2008 **Year I** **Issue 1**

TRANSLATION STUDIES. RETROSPECTIVE AND PROSPECTIVE VIEWS

Proceedings of the 3rd Conference
Translation Studies: Retrospective and Prospective Views

(First volume)

9 – 11 October 2008
"Dunărea de Jos" University of Galați, ROMANIA

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This issue includes a selection of the papers presented at the International Conference
Translation Studies: Retrospective and Prospective Views
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Editors' Note

The summer of 2006 witnessed a new event in the calendar of international scientific events hosted by the Faculty of Letters, "Dunărea de Jos" University of Galați: the international conference *Translation Studies: Retrospective and Prospective Views* which benefited from the contribution of 32 participants. The interest shown by the community of would-be and professional translators, master students specializing in translation and interpreting as well as teachers of the theory and practice of translation supported the conference organizing committee to continue the project. Thus, the second edition of 2007 enjoyed wider success as it brought together 67 participants. After the first two successfully-developed projects whose proceedings were published in two volumes by the CNCSIS-accredited EUROPLUS Publishing House in Galați, Romania, the 2008 edition followed.

The conference preserved the same specific demands: a) to provide an academic framework for productive discussion for professional and would-be translators, teachers and MA or PhD students interested in disseminating the results of their research, and b) to show how research in these fields was prepared to meet the challenges of the globalizing imperatives at the beginning of the twenty-first century, and how the local background managed to adjust to these challenges. Although the main purpose of the conference was to focus on translation studies exclusively, the organizing committee were open to suggestions and accepted other topics proposed by participants as well. This explains the flexible scientific profile creating an opportunity for younger researchers to present, describe, disseminate and, thus, submit the results of their scientific quest or exploration to other (more experienced) specialists for discussion, suggestions and (eventually) recommendations for further reading.

Since the third edition of the conference on translation studies in 2008 registered 87 participation offers, the conference proceedings publication format required some changes. The conference organizing committee decided that the participants' contributions selected and refereed should be published in a specialist review. This review published in three issues annually, is meant to gather a number of the articles presented in the yearly editions of this conference as well as other submitted contributions (such as short essays, book reviews, calls for books/papers, conference chronicles, announcements related to the field of translation studies). The first three issues will also publish papers not originally presented in the conference, whose authors could not participate in the event proper but had submitted their paper according to the conference calendar or while the editing work on the review was still in progress.

The publication of the first three volumes was made possible thanks to the financial support of A.N.C.Ş./N.A.S.R. (**A**genţia **N**aţională pentru **C**ercetare **Ş**tiinţifică – the **N**ational **A**uthority for **S**cientific **R**esearch), subsequent to the above-mentioned project competition. The conference proceedings developed in both plenary and concurrent sessions which were so devised as to allow the participants to share their research findings in language-specific environments focusing on English culture and translation studies and Romance cultures and translation studies (French and Romanian). The members of the scientific committee refereed the contributions; most of them were accepted for publication and they are included in three thematically-organized proceedings volumes. In addition to the paper sections, each of the issues will open with the editors' note and a foreword assuring an easier access to the papers in the respective issue and they will end with a chapter of contribution summaries in French.

In the light of the foregoing, the first volume will consist of two paper sections, the former focusing on literary topics and the latter on foreign language teaching.

The second volume will include the contributions in the field of language and culture studies, approaching the English, French, Romanian or German cultural and linguistic environments.

The third volume will gather all of the topics discussed in the field of translation studies.

The editors and conference organizers are grateful to the scientific committee and the peer reviewers for their work and helpful suggestions which have contributed to the final form of the articles. Their special thanks go to each member of the English Department in the Faculty of Letters - "Dunărea de Jos" University of Galaţi for their steady support and dedication during the long hours of project designing, preparation and unfolding of the conference as well as the editing works.

The editors' cordial thanks also go to contributors who kindly answered the last minute publication requests thus authoring this new series of volumes on the current state of translation studies in Romania and abroad and to the Board of the University and of the Faculty of Letters for their support in publishing this series and in organizing the conference whose name was granted to the review.

The editors also wish to thank our colleague, Dr. Gabriela Iuliana Colipcă for the efforts she took as a web master, when creating the conference web page which can be accessed for details regarding the previous editions of the conference at the address http://www.lit.ugal.ro/ConferenceTranslationStudies/home.htm

Elena CROITORU Floriana POPESCU

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Foreword

The first volume of this series includes those papers considering aspects of the literary text or message presented within the literature and culture studies concurrent sessions. They were delivered in English or French and they have their titles in the original, but in order to ensure the English readership wider access to the papers, an outline of the topics discussed in each of the papers as well as excerpts from the abstracts accompanying the conference participation offers were selected and are available in what follows. In case prospective readers of the current volume would choose to exchange ideas with any of the volume contributors, their e-mail addresses are also provided.

