanco, pero no de las otras realidades, el pasado indio, por ejemplo, o negro, o hispánico... Todo eso se quedaba afuera.* (Fuentes, p. 100-101).

De este modo, esta sociedad aparentemente tolerante y multicultural ha perdido, a través de la pérdida de sus propias raíces, la tolerancia de aceptar *al otro*, más que a nivel exterior:

*yo hablo de admitir a algo más que el inmigrante físico, hablo de admitir su memoria, su recuerdo... e incluso su deseo de regresar un día a su patria.* (Fuentes, p. 105-106)

Sin embargo, hay que remarcar que estos acentos virulentos en el discurso crítico aparecen también en la óptica del médico Hull cuando, en la soledad, sobrepasa la necesaria autocensura que le lleva, en el discurso público, a la afirmación de los valores “oficiales” estadounidenses. Las imágenes construidas en el discurso narratorio de Hull son éstos de un mundo cinematográfico, carente de profundidad. Los elementos de cultura reciente americana denuncian la escasez, el vacío de esta sociedad<sup>1</sup> y vienen a subrayar la falta de valor como resultado de la

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<sup>1</sup> *la cola arrastrada entre el polvo, las corcholatas de Coca Cola y las envolturas de barras de chocolate Mars.* (Fuentes, p. 125).

falta de una herencia histórica. Los Estados Unidos se caracterizan por el *silencio histórico* que llega, de un lado, para cubrir la culpa de una cadena de violencia que la propaganda oficializa como fundadora – la violencia sobre los indios, aquella sobre los negros – y, por el otro lado, para marcar la ausencia de un cambio histórico, que se concretiza en el concepto de *historia reciente*: “mi tierra de sincretismos salvajes, de pastiches políticos y crisoles migratorios y mapas pegados con goma de mascar”. (Fuentes, p. 167-168)

### **La identidad y el arraigo. Al femenino.**

Al igual que en otras obras de Carlos Fuentes, la identidad arraigada adquiere la imagen y el cuerpo de una mujer: Constancia es, para Hull, no solamente la mujer que simboliza la pasión erótica, sino que ella encarna la mujer-tierra y la mujer-agua, es decir el arraigo<sup>1</sup>; desarraigada de su Andalucía natal, ella queda, sin embargo, para Hull, el símbolo del apego con la tierra, es decir del arraigo, ella es su único arraigo y su pérdida equivale, para el doctor, con la pérdida del único punto de referencia estable, su único arraigo<sup>2</sup>, y esto aparece fuertemente/ con fuerza cuando Constancia (parece que) muere.

La confrontación entre masculino –femenino aparece como un choque cultural, esta vez fallado, entre Hull y Constancia. Como siempre, el papel dominante y dominador es el del masculino, desde el punto de vista de la fuerza y desde la visión erótica. La atracción carnal es, de hecho, la que inicia la relación y más tarde la unión, pero esto, por culpa del desarraigo de la mujer, fracasa en *Constancia*. Es otra manera por la cual Fuentes denuncia la cultura estadounidense de cartón, falsamente superior y basada en valores exteriores. El médico Hull, el intelectual, conquista la mujer, a Constancia la tradicionalista, pero no la puede dominar desde el punto de vista cultural/ culturalmente: ella no adopta ni su lengua, ni sus valores, ni el modo de vida, aunque se desarraiga. Se trata, por lo tanto, sobre una fingida superioridad cultural de Hull dado que éste no anhela más que el presente, ignorando las raíces:

*Vivía sola. Cuidaba su piso. Iba mucho a misa. Nadie sabía hacer el amor como ella. Servía mesas en un café del barrio de la Santa Cruz. Pero eso, ya lo dije. Era mi Galatea andaluza, yo la iba a formar, excitadamente, sintiéndome el intermediario de la civilización, el portador de valores espirituales que no se reñían con la prosperidad, con la relación práctica que merecen las cosas. Yo el hombre seguro de sí mismo, de su país, su tradición, su lengua, y que por eso podía tomar a esta muchacha casi iletrada, que no hablaba inglés: por una vez — lancé una sonrisa en dirección del fantasma de Henry James— el norteamericano sería el Pigmalión de la europea, recogida a orillas del Guadalquivir en la tierra más antigua de Europa: Andalucía, Tartessos de griegos y fenicios. Andalucía era castiza porque era mestiza: tierra conquistada, tierra raptada. Regresamos juntos y yo abrí mi consulta en Atlanta y mi casa en Savannah. Lo demás es sabido.* (Fuentes, p. 633-639).

Si Fuentes proclama así la superioridad cultural de Europa sobre América del Norte, él proclama de hecho la superioridad cultural del que se enraíza en una

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<sup>1</sup> *Yo soy agua, yo soy surtidor. Era andaluza. Y Andalucía es tierra de árabes que llegaron del desierto y encontraron el refugio del agua. Granada...* (Fuentes, p. 310-311).

<sup>2</sup> *No podía separarme de ella. No podía abandonarla.* (Fuentes, p. 311).

identidad ancestral<sup>1</sup> – uno de los temas predilectos y recurrentes en Carlos Fuentes - ; esta superioridad se guarda aunque el viejo continente está representado por una andaluz casi analfabeta, y América por el médico culto. Europa tiene una cultura fundamentada en la herencia griego-fenicia (invocada, además, por Fuentes) y eternizada por cada europeo; en cambio, América del Norte reivindica de la cultura de lo inmediato, de lo reciente, de lo superficial: orgullosa de haberse roto y olvidado las raíces, Norteamérica será así, desde el punto de vista cultural, siempre inferior a la vieja, pero cargada de cultura, Europa.

En la novela *Constancia*, el personaje femenino representa la identidad perenne, la que sobrevive justo gracias al arraigo en los valores de una cultura antigua.

*Fuentes propone una lectura plural de los tiempos nacionales y continentales, a través de dos diseños culturales e históricos, el libertario es representado por la cultura popular renacentista. El otro por el autoritarismo del Escorial y los mitos aztecas. La Lengua, y por lo tanto la Mujer, es el puente.* (Perilli)

Arrancada de su Andalucía natal por fuerzas del amor, Constancia queda una desarraigada que no quiere destruirse la identidad aceptando otro arraigo en la tierra americana. Constancia rechaza todo tipo de mezcla cultural, negando cualquier lectura – porque ésta le habría podido destruir lo que ella sabía, dado que sus raíces le alimentaban el espíritu permanentemente, o negando aprender el inglés<sup>2</sup>. Asimismo, ella no se arraiga ni procreando, no porque no quiera, sino porque la tierra americana no le ofrece la savia necesaria.

El juego a la muerte/vida entre Hull y Constancia – nombre sugestivo igualmente – destaca la importancia del arraigo para poder vivir. Sorprendentemente, Constancia muerta vive y puede, más aún mantiene la vida del que está a su lado, porque ella lleva en sí la savia cultural del continente que ha dejado. El desesperado grito final del doctor, *Constancia no te dejes desterrar* (Fuentes, p. 924) es el llanto del hombre que, hallado en una tierra que no puede alimentarle las raíces, acepta, por fin, toda la herencia cultural que la mujer-tierra le había traído.

#### **Texto de referencia**

Fuentes, Carlos, *Constancia y otras novelas para vírgenes*, Alfaguara, México, 1990 (Kindle edition)

En el texto, las referencias a esta edición se dan entre paréntesis.

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<sup>1</sup> El discurso de la identidad se resume en la replica de Plotnikov, y une inextricablemente la identidad del arraigo: *Recuerde esto, Gospodin Hull, el origen nos espera siempre*. (Fuentes, p. 90)

<sup>2</sup> Constancia que se niega a aprender el idioma de la tierra de adopción se convierte de esta manera en la encarnación del pensamiento de Fuentes sobre el multilingüismo en los Estados Unidos donde, afirma Fuentes, el español tiene el mismo derecho de lengua oficial, al menos en el Sur, como el inglés en una realidad evidentemente multicultural. En un artículo del periódico *El País*, *Los Estados Unidos por dos lenguas*, Fuentes afirma: *Proclamar el inglés lengua única de los Estados Unidos es una prueba de miedo y de soberbia inútiles. Y una lengua sólo se considera a sí misma «oficial» cuando, en efecto, ha dejado de serlo. En materia cultural, las lenguas bífidas son propias de serpientes, pero emplumadas.* (Fuentes, 1998)

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## CULTISMOS Y TERMINOLOGÍAS EN ESPAÑOL (s. XVII – XIX)

Coman LUPU\*

**Abstract:** *The present study focuses upon three chronological segments in the history of the lexical borrowings from Latin into Spanish and brings to the fore the contribution of each of the three centuries (XVII – XIX) to the development of the specialized languages characteristic of various terminological areas. Out of the corpus of erudite loan words which entered the Spanish lexicon we have selected the elements which pertain to the structure of specialized languages.*

**Keywords:** *study, Latin, Spanish.*

1. *Definición del cultismo.* Teniendo en cuenta el modo en el cual se realiza, el préstamo lingüístico puede ser directo (o popular) e indirecto (es decir asimilado por vía libresca). El préstamo popular se produce en condiciones de bilingüismo, de contacto directo entre dos comunidades lingüísticas distintas. A esta categoría pertenecen, por ejemplo, los intercambios de palabras entre el español y el catalán, entre el occitano y el francés o los préstamos entrados en rumano del húngaro. En lo que sigue, nos ocuparemos de los préstamos penetrados del latín en español a lo largo de los siglos XVII – XIX, por vía culta. Pero los préstamos librescos de los idiomas neolatinos pueden proceder no solo del latín (o del griego antiguo), sino también de una lengua moderna de cultura. Una de las fuentes es, por ejemplo, el francés. De dicho idioma provienen: el ptg. *ascensor, cone, decantar, décor, dentifricio, eléctrico, duque*; el esp. *delimitar, devenir, diatriba, duque, eccema, evolución*; el cat. *decor, distorsió, duc*; el it. *décor, degradazione, diplomatico* (adj., s.m.), *destituzione, detonare, disponibile, disseccare, divertire, dispepsia, edulcorare, elettrico*; el rum. *anomal, antipod, antitez, antracit, apetit, ardent, ascensor, ascez, asisten, autograf, azalee, beneficia, bigamie, cronologie, decor, deveni, diet, diagonal, diagram*, etc. (Sanda Reinheimer Ripeanu, 2004b). En determinados casos, es difícil elegir entre el latín / el paleogriego y una lengua moderna de cultura, por ello las soluciones etimológicas difieren de un diccionario a otro. Es el caso del cat. *democràcia*, 1803 // DCVB: gr.; ptg. *antracite* // DELP: fr.; *ascese* // DELP: fr.; DPLC: lat.; *asceta* // DELP: fr.; DPLC: lat.; *deficiente* (adj., s.m.) // DELP: fr.; *deflagração* // DELP: fr.; *deformação* // DELP: fr.; *demolição* // DELP: fr.; it. *defecare*, 1797 // DELI: fr.; *degradare*, 1282 // DELI: fr.; *democrazia*, fr.; *dentifricio*, fr.; *dentizione*, fr.; *dimissione*, 1647 // DELI: fr. En ocasiones, la misma fuente lexicográfica opta por el doble origen posible para el mismo lexema: ptg. *demissão*, s. XVI, lat. ou fr.; *cronologia*, fr. ou gr.; *democracia*, fr., gr.; it. *definitivo*, a. de 1294 // DEI: lat., fr.; *deportazione*, 1745 ou 1673 // DELI: fr.; DEI: lat., fr.; *dimettere*, a principios del s. XIII // DELI<sup>1</sup>: lat., fr.;

\* Universidad de Bucarest, Rumania

<sup>1</sup> DCVB = A. M. Alcover – Fr. de B. Moll, *Diccionari català-valencià-balear. Inventari lexicogràfic i etimològic de la llengua catalana*, Palma de Mallorca, I-X, 1930-1962; DEI = G. Battisti – G. Alessio, *Dizionario etimológico italiano*, I-V, Barbera, Firenze, 1950-1957; DELI = M. Cortelazzo – P. Zolli, *Dizionario etimológico della lingua italiana*, I-V, Zanichelli, Bologna, 1992; DELP = José Pedro Machado, *Dicionário etimológico de*

*divergere*, 1797 // DEI: fr., lat. (Sanda Reinheimer Rípeanu, 2004b). En el caso de los cultismos del rumano, los especialistas en etimología operan habitualmente con los conceptos de origen doble o múltiple: latín y francés; latín e italiano; francés e italiano; francés, latín y alemán, etc.

El primer problema que plantea *el estudio de los préstamos de origen latino del vocabulario románico* es la falta de diferenciación clara entre los conceptos **latinismo** y **cultismo**. Las definiciones propuestas por Lázaro Carreter (1953) en su *Diccionario de términos filológicos* indican precisamente esta falta de claridad. Según Lázaro Carreter, el **latinismo** es “un vocablo o giro que conserva su aspecto latino y ha sido introducido por influjo culto”, mientras que los cultismos son “palabras que han entrado en un idioma por exigencias de cultura (literatura, escolástica, filosofía, etc.), procedentes de una lengua culta, ordinariamente del latín. Tales vocablos mantienen su aspecto latino, sin haber sufrido las transformaciones de las voces populares.”

Hay problemas terminológicos concernientes a la noción de *cultismo* en todas las lenguas románicas. A la misma categoría etimológica de lexemas, se refieren, de manera más o menos matizada, el fr. *mot savant*, *latinisme*, *emprunt latin*, el cat. *veu culte*, *cultisme*, el ptg. *cultismo*, *palavra erudita* o el it. *voce dotta*... Sanda Reinheimer Rípeanu (2004a, 13) prefiere el término *latinisme*: “Pour les désigner, nous nous sommes arrêtée à *latinismes*, qui indique d’une manière explicite l’origine latine d’un emprunt dont l’entrée dans une langue romane s’explique par une influence d’ordre culturel.”

Refiriéndose al conjunto de préstamos penetrados del latín en los idiomas neolatinos, Carlo Tagliavini (1969: 325) los reúne bajo el sintagma „il superstrato culturale latino”:

Un superstrato che incombe su tutte le lingue romanze occidentali, non dovuto a conquiste e occupazioni territoriali come quello germanico e arabo, ma rimasto sempre e solo di carattere più o meno erudito, è quello culturale latino. Siccome però il Latino forma anche il nucleo centrale delle lingue romanze, questo superstrato culturale latino, che arricchisce il lessico neolatino, non è che un ramo dello stesso fiume, il quale si viene a ricongiungere al corso principale per portare acqua della stessa sorgente, ed è quindi un filone più facilmente amalgamabile, ma più difficilmente identificabile.

Bustos Tovar (1974, 24)<sup>1</sup> opta por el término **cultismo**, considerando que son **latinismos** únicamente los vocablos que han pasado del latín sin sufrir ningún

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*lingua portuguesa*, Livros Horizonte, Lisboa, I-V, 19773; DPLC = *Diccionário da lingua portuguesa contemporânea da Academia das Ciências de Lisboa*, I-II, Verbo, 2001.

<sup>1</sup> “Sin pretender llegar a conclusiones definitivas – que sólo será posible cuando se haga la historia completa del cultismo –, necesitamos adoptar una decisión sobre el problema. Pienso que sería conveniente reservar el término *latinismo* para las palabras que no han sufrido variación alguna: es lo que Américo Castro ha llamado “latinismo en crudo”. Este tipo de voces no se ha adaptado en absoluto a la morfología del español, y a él correspondería tanto vocablos como giros: *máximum*, *mínimum*, *quid*, *sine qua non*, etc. En cambio, *cultismo* nos servirá para designar las voces procedentes del latín que, habiendo sido introducidas por influjo culto, se han adaptado en mayor o menor grado a la morfología del español.”

cambio en su ortografía (por ejemplo, *ad-litteram*, *ad-hoc*, *currículum*, etc.). Además, no se deben olvidar las palabras de origen griego para las cuales el latín solo ha sido un intermediario. Manuel Alvar y Sebastián Mariner (1967, 8-9)<sup>1</sup> introducen los conceptos de latinismos indirectos y de latinismos inmediatos. Las voces tomadas en español de las lenguas románicas son latinismos indirectos, mientras que los helenismos y las palabras de origen hebreo o germánico, para las cuales el latín ha servido únicamente de vehículo transmisor, son latinismos inmediatos. Para Alvar y Mariner los latinismos son los vocablos cuya entrada en el idioma se produce en el contexto de la influencia ejercida por el latín y representan un “abstrato (religioso, escolástico, jurídico) o superestrato (cultural en general)” de la lengua española.

2. El porcentaje de palabras tomadas del griego mediante el latín es bastante elevado en el vocabulario de todas las lenguas románicas literarias. Por ejemplo:

- **apostropha, apostrophe** (< gr.), s. f. > ptg. *apóstrofe*, s. XVI; esp. *apóstrofe* (m., f.), 1632; cat. *apòstrofe* (m.), 1803; fr. *apostrophe*, 1516; it. *apostrofe*, v. 1360; rum. *apostrof*, 1705 // DEX, MDA: fr., lat.; TRDW<sup>2</sup>: lat.

- **apostrophos** (< gr.) (tard.), s. f. > ptg. *apóstrofo* (m.), s. XVI; esp. *apóstrofo* (m.), 1726-1739; cat. *apòstrof* (m.), 1696; fr. *apostrophe*, 1514; it. *apostrofo* (m.), an. 1589; rum. *apostrof* (n.), 1699 // DEX, MDA: fr., lat.; TRDW: lat.

- **episcopus** (< gr.), s. m. > ptg. *bispo* (her.); esp. *obispo*, v. 1140, semic.; cat. *bisbe* // DECAT<sup>3</sup>: semic.; DCVB: her.; fr. *évêque* (her.); it. *vescovo* (her.); rum. *episcop*, 1464 // DEX: ngr., lat.; TRDW: mgr.

- **etimologia** (< gr.), s. f. > ptg. *etimologia*, XVIe s.; esp. *etimología*, v. 1440; cat. *etimologia*, XIVe s.; fr. *étymologie*, h. 1175; it. *etimologia*, s. XIII; rum. *etimologie*, 1701-1750 // DEX: fr., lat.; TRDW: lat.; DILR<sup>4</sup>: lat., gr.

<sup>1</sup> Alvar y Mariner llaman la atención sobre la dificultad de clasificar las palabras relacionadas directa o indirectamente con el latín y distinguen: “A. Voces que en castellano tienen aspecto de latinismos pueden, en realidad, no haber sido tomadas del latín directamente, sino de otra lengua (francés, italiano, inglés, etc.): *trascendental*, *existencialismo*, etc., para no citar sino ejemplos evidentes, han entrado en el español desde el francés.

B. Vocablos que el castellano ha tomado realmente del latín no son en realidad latinismos, sino empréstitos que el latín había admitido del griego, hebreo, lenguas germánicas, etc.; para ellos el latín no ha sido más que el vehículo transmisor, aunque los haya podido conformar a sus propias tendencias evolutivas: *hemostático*, *Mesías*, *robar*, etc., están en el castellano en estas condiciones.

En uno y otro supuesto cabe, pues, hablar de latinismos solo hasta cierto punto: indirectos los primeros, inmediatos los segundos. Sin embargo, pese a su motivación común y al carácter solo parcial de unos y otros, la diversa consideración de que gozan es patente y, hasta cierto punto también, razonable.”

<sup>2</sup> DEX= *Dicționarul explicativ al limbii române*, Editura Academiei, Bucure ti, 1975; MDA = *Micul dicționar academic*, Univers Enciclopedic, Bucure ti, 2001-; TRDW = H. Tiktin, *Rumänisch-deutsches Wörterbuch*, éd. Paul Miron, Harrossowitz, Wiesbaden, 3 vol., 1985-1989.

<sup>3</sup> DECAT = Joan Coromines, *Diccionari etimològic I complementari de la llengua catalana*, 9 vol., Curial Edicions Catalanes-La Caixa, Barcelona, 1980-1991.

<sup>4</sup> DILR = Gheorghe Chivu, Emanuela Buz , Alexandra Roman, *Dicționarul împrumuturilor latino-romanice în limba română veche (1421-1760)*, Ed. Științifică, București, 1992.



- **etymologicus** (< gr.), adj. > ptg. *etimológico*, 1712; esp. *etimológico*, 1726-1739; cat. *etimològic*; fr. *étymologique*, h. 1550; it. *etimologico*, an. 1565; rum. *etimologic*, 1717 // DEX: fr., lat.; DILR: lat., gr.

Pero por vía culta entran también numerosos helenismos, préstamos tomados del griego sin que el latín sirva de vehículo:

- **cat.** *anfibi*, *antropòfag*, *antipatia*, *antítesi*, *aforisme*, *apatia*, *arcaïsme*, *ascesi*, *asterisc*, *ateu*, *atròfia*, *carp*, *catàstrofe*, *coleòpter*, *coma*, *cromàtic*, *crisàlide*, *crisantem*, *dispèpsia*, *energumen*, *enciclopedia*, *epidermis*, *epíleg*, *ornitologia*, *quiromància*, *quist*, *xicoira*;

- **esp.** *anfíbio*, *antracita*, *antropófago*, *antipatía*, *antítesis*, *aforismo*, *apatía*, *apología*, *apoteosis*, *artritis*, *arcaísmo*, *ascesis*, *asterisco*, *astronomía*, *ateo*, *atrofia*, *carpo*, *catástrofe*, *categoría*, *coleóptero*, *cromático*, *crisálida*, *crisantemo*, *cráneo*, *crisis*, *decálogo*, *dialéctico*, *dialecto*, *diámetro*, *disentería*, *dispepsia*, *dosis*, *elástico*, *eléctrico*, *enciclopedia*, *energúmeno*, *epidemia*, *epílogo*, *hipocresía*, *ornitología*, *quiromancia*, *quiromancia*, *quiste*;

- **fr.** *amphibie*, *antagoniste*, *archaïsme*, *ascèse*, *carpe*, *charisme*, *kyste*;

- **it.** *anice*, *apogeo*, *assioma*, *azalea*, *chiromanzia*, *cromatico*, *cronologia*, *diabete*, *eczema*, *enciclopedia*, *gerarchico*;

- **ptg.** *coleóptero*, *gnomo*, *ornitologia*, *quiromancia*, *sistemático*.

Relativo a los helenismos, es decir a los préstamos tomados directamente del griego antiguo, es necesario hacer dos observaciones:

—Mientras que en las últimas décadas ha aumentado el número de estudios, glosarios y diccionarios dedicados a las palabras cultas de origen latino, el único diccionario de helenismos conocido fue publicado a mediados del siglo pasado<sup>1</sup>.

—Si recurrimos al *Dictionnaire des emprunts latins dans les langues romanes* (Sanda Reinheimer Rípeanu, 2004b), un diccionario que reúne los préstamos procedentes del latín en las seis lenguas románicas literarias (portugués, español, catalán, francés, italiano y rumano), observamos que el número de helenismos directos es mucho mayor en castellano que en los demás idiomas neolatinos:

El esp. *alegoría* tiene como étimo inmediato el griego; para el portugués, catalán, francés, italiano, rumano, el origen inmediato es latino.

Lo mismo para el esp. *ambrosía* / *ambrosia*, *anfiteatro*, *anónimo*, *apología*, *astronomía*, *decálogo*, *epidemia*, *epílogo*, *eucaristía*, *(h)armonía*, *(h)armónico*, *hecatombe*, *hipoteca*, *hipótesi(s)*, *galaxia*, *geografía*, etc.

A veces, los vocablos de la misma familia léxica tienen en español un origen distinto:

—*apólogo* (1547) < lat., *apología* < gr.

—*astrónomo* (1251-1284) < lat., *astronomía* < gr.

—*hepático* (1726-1739) < lat., *hepatitis* < gr.

Además de estos aspectos concernientes a las opciones etimológicas de los diccionarios españoles, quisiéramos llamar la atención sobre un detalle más. Cat. *beneficiar*, fr. *bénéficier*, it. *beneficiare*, rum. *beneficia* aparecen como préstamos librescos del lat. *BENEFICIARE*, mientras que el esp. *beneficiar* está registrado como derivado interno del esp. *beneficio*; lo mismo hemos notado también en el caso del ptg. *beneficiar*. Tales soluciones etimológicas relativas a la procedencia

<sup>1</sup> C. Eseverri Hualde, *Diccionario etimológico de helenismos españoles*, Pamplona, 1945.

de los vocablos cultos llegan a individualizar el español en el conjunto de los idiomas neolatinos.

Volviendo al problema de la definición, optamos por la propuesta de Bustos Tovar, el autor de un consistente e importantísimo estudio sobre el cultismo medieval. Por lo tanto, entendemos por el término *cultismo* cualquier palabra que penetra en los idiomas románicos por influencia del latín medieval o científico a lo largo de la historia evolutiva de dichas lenguas.

Para distinguir los vocablos heredados del latín de los préstamos procedentes del mismo idioma, podemos recurrir a varios criterios. El criterio más eficiente, frecuentemente utilizable como término de referencia, es la estructura fonética. Por ejemplo, en las palabras heredadas del latín, el grupo consonántico *-kt-* se convierte en castellano en *ch* [t ], y en rumano llega a ser *pr*: lat. LACTE(M) > esp. *leche*, rum. *lapte*; LECTU(M) > esp. *lecho*, NOCTE(M) > esp. *noche*, rum. *noapte*; OCTO > esp. *ocho*, rum. *opt*. Eso quiere decir que las palabras españolas o rumanas de origen latino con *-kt-* en su estructura fonética son cultismos: esp. *nocturno, lácteo, carácter*; rum. *adjectiv, corect, direct*, etc.

En las voces heredadas del latín, la vocal *o* breve y tónica diptonga en español en *ue*, y la *e* breve y acentuada en *ye*: FOCUS > *fuego*, PÓRTA > *puerta*, FÉLE(M) > *hiel*, TERRA > *tierra*. Pero el lat. MÓDUS > *modo* no tiene diptongo en español, lo que significa que en este caso se trata de un préstamo.

Pero el criterio fonético no es el único, tampoco el decisivo en todos los casos. Otros factores que pueden contribuir a la determinación de un préstamo culto son:

- el ambiente de su procedencia y el campo semántico del cual forma parte
- el criterio gramatical: los superlativos sintéticos en *-ísimo / -érrimo*, como *antiquísimo, celebérrimo, fidelísimo, papérrimo* etc. o los comparativos del tipo *superior, inferior* etc. son, evidentemente, cultismos.

3. Otro aspecto importante para la historia del estudio de los cultismos es la “clase”, el tipo de lengua latina. Desde el punto de vista de W. Meyer-Lübke<sup>1</sup>, solo es cultismo el vocablo tomado del latín clásico, del latín escrito.

El proceso de enriquecimiento y modernización del vocabulario de las lenguas románicas lleva – en la literatura especializada – el nombre de *relatinización*. Como dicho fenómeno empieza a principios de la Edad Media y continúa en las épocas ulteriores de evolución de los idiomas neolatinos, Sanda Reinheimer Rîpeanu (2004a, 15-19) incluye en la categoría de préstamos cultos todos los términos “qui remontent au latin classique”, los “termes forgés en bas latin”, los “termes du latin médiéval”, los “termes du latin moderne” y las palabras para las cuales el latín ha sido “intermédiaire”.

4. El presente estudio forma parte de una serie transcronológica dedicada a los préstamos cultos del español y de las demás lenguas románicas. ¿Por qué tres “tranches chronologiques”, esta vez? En primer lugar, se trata de tres centurias consecutivas de la historia del español; cada siglo tiene una fisonomía distinta e

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<sup>1</sup> Ap. Jesús de Bustos Tovar (1974, 22): “Cuando Meyer-Lübke, apartándose del criterio fonético, ve en el cultismo «palabras tomadas de la lengua escrita», está señalando otro aspecto tan incompleto o más que el exclusivamente fonético.”

imprime su sello a la estructura del vocabulario castellano. Al estrato de cultura y civilización de cada época le corresponde un estrato de léxico. Por otro lado, nos proponemos ofrecer una perspectiva comparada sobre los sectores terminológicos más activos durante los tres siglos.

En el siglo XVII, se registran tensiones y convulsiones en las distintas esferas de la vida social de España, que se relacionan con las direcciones de su desarrollo económico y del arte. El pensamiento filosófico y estético deja una importante herencia cultural: Góngora, Quevedo, Lope de Vega, Tirso de Molina, Juan Ruiz de Alarcón, Pedro Caldeón de la Barca, Gracián, etc. Es el siglo de *El ingenioso hidalgo don Quijote de la Mancha* y de las doce *Novelas ejemplares*. A principios de la misma centuria está publicado el primer diccionario monolingüe de la historia lexicográfica del español: Sebastián de Covarrubias, *Tesoro de la lengua castellana o española* (1611). En los escritos de los autores del siglo XVII y en el *Diccionario* de Covarrubias están atestiguados por primera vez muchos de los préstamos de origen latino. Relativo a una de las direcciones estéticas de la literatura española del siglo XVII, García López (1974: 347) resalta: “El *lenguaje culto* se basa en el empleo abundante del latinismo, merced al cual la expresión adquiere originalidad y se aleja de las formas vulgares del habla habitual”.

En cuanto al siglo XVIII, esta centuria es una de las más interesantes de la historia del segundo milenio. Es un siglo fronterizo, el último de la Edad Moderna y, al mismo tiempo, el primero de la Edad Contemporánea. Es el siglo en el cual se producen cambios radicales en el paradigma social y la burguesía se afirma como líder económico. Aumenta el interés por la investigación científica y por la educación y aparecen nuevas instituciones culturales, entre las cuales hay que mencionar la Academia Española. Es el Siglo de las Luces, atravesado de corrientes culturales y de movimientos sociales.

En el siglo XIX, ya estamos en plena Edad Contemporánea. Los préstamos cultos reflejan en general una sincronización cultural y científica de los idiomas románicos occidentales.

Nuestro corpus de cultismos con la primera documentación conocida en los siglos XVII-XIX está formado de 1649 vocablos (857 en el siglo XVII, 467 en el s. XVIII y 325 cultismos entrados del latín en español a lo largo del siglo XIX). Desde el punto de vista de su contenido, las 1649 palabras pertenecen a varios campos que indican las direcciones de desarrollo de la vida social en dichas centurias. En el siglo XVII predominan los términos **abstractos**: *antagonista*, antes de 1629; *antelación*, 1624; *asentir*, a principios del s. XVII; *aseverar*, a comienzos del s. XVII; *asimilar*, a principios del s. XVII; *asimilación*, 1636; *austeridad*, 1612; *compatible*, 1618; *compilar*, 1632; *complejo*, *complejo*, 1625; *comprensión*, 1604; *consternar*, 1682; *contingente*, 1615; *contradictorio*, 1663; *convertible*, 1650; *deteriorar*, 1611; *elogio*, 1605; *eludir*, 1612; *evocar*, hacia 1614; *exacto*, 1607; *fabulación*, 1650; *fatalidad*, 1682; *frustración*, 1607; *frecuentación*, 1607; *inmensidad*, 1617; *inminente*, 1641; *incapacidad*, 1607; *incivil*, 1604; *imputación*, 1604; *inculcar*, 1604; *inductivo*, s. XVII; *permisión*, 1607; *perorar*, 1685; *perspicacia*, a finales del s. XVII; *plenitud*, 1605; *prefigurar*, 1615. Otros campos representados en el corpus, como indicios de las tendencias de desarrollo de la época, son: la **geografía y geología** (*península*, 1611; *ónice*, *ónix*, 1629; *ópalo*, a finales del s. XVII), **ciencias** (*convexo*, 1611; *paralelogramo*, 1633; etc.). Entran en español también numerosos vocablos **culturales** (*clásico*, 1632; *contexto*, 1644; *decano*, 1636; *declamatorio*, 1630; *escultura*, 1613; *escriba*, 1607; *mausoleo*,

1611; *museo*, 1611; *narrador*, 1607; *parágrafo*, 1607; *paráfrasis*, 1611; *pleonasma*, 1604; *poética*, comienzos del s. XVII; *tesis*, 1615; *traductor*, 1611; etc.) o relativos a la **medicina y anatomía** (*convulsión*, 1644; *corpulencia*, antes de 1627; *debilidad*, 1611; *delirio*, 1611; *dentición*, 1616; *depresión*, 1645; *erección*, a comienzos del s. XVII; *excitación*, 1607; *flemón*, 1624; *medicar*, 1604; *medicación*, 1607; *molar*, 1604; *obeso*, antes de 1645; *olfato*, 1616; *palor*, 1626; *plaga*, 1611; *tibia*, 1615), al **tiempo** (*anuo*, antes de 1645; *bienal*, 1618; *bienio*, 1644; *bimestre*, 1611; *coetáneo*, 1684; *data*, 1601; *década*, 1601; *semestre*, a comienzos del s. XVII). Términos **técnicos**: *faro*, 1611; *motor*, s. XVII; *náutico*, a principios del s. XVII; *navegador*, 1604; *tubo*, 1607; *utensilio*, 1607; etc.; **religiosos**: *episcopal*, 1650; *monacal*, 1612; *monástico*, 1607; *párroco*, 1611; *pontificio*, 1688; **jurídicos**: *cómplice*, a principios del s. XVII; *delación*, 1638; *derogación*, 1616; *detención*, 1607; *judiciario*, 1607; *jurisprudencia*, a finales del s. XVII; *plácito*, 1626; *promulgación*, 1612; **sociales y políticos**: *compatriota*, 1615; *democracia*, 1640; *diputación*, 1616; *plebe*, a comienzos del s. XVII; del campo de la fauna (*foca*, 1611; *insecto*, a finales del s. XVII). Superlativos sintéticos: *antiquísimo*, 1607; *celebérrimo*, 1605.

En cuanto a la siguiente centuria, predominan las palabras relativas a la **medicina y farmacia**: *bíceps*, 1782; *bilioso*, 1706; *bronquio*, 1726-1739; *cervical*, 1786; *circunvolución*, 1791; *clavícula*, 1708; *coagular*, 1709; *coagulación*, 1726-1739; *constiparse*, 1726-1739; *córnea*, 1709; *cutícula*, 1726-1739; *demente*, 1726-1739; *dorsal*, hacia 1760; *duodeno*, 1790; *farmacéutico*, 1706; *fémur*, hacia 1730; *forúnculo / furúnculo*, hacia 1760; *ganglio*, 1786; *glóbulo*, 1786; *hemorragia*, hacia 1760; *hemorroide/hemorroida*, 1726-1739; *hepático*, 1726-1739; *linfático*, a principios del s. XVIII; *mandíbula*, 1786; *miope*, 1786; *morboso*, 1726-1739; *nefritis*, 1786; *obesidad*, 1726; *obeso*, 1726-1739; *parásito*, 1726-1739; *pleuresía*, hacia 1730; *purulento*, 1726-1739; *renal*, 1726; *secreción*, 1726-1739; *tórax*, hacia 1760; *vértebra*, 1726-1739; *yugular*, 1726; etc.

Otros sectores representados en el corpus, como indicios de las tendencias de la cultura y ciencia de la época, son: la **técnica** (*binóculo*, 1709; *excavación*, 1791; *filtro*, 1726; *hélice*, 1734; *hidráulico*, 1726-1739; *magnético*, 1726; *manubrio*, 1708; *técnico*, hacia 1760; etc.), **ciencias** (*binomio*, 1709; *corola*, hacia 1760; *magnolia*, hacia 1760; *prisma*, 1726-1739; etc.). Términos **culturales** (*editor*, hacia 1760; *elenco*, 1726-1739; *elipse/elipsis*, hacia 1760; *elocución*, 1726-1739; *filólogo*, 1726-1739; *filología*, 1726-1739; *narrativo*, 1790; *nexo*, 1726; *nominal*, 1726; *parodia*, hacia 1760; *perífrasis*, 1726-1739; *sigla*, hacia 1760; etc.) o relativos al **tiempo** (*evo*, 1726-1739; *trimestre*, 1726-1739) y numerosos **abstractos**: *connivencia*, 1710; *conjetural*, 1791; *criterio*, hacia 1760; *difusión*, 1705; *divergencia*, 1739; *doctrinal*, 1790; *dogmático*, 1790; *enunciar*, 1726-1739; *exploración*, 1726; *exultación*, 1706; *fenómeno*, hacia 1730; *inaugurar*, 1726-1739; *incolumidad*, hacia 1760; *incomodar*, 1726-1739; *intuición*, 1726-1739; *retrógrado*, 1737.

En el siglo XIX, las terminologías que se enriquecen son las de la **botánica** (*azalea*, 1878; *cacto*, *cactus*, 1802; *camelia*, 1851; *cereal*, 1822; *flora*, 1884; *fucsia*, 1899; *gardenia*, 1899; *tubérculo* s. XIX), **fauna** (*fauna*, 1884; *felino*, 1899; *crustáceo*, 1843; *molusco*, 1884), **deporte** (*atlético*, 1854; *natación*, 1879). Están asimilados también **términos jurídicos** (*legislación*, 1817; *inculpción*, 1852), **religiosos** (*asceta*, 1859; *episcopado*, 1852), **abstractos** (*cinismo*, 1884; *culminar*, 1899; *denigración*, s. XIX; *incomensurable*, 1852; *inminencia*, 1880;...), etc. Pero

el sector que parece absorber el mayor número de vocablos de especialidad es el de la **medicina** (*auscultar*, hacia 1850; *axila*, 1871; *bacilo*, 1899; *clínico*, 1884; *diabetes*, 1884 *dietético*, 1789; *epidermis*, 1843; *eyacular*, s. XIX; *falo*, 1899; *incubación*, 1843; *incubar*, antes de 1873; *masturbar*, 1899; *maxilar*, 1879; *obstetricia*, 1884; *pómulo*, 1884; *retina*, 1817; *sífilis*, 1884; *vagina*, 1817; etc.).

Se trata de términos que corresponden al paradigma social y cultural de cada centuria, a los progresos de la investigación científica, al pensamiento filosófico y económico del siglo XVII, el Siglo de las Luces y el siglo XIX, respectivamente, y que enriquecen las lenguas especializadas.

Es importante poner de relieve un aspecto peculiar propio de la introducción de préstamos: no todos llegan a tener arraigo en la lengua que los absorbe: entre los 1649 préstamos cultos penetrados en dichas centurias, hay unos cuantos lexemas que no se han arraigado en español: *acumen* †, 1684; *adversar* †, 1626; *antecedencia* † (f.), 1617; *consueto* † (adj.), 1611; *deliciarse* †, 1612; *encantación* †, 1614; *fiducia* †, 1601; *fetor* †, 1607; *fraudar* †, 1604; *funestar* †, 1643; *licuefacer* †, 1676; *nervoso* †, 1605; *compage*, 1726-1739; *eloquio*, 1726; *excidio*, 1791; *excomunicación*, 1791; *funeralias*, 1791; *tetro*, 1726; *usitado*, 1726-1739; *circunvenir* †, s. XIX; *concuasar* †, 1879; *decorrerse* †, 1843; *detentor* †, 1879; *infido* †, 1879; *inyungir* †, 1879; *insurgir* †, s. XIX; *lenir* †, 1852; *malignar* †, s. XIX; *placar* †, 1879; *premitir* †, 1879; *suspición* †, 1850; *torpor* †, 1879.

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## **EL HABLA ESPAÑOLA ACTUAL: CAMBIOS FONÉTICOS**

**Patricia RADU-BUTEREZ\***

***Abstract:** In the current context of the language evolution, Spanish has witnessed and continues to witness simplification processes that are noticeable primarily at the oral level. The users tend to simplify the speech according to the communication context, but mainly depending on the sociocultural variables, namely age, gender, level of education and the dialectal factor, which plays an important role on the background of the migration from the rural to the urban area and vice versa. Although there are various linguistic varieties, in Spain there is a tendency towards generalization regarding the processes of phonetic change. Therefore, in this context it would be necessary to discuss about the importance of the standard norm and the need of a possible normativization at the phonetic and orthographic level for the present and future changes. The main subject of this paper is the presentation of examples of phonetic changes in the speech of Spanish mother tongue users.*

***Keywords:** speech, phonetic change, sociocultural variables.*

### **1. Introducción**

El habla española actual, igual que otras hablas, se encuentra en un continuo estado de cambio, por motivos diversos, que tienen que ver tanto con la lingüística, pero quizás aún más con la realidad social, económica, política, y la enumeración puede seguir.

Desde la perspectiva de la sociolingüística, el habla se caracteriza a través de los rasgos socioculturales de las personas que la utilizan, mientras que la dialectología plantea el mismo concepto desde la dimensión geográfica. La gente se está moviendo de una zona a otra, lo que implica influencias dialectales. Ejemplos en este sentido serían los estudiantes que cambian de ciudad para atender las clases de una universidad, o las personas que cambian de ciudad por motivos laborales.

La pregunta que viene a la mente es si las influencias dialectales abren paso a los cambios fonéticos y en qué medida deberían influenciar estos a la norma estándar o a la grafía. Aún no se puede responder a la pregunta anterior, pero a lo mejor se pueden vislumbrar los próximos cambios en los indicios actuales.

El propósito del trabajo es identificar ejemplos de variación fonética, pero también ofrecer una imagen acústica del habla actual y plantear algunas cuestiones con respecto a la norma fonética en uso.

### **2. Marco teórico**

La influencia de los factores sociales en el uso de la lengua puede ser variable dependiendo de la comunidad. Moreno Fernández (2008:40) afirma que el nivel de complejidad de un grupo social puede corresponder con el uso de la lengua.

La norma es el conjunto de reglas y recomendaciones emitidas por las autoridades de la lengua con el propósito de guiar, enseñar, corregir y normalizar el uso de la lengua. Sin embargo, la norma es diferente en lo que concierne a la

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\* Universidad de Bucarest, Rumania, [rb.patriciaa@gmail.com](mailto:rb.patriciaa@gmail.com)

lengua hablada y a la lengua escrita, y aún más si tomamos en cuenta la división geográfica que, en la mayoría de los casos, corresponde con la división diatópica de la lengua. Cada zona cuenta con la norma estándar y con una norma regional, según sus particularidades diatópicas.

Los lingüistas hacen distinción entre las diferentes normas, con la mención de que la norma regional no encaja perfectamente en la norma estándar, y de aquí no debe entenderse el carácter incorrecto de la variedad diatópica en cuestión, sino la variedad de los rasgos de la misma en comparación con otras variedades diatópicas.

Difícil definirnos por una norma «estándar» porque variará de unos lugares a otros, y siempre será culto quien la emplee de una u otra forma, o se repudiará en unos sitios como incorrecto lo que es correcto en otros. O resultará para muchos «cultos» intolerable lo que es la norma común de quienes se creían dueños del español. (Álvar, 1996:18)

El habla informal favorece un nivel más alto de descuido en el uso de la lengua, y por tanto, también en la pronunciación. De esta forma, se producen ciertos fenómenos fonéticos que representan la variación fonética, y quizás también los próximos cambios fonéticos o los que están en marcha.

Al hablar sobre el vínculo que existe entre la sociolingüística y la lingüística histórica, Blas Arroyo (2005:250-251) afirma que las etapas previas al cambio lingüístico se pueden observar en tiempo real, en el caso de los cambios sincrónicos. De esta forma, el carácter potencial de algunos fenómenos fonéticos puede sufrir modificaciones a lo largo del tiempo.

### **3. Metodología**

El presente trabajo se inscribe dentro del marco sincrónico y descriptivo, de manera que los ejemplos presentados forman parte de un corpus oral de entrevistas. Los informantes proceden de Alicante y se dividieron en tres grupos, según la edad: 18-35, 35-60 y más de 60 años. Gran parte de los informantes pertenece al primer grupo y tiene un nivel de instrucción alto. El marco de la entrevista ha permitido que los informantes hablaran libremente y en la medida de lo posible, entablar una conversación con los entrevistadores.

Después de que las entrevistas fueron transcritas, se identificaron fenómenos particulares que posteriormente fueron transcritos fonéticamente y que se dividieron según su naturaleza. Aparecen fenómenos característicos de la Comunidad Valenciana, fenómenos de influencia de otras zonas y fenómenos que se producen en Alicante y también en otras zonas y que pueden ser considerados como *tendencias fonéticas*, dado que se extienden amplia y rápidamente.

El análisis plantea la presentación estadística de algunas tendencias fonéticas y de fenómenos producidos por influencia de zonas adyacentes.

### **4. Resultados**

Las muestras fueron extraídas de 6 son mujeres, que pertenecen al primer grupo de edad, 18-30 años, que tienen un nivel alto de instrucción y están estudiando diferentes carreras, según se indica en la Tabla 1. Este hecho puede llegar a mostrar, quizás, el grado de prestigio de los oficios correspondientes a

cada carrera y la manera en que los informantes se sitúan con respecto al uso de la lengua<sup>1</sup>.

El 80% de las informantes procede de la ciudad Alicante, mientras que el resto de 20%, es decir la informante 4 y la informante 6 tienen como lugar de nacimiento Ibi, un pueblo localizado en el noreste de la provincia de Alicante, respectivamente Huesca, una de las ciudades de Aragón, en el noreste de la península. El lugar de residencia no corresponde totalmente con el lugar de nacimiento, hecho justificado por la estancia en la ciudad en la que se encuentra la facultad en que estudia cada informante.

No. inf.	Sexo	Edad	Nivel de instrucción	Ocupación	Procedencia	Residencia
1.	♀	25-28 años	Alto (grado - Psicología)	Estudiante	Alicante	Alicante/Elche
2.	♀	25-28 años	Alto (grado – Magisteric de Infantil)	Estudiante	Alicante	Alicante/Elche
3.	♀	23 años	Alto (grado - Biotecnología)	Estudiante	Alicante	Alicante/Elche
4.	♀	25-30 años	Alto (grado - Química)	Estudiante	Ibi (Alicante)	Ibi (Alicante)
5.	♀	22-25 años	Alto (grado - Farmacia)	Estudiante	Alicante	Alicante/ San Joan d'Alacant
6.	♀	22-25 años	Alto (grado - Farmacia)	Estudiante	Huesca	Alicante/ San Joan d'Alacant

**Tabla 1. Los informantes y las variables extralingüísticas**

La tabla 2 recoge los procesos fonéticos que más destacan en las muestras de las seis informantes, junto con la frecuencia total y la frecuencia según cada informante. La pérdida de la oclusiva velar del grupo /ks/ registra 15 ejemplos, seguida por la fusión vocálica, que aparece en 12 ejemplos. Igualmente destacan la asimilación de la oclusiva velar del grupo /kt/, la elisión de la sílaba tónica y del hiato y la síncope. Los fenómenos que tuvieron una frecuencia de producción reducida son la reducción del diptongo /we/, la apócope y la aféresis.

<sup>1</sup> Es conocido el hecho de que algunas profesiones tienen un prestigio muy alto en lo que concierne al uso de la lengua. Un ejemplo en este sentido serían los médicos, los profesores y los periodistas, aunque no sea válido en todos los casos.



Fenómeno fonético	Frecuencia total	Frecuencia informante					
		I1	I2	I3	I4	I5	I6
Perdida de la oclusiva velar del grupo /ks/	15	2	10	0	2	1	0
Asimilación de la oclusiva velar del grupo /kt/	6	2	0	0	3	1	0
Elisión de la sílaba tónica y del hiato	5	0	1	1	3	0	0
Reducción del diptongo /we/	2	0	1	0	1	0	0
Fusión vocálica	12	1	5	1	5	0	0
Apócope	2	0	0	0	1	1	0
Aféresis	2	0	0	0	1	0	1
Síncopa	4	4	0	0	0	0	0

**Tabla 2. La frecuencia total y la frecuencia de los fenómenos según cada informante**

En lo que concierne la distribución de producción de los fenómenos según cada informante, se observa que hay informantes que produjeron ciertos fenómenos, mientras que en otros casos se registraron ejemplos para cada proceso. El carácter consonántico de los fenómenos está representado escasamente mediante procesos que implican a la oclusiva velar y los procesos de frecuencia baja, aunque los datos numéricos indican que existe un equilibrio entre los procesos de índole consonántica y vocálica.

Fenómeno fonético	Ejemplo	Transcripción fonética
PERDIDA DE LA OCLUSIVA VELAR DEL GRUPO /KS/	[...] en la mía siempre ha <b>existido</b> porque maestras ha habido toda la vida [...]	[esis'tido]
ASIMILACIÓN DE LA OCLUSIVA VELAR DEL GRUPO /KT/	[...] que el lenguaje es <b>producto</b> también [...]	[pro'ðuyto]
ELISIÓN DE LA SÍLABA TÓNICA Y DEL HIATO	[...] y lo que pasa es tenemos exámenes <b>ahora</b> en septiembre [...]	[ara]
REDUCCIÓN DEL DIPTONGO /WE/	[...] <b>pues</b> cambiarlas porque si se pueden cambiar [...]	[pos]
FUSIÓN VOCÁLICA	[...] por ejemplo yo sé que el tema <b>de investigación</b> la mujer [...]	[ðimβestiya'θjon]
APOCOPE	[...] quiero hacer el NIR que son las oposiciones <b>para</b> trabajar en hospital [...]	[pa]
AFERESIS	[...] ni tampoco sé lo laboratorio ni... <b>entonces</b> descarte....[...]	['toŋθes]
SÍNCOPA	[...] y me parece que <b>también</b> tiene mucha utilidad [...]	[tam'jen]

### Tabla 3. Ejemplos de fenómenos

En resumidas cuentas, los fenómenos presentados en la Tabla 3 son las producciones fonéticas con mayor frecuencia en las muestras de las informantes. Entre los procesos que implican grupos consonánticos aparece la pérdida de la oclusiva velar del grupo /ks/ y la asimilación de la oclusiva velar del grupo /kt/. El primero es más frecuente que el segundo y no es un fenómeno reciente, dado que es considerado como *rasgo general* en Castilla y León y extendido también en otras zonas (Álvar, 1996:201).

Un fenómeno muy interesante es la elisión de la sílaba tónica y del hiato en *ahora*. Se encuentra en el 50% de los informantes y la más probable explicación, aparte de la facilitación articulatoria que favorece la elisión de la sílaba mediana tónica, es la procedencia de las informantes. El valenciano es la variedad lingüística más hablada en la provincia de Alicante, por consiguiente, podría tratarse de una influencia resultada por el contacto directo con el valenciano, o la sustitución del vocablo castellano *ahora* por el catalán *ara*. La frecuencia más alta se encuentra en la informante 4, que procede de una localidad de la provincia de Alicante, que está situada a aproximadamente 47 kilómetros de la capital en cuestión. El uso extendido del valenciano en la provincia de Alicante puede justificar la frecuencia más alta en la informante 4 en comparación con las demás informantes.

La reducción del diptongo /we/ de *pues* es otra tendencia fonética encontrada en las muestras de la informante 2 y de la informante 4. La reducción de la sílaba tónica y la monoptongación puede ser el reverso del proceso de evolución del latín al castellano, del latín *post*, sin embargo, el lugar de articulación de la *u* puede favorecer la asimilación del lugar de articulación de la *o*.

La apócope es otro fenómeno con extensión amplia y frecuencia alta en el habla actual. Aunque su producción se limita a los ejemplos encontrados en las muestras de las informantes 4 y 5, es un proceso característico del habla relajada, coloquial y bastante descuidada.

En el mismo modo ocurre también la aféresis de la sílaba átona antepuesta a la sílaba tónica, en *entonces*. Sin duda, es el resultado de la simplificación en el habla espontánea.

El último ejemplo de la tabla 3 es la síncope de la implosiva bilabial en posición inicial de sílaba tónica, que fue registrada<sup>1</sup> como fenómeno bastante inusual y “raro” en Castilla y León, hecho que indica la extensión del fenómeno y por consiguiente, la confirmación del carácter de tendencia fonética.

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibidem*

	Realización	Ejemplo	Transcripción fonética	Informante
ASIMILACIÓN DE LA OCLUSIVA VELAR DEL GRUPO /KT/	∅	[...] más que nada para <b>practicar</b> inglés [...]	[prati'kar]	I5
	[ɾt]	[...] una mujer y luego la de <b>prácticas</b> que era yo [...]	[praɣ'tikas]	I4
		[...] es <b>producto</b> de la sociedad [...]	[pro'ðuɾto]	I1

Tabla 4. Las realizaciones de la oclusiva velar del grupo /kt/

Las realizaciones de la oclusiva velar perteneciente al grupo consonántico /kt/ tienden hacia la pérdida o a la sonorización, ambas realizadas mediante asimilación. El ejemplo de la informante 5 y el de la informante 4 son muy frecuentes entre las informantes, con mayor razón cuando hablan sobre la carrera académica. La realización fricativa sonora producida por la primera informante, es decir [pro' u to] ocurre también en el habla encadenada, de carácter informal, con tendencia a la geminación de la oclusiva dental.

	Contexto fonético	Ejemplo	Transcripción fonética	Informante
PÉRDIDA DE LA OCLUSIVA VELAR DEL GRUPO /KS/	Seguido por C	[...] esta <b>expresión</b> que está dentro de la [...]	[espre'sjon]	I1
	Seguido por VC	[...] y lo que pasa es tenemos <b>exámenes</b> ahora en septiembre [...]	[e'samenes]	I4
	Posición inicial sílaba	[...] ahora empezamos los <b>exámenes</b> [...]	[e'samenes]	I5
		[...] no que sea una cosa que haya <b>existido</b> toda la vida....[...]	[esis'tiðo]	I2
	Posición final sílaba	[...] no te dejan... <b>explicación</b> , ellos son más fuertes [...]	[esplika'θjon]	I2
		[...] no sé si me he <b>explicado</b> muy bien porque [...]	[mespli'kaw]	I4

Tabla 5. La pérdida de la oclusiva velar del grupo /ks/

De la tabla 3, quizás el fenómeno más frecuente en el habla actual es la pérdida de la oclusiva velar del grupo /ks/, considerado en algunas zonas como norma regional. El ejemplo presentado pertenece al contexto fonético - ks – V – C, que no es tan frecuente como el grupo consonántico que precede a otra consonante. Sin embargo, la frecuencia alta en las muestras puede ser el resultado de la articulación difícil en dicho contexto. En el ejemplo presentado podría tratarse también de la asimilación de la alveolar que sigue después de la vocal. La posición con respecto a la sílaba tónica es otro factor que hay que tener en cuenta. En los ejemplos de la Tabla 5, la velar se encuentra en posición anterior a la sílaba tónica o en posición de contigüidad con la vocal tónica: *exámenes*, pero también en posición inicial de sílaba, lo cual puede representar una dificultad a la hora de pronunciar la palabra en el ritmo normal de una conversación informal.

	Vocales	Ejemplo	Transcripción fonética	Informante
FUSIÓN VOCÁLICA	A + E	[...] que son así y ya está lo que se les cambias [...]	[jas'ta]	I2
	E + A	[...] antes sí que había más vida porque venía [...]	[ka'βia]	I4
	E + E	¿Qué estudiáis, por cierto? [...]	[kestu'ðjajs]	I3
	E + I	[...] por ejemplo yo sé que el tema de investigación la mujer [...]	[ðimβesti'γa'θjon]	I1

**Tabla 6. Los tipos de fusión vocálica**

Los ejemplos de fusión vocálica varían dependiendo de las vocales situadas en posición final, respectivamente posición inicial de palabra y sílaba. Los ejemplos de la Tabla 6 muestran una prevalencia por la producción de fusiones que implican la vocal abierta *a* y la vocal semicerrada *e*, en posiciones complementarias. Esto se debe a la frecuencia muy alta de verbos, preposiciones, conjunciones, sustantivos, etcétera, que empiezan y terminan por una de las dos vocales. La combinación predominante de las muestras es *e – e*, con 7 ejemplos, después *e – a*, con 3 ejemplos, *a – e* y *e – i*, cada una con un ejemplo. Una posible justificación para las fusiones vocálicas es el ritmo del habla, que es el propio de una situación informal, y que es sostenido también por un grado bastante alto de relajación y de soltura por parte de las informantes.

## 5. Conclusiones

Los ejemplos de procesos fonéticos presentados anteriormente confirman una clara tendencia hacia la simplificación y al encadenamiento de las palabras mediante la fusión de los sonidos. Los contextos fonéticos que favorecen el cambio son los más abiertos desde la perspectiva de la propagación del cambio fonético.

Los fenómenos presentados no se pueden explicar solamente invocando un solo tipo de variables, sino haciendo uso tanto de las variables lingüísticas, como también de las variables extralingüísticas. En este sentido, el factor

geográfico tiene una influencia considerable si se correlaciona con rasgos dialectales y con información que indica la movilidad del informante de una zona a otra.

La influencia de la norma es escasa al tratar de justificar los fenómenos fonéticos, puesto que en la lengua hablada siempre se encontrarán maneras de simplificar, lo que es suficiente para que surja la variación fonética, y de ahí también el cambio fonético.

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## **LA REFLEXIÓN SOBRE EL MUNDO CONTEMPORÁNEO EN DON QUIJOTE**

**Lavinia SIMILARU\***

**Abstract:** Reflection on the contemporary world in Don Quixote

*The Ingenious Gentleman Don Quixote of La Mancha is already 400 years old, and, despite its impressive "age", it is still read and reread. There is no doubt that it is a treasure, and from many points of view, not only literary and linguistic. Don Quixote offers above all a life lesson, infusing his readers an undeniable and timeless wisdom throughout the centuries.*

*The very well-known novel by Cervantes also offers a realistic picture of the contemporary world, being a valuable historical document for readers today, 400 years after its publication. The world of Don Quixote is populated by shepherds, farmers, puppeteers, village and wealthy people, noble people, priests, monks, barbers, innkeepers, thieves, bandits, vulgar women... All described with incredible realism. There is information about the Inquisition and the "proceedings" that were taking place in the time of Philip III for a Moorish to remain in Spain. Another equally realistic aspect lies in the master - servant relationships, perfectly presented. We cannot fail to mention the descriptions of the windmills, or the unforgettable description of the printing.*

**Keywords:** Spanish literature, Don Quixote, realism.

### **Actualidad del Quijote**

*El ingenioso hidalgo Don Quijote de la Mancha* ha cumplido ya 400 años, y, a pesar de ello, se sigue leyendo y releendo. No cabe duda de que constituye un tesoro, y desde muchos puntos de vista, no solamente literario y lingüístico. En julio de 2016, el presidente americano visitó España, y los reyes le regalaron una edición en inglés de *Don Quijote*, con una dedicatoria que abarcaba una cita del capítulo 58 de la Segunda parte, donde el caballero habla con su escudero sobre la libertad. Esto no hace más que reiterar la gran actualidad de la novela de Cervantes. Los que rigen la suerte del planeta se inspiran todavía en las sabias enseñanzas del *Quijote*. Y no son los únicos: la gente común y corriente también encuentra en el insuperable libro infinitas fuentes de inspiración, además del placer intelectual. *Don Quijote* ofrece sobre todo una lección de vida, infundiendo a sus lectores una sabiduría innegable e imperecedera, más allá del tiempo histórico.

La actualidad y la importancia del *Quijote* son indiscutibles en el mundo contemporáneo. El profesor y académico Francisco Rico observa que "el *Quijote* es, por lo menos, un libro castellano, una institución hispánica y un mito universal" (Rico, 2012: 136). Cada época ha encontrado en el *Quijote* respuestas a sus preguntas más entrañables; los seres humanos de cada época se han reconocido en el Caballero de la Triste Figura.

Como destaca don Miguel de Unamuno: "El pobre e ingenioso hidalgo no buscó provecho pasajero ni regalo de cuerpo, sino eterno nombre y fama, poniendo

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\* Universidad de Craiova, [lavinia\\_similaru@yahoo.es](mailto:lavinia_similaru@yahoo.es)

así su nombre sobre sí mismo. Sometióse a su propia idea, al Don Quijote eterno, a la memoria que de él quedase” (Unamuno, 1992: 164). Hace más de un siglo, Miguel de Unamuno le evocaba en estas memorables palabras, denunciando y lamentando la “miseria” de la vida cotidiana:

No se comprende aquí ya ni la locura. Hasta del loco creen y dicen que lo será por tenerle su cuenta y razón. Lo de la razón de la sinrazón es ya un hecho para todos estos miserables. Si nuestro señor Don Quijote resucitara y volviese a esta su España, andarían buscándole una segunda intención a sus nobles desvaríos (*ibidem*: 140).

Como aclara más adelante don Miguel de Unamuno, el caballero nos da

el valor que más falta nos hace: el de afrontar el ridículo. El ridículo es el arma que manejan todos los miserables bachilleres, barberos, curas, canónigos y duques que guardan escondido el sepulcro del Caballero de la Locura. Caballero que hizo reír a todo el mundo, pero que nunca soltó un chiste. Tenía el alma demasiado grande para parir chistes. Hizo reír con su seriedad (*ibidem*).

El 23 de abril de 2015, el escritor Juan Goytisolo, laureado con el Premio Cervantes, subrayaba en su discurso que los seres humanos de nuestra época siguen sintiendo la misma necesidad de “volver a Cervantes y asumir la locura de su personaje como una forma superior de cordura. [...] Al hacerlo no nos evadimos de la realidad incua que nos rodea. Asentamos al revés los pies en ella”. (<http://www.mecd.gob.es/prensa-mecd/dms/mecd/prensa-mecd/actualidad/2015/04/20150423-cervantes/goytisolo.pdf>). Juan Goytisolo es el escritor que imagina al Caballero de la Triste Figura en nuestro deplorable presente,

a lomos de Rocinante acometiendo lanza en ristre contra los esbirros de la Santa Hermandad que proceden al desalojo de los desahuciados, contra los corruptos de la ingeniería financiera o, a Estrecho traviesa, al pie de las verjas de Ceuta y Melilla que él toma por encantados castillos con puentes levadizos y torres almenadas socorriendo a unos inmigrantes cuyo único crimen es su instinto de vida y el ansia de libertad. (<http://www.mecd.gob.es/prensa-mecd/dms/mecd/prensa-mecd/actualidad/2015/04/20150423-cervantes/goytisolo.pdf>).

En abril de 2016, al recibir el mismo premio Cervantes, el escritor mexicano Fernando del Paso relató su primera lectura del *Quijote*, y confesó su admiración por la famosa novela:

Pero aprendí a leer con los dos ojos, y con los dos ojos y entre los rugidos de los leones me las vi con don Quijote de La Mancha. En efecto, un hermano de mi padre que tenía una gran biblioteca virgen—nadie la leía: compraba los libros por metro-, me invitó a pasar quince días en su casa, muy cercana al zoológico, desde donde se escuchaban a distintas horas del día los estentóreos rugidos de los leones y yo me dije: ¿leoncitos a mí? y me zambullí en la literatura de los clásicos castellanos [...]. Fue allí también, en la casa de mi tío donde me enfrenté con Don Quijote en desigual y descomunal batalla: él, las más de las veces jinete en Rocinante o a horcajadas en Clavileño y yo, en miserable situación pedestre. No obstante

mi Señor y Sancho Panza estaban ilustrados por Gustave Doré y eso me sirvió de báculo. Salí de su lectura muy enriquecido y muy contento de haber aprendido que la literatura y el humor podían hacer buenas migas. ([http://cultura.elpais.com/cultura/2016/04/23/actualidad/1461411028\\_121080.html](http://cultura.elpais.com/cultura/2016/04/23/actualidad/1461411028_121080.html))

### **Reflexión sobre el mundo contemporáneo en *Don Quijote***

La famosísima novela de Cervantes ofrece también una imagen realista sobre el mundo contemporáneo, constituyendo para los lectores de hoy, 400 años después de su publicación, un valiosísimo documento histórico. El mundo del *Quijote* está poblado por pastores, labradores, titiriteros, gente del pueblo y gente acomodada, nobles, curas, frailes, barberos, venteros, ladrones, bandoleros, mujeres vulgares... Todos descritos con un realismo increíble.

Jean Canavaggio destaca:

Resucitar la caballería andante es encarnarla en la cotidianidad, en el marco familiar de una existencia concreta: las llanuras de la Mancha adonde el héroe va en busca de aventuras, la venta donde es armado caballero, los caminos por los que se cruza con cabreros, monjes y galeotes sólo muestran el «realismo» cervantino como signos de un presente del que no podría abstraerse y que, en la cúspide de su exaltación, lo devuelve siempre a la tierra. En la bisagra del mundo prosaico en el que se arraiga y del mundo ideal hacia el que se proyecta incansablemente, don Quijote no tiene más salida que integrar este presente en su sistema de pensamiento (Canavaggio, 1995: III 62).

Por eso, cuando Don Quijote ve la venta que él confunde con un castillo y espera que un enano anuncie con una trompeta su llegada, Cervantes hace que ocurra lo que su héroe desea, pero no de la manera que se imagina Don Quijote, sino mediante una actividad trivial de la vida cotidiana:

En esto, sucedió acaso que un porquero que andaba recogiendo de unos rastros una manada de puercos -que, sin perdón, así se llaman- tocó un cuerno, a cuya señal ellos se recogen, y al instante se le representó a don Quijote lo que deseaba, que era que algún enano hacía señal de su venida; y así, con estraño contento, llegó a la venta (I, 2).

Pero a lo largo de la novela hay informaciones sobre varias actividades y profesiones reales y comunes en la época.

Es inolvidable el orgullo del médico que atiende a Sancho, cuando el escudero llega a ser gobernador: “Yo, señor, soy médico, y estoy asalariado en esta ínsula para serlo de los gobernadores della, y miro por su salud mucho más que por la mía, estudiando de noche y de día, y tanteando la complexión del gobernador, para acertar a curarle cuando cayere enfermo” (II, 47). No deja de presumir de sus estudios, imaginando que su prestigio aumentará si los menciona: “Yo, señor gobernador, me llamo el doctor Pedro Recio de Agüero, y soy natural de un lugar llamado Tirteafuera, que está entre Caracuel y Almodóvar del Campo, a la mano derecha, y tengo el grado de doctor por la universidad de Osuna” (II, 47). A pesar del enfado de Sancho, el médico no cede, y le prohíbe comer, citando a Hipócrates para ser más convincente: “Porque nuestro maestro Hipócrates, norte y luz de la medicina, en un aforismo suyo, dice: Omnis saturatio mala, perdives



autem pessima. Quiere decir: "Toda hartazga es mala; pero la de las perdices, malísima". (II, 47). Cervantes utiliza este episodio cómico (Sancho tiene hambre, y el médico no le permite comer nada, diciendo que la comida le hace daño) para ridiculizar las perplejidades de la medicina de su época. Las explicaciones que este médico ofrece a Sancho demuestran su ignorancia, y el poco desarrollo de la medicina: "la razón es porque siempre y a doquiera y de quienquiera son más estimadas las medicinas simples que las compuestas, porque en las simples no se puede errar y en las compuestas sí, alterando la cantidad de las cosas de que son compuestas" (II, 47).

Memorable es la realista descripción de la comida que se tiene que servir en la boda de Camacho con Quiteria:

Contó Sancho más de sesenta zaques de más de a dos arrobas cada uno, y todos llenos, según después pareció, de generosos vinos; así había rimeros de pan blanquísimo, como los suele haber de montones de trigo en las eras; los quesos, puestos como ladrillos enrejados, formaban una muralla, y dos calderas de aceite, mayores que las de un tinte, servían de freír cosas de masa, que con dos valientes palas las sacaban fritas y las zabullían en otra caldera de preparada miel que allí junto estaba. (II, 20).

Cervantes remata la descripción mencionando a los cocineros, sin los cuales el banquete no sería posible; ellos tienen que trabajar, para que los demás se diviertan: "Los cocineros y cocineras pasaban de cincuenta: todos limpios, todos diligentes y todos contentos." (II, 20). Cervantes no se olvida de llamar la atención del lector sobre la simplicidad de los preparativos de tal boda de labradores, con guisos tradicionales, pero en abundancia: "Finalmente, el aparato de la boda era rústico, pero tan abundante que podía sustentar a un ejército" (II, 20).

Acontecimientos que parecen sacados de las crónicas de la época vienen mencionados en la historia de Ricote, el morisco, un vecino de Sancho, a quien el escudero se asombra de encontrar: "¿Quién diablos te había de conocer, Ricote, en ese traje de moharracho que traes? Dime: ¿quién te ha hecho franchote, y cómo tienes atrevimiento de volver a España, donde si te cogen y conocen tendrás harta mala ventura?" (II, 54). Ricote había sido desterrado, no podía estar en España sin arriesgar su vida, pero confía en Sancho, sabe que su vecino no le delatará, y le cuenta sus desgracias:

Si tú no me descubres, Sancho -respondió el peregrino-, seguro estoy que en este traje no habrá nadie que me conozca [...]. Yo tendré lugar de contarte lo que me ha sucedido después que me partí de nuestro lugar, por obedecer el bando de Su Majestad, que con tanto rigor a los desdichados de mi nación amenazaba, según oíste. (II, 54).

Después de comer, Ricote tiene la oportunidad de relatarle detenidamente las desventuras de los moriscos expulsados de España:

«Bien sabes, ¡oh Sancho Panza, vecino y amigo mío!, como el pregón y bando que Su Majestad mandó publicar contra los de mi nación puso terror y espanto en todos nosotros; a lo menos, en mí le puso de suerte que me parece que antes del tiempo que se nos concedía para que hiciésemos ausencia de España, ya tenía el rigor de la pena ejecutado en mi persona y en la de mis hijos. Ordené, pues, a mi parecer como prudente, bien así como el que sabe que para tal

tiempo le han de quitar la casa donde vive y se provee de otra donde mudarse; ordené, digo, de salir yo solo, sin mi familia, de mi pueblo, y ir a buscar donde llevarla con comodidad y sin la priesa con que los demás salieron; porque bien vi, y vieron todos nuestros ancianos, que aquellos pregones no eran sólo amenazas, como algunos decían, sino verdaderas leyes, que se habían de poner en ejecución a su determinado tiempo; y forzábame a creer esta verdad saber yo los ruines y disparatados intentos que los nuestros tenían, y tales, que me parece que fue inspiración divina la que movió a Su Majestad a poner en efecto tan gallarda resolución, no porque todos fuésemos culpados, que algunos había cristianos firmes y verdaderos; pero eran tan pocos que no se podían oponer a los que no lo eran, y no era bien criar la sierpe en el seno, teniendo los enemigos dentro de casa. Finalmente, con justa razón fuimos castigados con la pena del destierro, blanda y suave al parecer de algunos, pero al nuestro, la más terrible que se nos podía dar (II, 54).

A los lectores de todos los tiempos les ha conmovido la melancolía de Ricote, que lamenta haber tenido que irse de España:

Doquiera que estamos lloramos por España, que, en fin, nacimos en ella y es nuestra patria natural; en ninguna parte hallamos el acogimiento que nuestra desventura desea, y en Berbería, y en todas las partes de África, donde esperábamos ser recibidos, acogidos y regalados, allí es donde más nos ofenden y maltratan. No hemos conocido el bien hasta que le hemos perdido; y es el deseo tan grande, que casi todos tenemos de volver a España, que los más de aquellos, y son muchos, que saben la lengua como yo, se vuelven a ella, y dejan allá sus mujeres y sus hijos desamparados: tanto es el amor que la tienen; y agora conozco y experimento lo que suele decirse: que es dulce el amor de la patria (II, 54).

Antes de irse, Ricote había enterrado un tesoro cerca del pueblo, y pensaba ir a recuperarlo: “Ahora es mi intención, Sancho, sacar el tesoro que dejé enterrado, que por estar fuera del pueblo lo podré hacer sin peligro y escribir o pasar desde Valencia a mi hija y a mi mujer, que sé que está en Argel, y dar traza como traerlas a algún puerto de Francia, y desde allí llevarlas a Alemania”. (II, 54). Es, sin duda, la historia de muchos moriscos que tuvieron que dejar España en la época, historia que Cervantes inmortaliza para nosotros en su novela.

Hay informaciones sobre la Inquisición, en el capítulo de la cabeza encantada, ya que la broma no puede durar mucho, por miedo a la Inquisición, y Cervantes lo apunta estrictamente:

divulgándose por la ciudad que don Antonio tenía en su casa una cabeza encantada, que a cuantos le preguntaban respondía, temiendo no llegase a los oídos de las despiertas centinelas de nuestra Fe, habiendo declarado el caso a los señores inquisidores, le mandaron que lo deshiciese y no pasase más adelante, porque el vulgo ignorante no se escandalizase; pero en la opinión de don Quijote y de Sancho Panza, la cabeza quedó por encantada y por respondona, más a satisfacción de don Quijote que de Sancho (II, 62).

También hay información sobre las “diligencias” que se llevaban a cabo en la época de Felipe III para que un morisco pudiera permanecer en España:

No [...] hay que esperar en favores ni en dádivas, porque con el gran don Bernardino de Velasco, conde de Salazar, a quien dio Su Majestad cargo de

nuestra expulsión, no valen ruegos, no promesas, no dádivas, no lástimas; porque, aunque es verdad que él mezcla la misericordia con la justicia, como él ve que todo el cuerpo de nuestra nación está contaminado y podrido, usa con él antes del cauterio que abrasa que del unguento que molifica; y así, con prudencia, con sagacidad, con diligencia y con miedos que pone, ha llevado sobre sus fuertes hombros a debida ejecución el peso desta gran máquina, sin que nuestras industrias, estratagemas, solicitudes y fraudes hayan podido deslumbrar sus ojos de Argos, que continuo tiene alerta, porque no se le quede ni encubra ninguno de los nuestros, que, como raíz escondida, que con el tiempo venga después a brotar, y a echar frutos venenosos en España, ya limpia, ya desembarazada de los temores en que nuestra muchedumbre la tenía. ¡Heroica resolución del gran Filipo Tercero, y inaudita prudencia en haberla encargado al tal don Bernardino de Velasco! (II, 65).

No podemos dejar de mencionar las descripciones de los molinos de viento, o la inolvidable descripción de la imprenta.

Don Quijote y Sancho encuentran unos molinos de viento en el campo, y la aventura que este hallazgo les proporciona es la más conocida de la novela, la que a lo largo de los siglos ha sido tantas veces citada o aludida, llegando a engendrar refranes populares en varias lenguas, de manera que en la actualidad la expresión “luchar con los molinos de viento” es archiconocida, y forma parte del folclore universal, a pesar de que habrá incluso quien apenas recuerde su origen. Don Quijote toma los molinos por “desaforados gigantes”, y quiere “hacer batalla y quitarles a todos las vidas [...]”; que ésta es buena guerra, y es gran servicio de Dios quitar tan mala simiente de sobre la faz de la tierra” (I, 8). Sancho Panza, con su sabiduría de campesino que no ha leído libros en su vida, le advierte que está embistiendo unos meros molinos de viento. Pero Don Quijote no le hace caso: “Bien parece -respondió don Quijote- que no estás cursado en esto de las aventuras: ellos son gigantes; y si tienes miedo, quítate de ahí, y ponte en oración en el espacio que yo voy a entrar con ellos en fiera y desigual batalla” (I, 8). Igual que en el caso de la venta que le parecía castillo, Don Quijote transfigura la realidad, fraguándola en el molde de sus deseos. En la lucha con el molino más cercano Don Quijote es herido, y acaba en la tierra: “embistió con el primero molino que estaba delante; y, dándole una lanzada en el aspa, la volvió el viento con tanta furia que hizo la lanza pedazos, llevándose tras sí al caballo y al caballero, que fue rodando muy maltrecho por el campo” (I, 8).

José María Paz Gago estudia la presencia de las “instalaciones preindustriales” en la novela, y reflexiona:

Imponentes construcciones dotadas de largos brazos en continua agitación, artefactos movidos por vísceras mecánicas, maquinarias complejíssimas elevando sus amplias aspas vestidas de velas como inacabables mangas, dejando a la vista sus chirriantes engranajes que coronaba el cuerpo de la gigantesca torre blanqueada... No es de extrañar que aquellos aparatosos edificios antropomorfos, los molinos de viento, devoradores insaciables de cereales de tantas cosechas, apareciesen a los ojos de los mortales como criaturas extraordinarias de fortísima complexión mecánica y aspecto feroz, ingredientes que Cervantes supo utilizar con envidiable habilidad narrativa, convertidos en gigantes temibles, aunque sólo fuesen imaginarios... (Paz Gago, 2006: 29).

El final del capítulo tiene también gran importancia histórica, puesto que don Quijote ve una imprenta, durante uno de sus paseos por la ciudad, y tiene la curiosidad de entrar, para mirar cómo se imprimen los libros. Su curiosidad permite al lector del siglo XXI imaginar una imprenta del Siglo de Oro. Don Quijote entra y “vio tirar en una parte, corregir en otra, componer en ésta, enmendar en aquélla, y, finalmente, toda aquella máquina que en las imprentas grandes se muestra” (II, 62).

José María Paz Gago no puede dejar de observar:

Esta fascinante visita del nuevo caballero andante a un taller de imprenta, la tecnología que lo ha hecho posible, que le ha dado la vida de ente tipográfico por antonomasia y ha desencadenado su propia historia imaginaria, historia de un lector empedernido y de un libro en sí misma, es tanto más sorprendente cuanto que existen poquísimos testimonios y documentos sobre el funcionamiento de las imprentas en Europa (Paz Gago, *op.cit.* : 60).

El caballero hace muchas preguntas, y los trabajadores le contestan con cortesía y con paciencia. Le muestran a un señor, y le dicen que es traductor, y Don Quijote compadece a los que desempeñan el oficio de traductor, y otros parecidos: “Osaré yo jurar -dijo don Quijote- que no es vuesa merced conocido en el mundo, enemigo siempre de premiar los floridos ingenios ni los loables trabajos. ¡Qué de habilidades hay perdidas por ahí! ¡Qué de ingenios arrinconados! ¡Qué de virtudes menospreciadas!” (II, 62).

Aunque nos pese, don Quijote no aprecia mucho la traducción:

Pero, con todo esto, me parece que el traducir de una lengua en otra, como no sea de las reinas de las lenguas, griega y latina, es como quien mira los tapices flamencos por el revés, que, aunque se ven las figuras, son llenas de hilos que las oscurecen, y no se ven con la lisura y tez de la haz; y el traducir de lenguas fáciles, ni arguye ingenio ni elocución, como no le arguye el que traslada ni el que copia un papel de otro papel. Y no por esto quiero inferir que no sea loable este ejercicio del traducir; porque en otras cosas peores se podría ocupar el hombre, y que menos provecho le trujesen (II, 62).

Otro aspecto igualmente realista estriba en las relaciones amo – criado, perfectamente presentadas.

Al principio de la inmortal novela, don Quijote escucha unos quejidos, y va a socorrer a la persona “menesterosa”. Se trata de Andrés, que es azotado por su amo:

Y, volviendo las riendas, encaminó a Rocinante hacia donde le pareció que las voces salían. Y, a pocos pasos que entró por el bosque, vio atada una yegua a una encina, y atado en otra a un muchacho, desnudo de medio cuerpo arriba, hasta de edad de quince años, que era el que las voces daba; y no sin causa, porque le estaba dando con una pretina muchos azotes un labrador de buen talle, y cada azote le acompañaba con una reprehensión y consejo. (I, 4).

El labrador que azota a Andrés le explica a don Quijote:

Señor caballero, este muchacho que estoy castigando es un mi criado, que me sirve de guardar una manada de ovejas que tengo en estos contornos, el cual es tan descuidado, que cada día me falta una; y, porque castigo su descuido, o

bellaquería, dice que lo hago de miserable, por no pagalle la soldada que le debo, y en Dios y en mi ánima que miente (I, 4).

Lo que quiere decir que el amo podía maltratar a sus criados, la sociedad de aquel entonces lo permitía.

Más tarde, Sancho critica la actitud de su amo, y le anima a casarse con Dorotea, ya que es mucho más hermosa que Dulcinea. En realidad, Sancho sueña con que su amo sea rey, para hacerle a él marqués. Don Quijote no soporta que pongan en duda la belleza de Dulcinea, y golpea sin piedad a su escudero:

Don Quijote, que tales blasfemias oyó decir contra su señora Dulcinea, no lo pudo sufrir, y, alzando el lanzón, sin hablalle palabra a Sancho y sin decirle esta boca es mía, le dio tales dos palos que dio con él en tierra; y si no fuera porque Dorotea le dio voces que no le diera más, sin duda le quitara allí la vida” (I, 30).

Aquí se observa que la relación entre el amo y el criado no se aparta de los cánones de la época: el amo tiene derecho a maltratar a su criado, y el criado lo considera normal y justo.

Lo mismo le pasa en la Segunda parte a Tosilos, el lacayo del duque que se había negado a luchar con don Quijote, y había preferido casarse con la doncella ofendida. El mismo Tosilos relata más tarde al caballero el desenlace del acontecimiento:

Yo pensé casarme sin pelear, por haberme parecido bien la moza, pero sucedióme al revés mi pensamiento, pues, así como vuestra merced se partió de nuestro castillo, el duque mi señor me hizo dar cien palos por haber contravenido a las ordenanzas que me tenía dadas antes de entrar en la batalla, y todo ha parado en que la muchacha es ya monja, y doña Rodríguez se ha vuelto a Castilla, y yo voy ahora a Barcelona, a llevar un pliego de cartas al virrey, que le envía mi amo (II, 66).

Cervantes describe con el mismo realismo las pintorescas costumbres tradicionales y los bailes de la boda de Camacho:

De allí a poco comenzaron a entrar por diversas partes de la enramada muchas y diferentes danzas, entre las cuales venía una de espadas, de hasta veinte y cuatro zagales de gallardo parecer y brío, todos vestidos de delgado y blanquísimo lienzo, con sus paños de tocar, labrados de varias colores de fina seda; y al que los guiaba, que era un ligero mancebo, preguntó uno de los de las yeguas si se había herido alguno de los danzantes. [...]Y luego comenzó a enredarse con los demás compañeros, con tantas vueltas y con tanta destreza que, aunque don Quijote estaba hecho a ver semejantes danzas, ninguna le había parecido tan bien como aquella. (II, 20).

También bailan las muchachas:

También le pareció bien otra que entró de doncellas hermosísimas, tan mozas que, al parecer, ninguna bajaba de catorce ni llegaba a diez y ocho años, vestidas todas de palmilla verde, los cabellos parte tranzados y parte sueltos, pero todos tan rubios, que con los del sol podían tener competencia, sobre los cuales traían guirnaldas de jazmines, rosas,

amaranto y madreelva compuestas. Guiábalas un venerable viejo y una anciana matrona, pero más ligeros y sueltos que sus años prometían. Hacíales el son una gaita zamorana, y ellas, llevando en los rostros y en los ojos a la honestidad y en los pies a la ligereza, se mostraban las mejores bailadoras del mundo. (II, 20).

El lenguaje también es muy realista: si Don Quijote cita autores clásicos y novelas de caballería, Sancho no deja de ensartar refranes populares. Pero el lenguaje y los refranes del *Quijote* son ya objeto de estudio de tantos libros y artículos.

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