SIMONA ANTOFI discusses the influence of G.G.Byron's *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* on Bolintineanu's *Conrad*. Her paper, ***Conrad**, Dimitrie Bolintineanu's Poem and Its Romantic Model,* suggests to that Bolintineanu purposefully creates a multi-layered romantic poem of ideas similar to Byron's. Conrad, like the Byronic poems, reveals the same type of problems, of heroes, the same historic reconstructions which bear the imprint of a peculiar lyricism, of the same type of sea poetry as well as the exotic picturesque.

Simona Antofi, associate professor, works at the Department of Literature, Linguistics and Journalism, Faculty of Letters, "Dunărea de Jos" University of Galați, Romania. Her field of research considers the Romanian literature of the 19th and 20th centuries.

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RUXANDA BONTILĂ considers *Annotation as Transtextual Translation* and her major intention is to discern the profile of an annotator. Taking as a starting point the prolificacy of Vladimir Nabokov's oeuvre, it has encouraged a number of annotators to embark upon the difficult, very often annoying task of annotating his works. The following by now famous names are envisaged here: Alfred Appel Jr., who consensually (i.e. having the writer's approval in terms of meaning) annotated *Lolita* (1970); and Brian Boyd who completed his long journey work of annotating *Ada* only last year (2007).

Ruxanda Bontilă is an associate professor at the English Department, Faculty of Letters, "Dunărea de Jos" University of Galați, Romania, teaching British and American Literature. Her recent publications include *Vladimir Nabokov's English Novels. The Art of Defusing Subjectivism* (2004) and *The Romantics and the Victorians. Views and Weaves* (2005).

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SORINA CHIPER, a young academic at the "Al. I. Cuza" Unversity of Iaşi, Romania, approaches the topic of *Black Identity in Richard Wright's Black Boy*. The author focuses on the representation of Black identity as reflected in Wright's autobiography. It places Black Boy within the context of African American literature and traces its roots in the tradition of slave narratives, from which it deviates via its bleak portrayal of Blacks in the South. Black identity is a site of negativity, from which Wright escapes by fashioning himself into a writer.

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RALUCA GALIȚA, a young academic at the University of Bacău, Romania, whose research fields include pragmatics, stylistics, discourse analysis, 'visualizes' the *Imagery of Death in* ***Hamlet***. Since William Shakespeare saw death as crime, suicide, infection, poison, disease, the researcher explores and comments on all the facets of death.

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NICOLETA IFRIM is a young academic at the Faculty of Letters, "Dunărea de Jos" University of Galați, Romania, who has been teaching Romanian literature. Her research interests focus on Mihai Eminescu's poetry and on the literary criticism discussing, interpreting or commenting on his literary production. With this particular paper she goes on a quest for fractal mirrors and for their literary relevance, having in view the recent literature of speciality.

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CRISTINA MĂLINOIU PĂTRAŞCU, a member of the doctoral school of the Faculty of Letters in "Dunărea de Jos" University of Galați, Romania was granted a one-year scholarship to carry on research in France. While 'peeping' *Into the Labyrinth of (Meta) Fiction with the Magus* she tries to find methodological issues in the classification of intensifiers as primary markers of intensification. The author concludes with the idea that systematic research on English intensifiers contrasts with the rather diffuse analytical approaches in the Romanian literature.

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Professor **DOINIȚA MILEA, PhD,** member of the Department of Literature and Linguistics, Faculty of Letters, "Dunărea de Jos" University of Galați, Romania, focuses on the starting points in the narrative techniques of the Romanian prose writers of the '80.

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ECATERINA PĂTRAŞCU shows a particular interest in *Knowledge and Representation in Contemporary British Novel*. She is convinced that postmodernism is the best term to define the majority of the writers after 1968, particularly when referring to the American world. Such concepts as reality, history, knowledge, truth, are marked by fragmentariness, perspectivism, extreme subjectivity, and relativism. None of these can create themselves and neither can they create ontology. Nevertheless, although well disguised, the attitude of contemporary British writers such as Graham Swift, Julian Barnes, Salman Rushdie does exist at the opposite pole.

The author considers that from the perspective of the British authors, history defines and establishes identities; from the relativistic American perspective, history is built. Political discourse and shade of meaning are involved in both cases, but the accent is different.

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DAN NICOLAE POPESCU, a young academic at "Ştefan cel Mare" University of Suceava, Romania, approaches the topic of "*Sir Gawain and the Green Knight": [Re]Translating the Mediaeval Code of Chivalry.* The author argues that by the end of the Middle Ages, the Code of Chivalry had estranged itself so much from its original meaning that somebody, if anonymous[ly], had to re-translate it so that the knightly body should return to its position as militia Christi and abandon the morally perilous status of militia saeculi. The Arthurian romance in question offers this anonymous contemporary of Geoffrey Chaucer a splendid opportunity to satirically but also critically analyse knighthood's fall from grace. Yet, it grants us yet one more chance to contemplate how at the turn of the 15th century Western culture switched from a God-centred environment to a man-centred one, ultimately implying that man perpetually re-translates himself/herself, striving to evade the limitations imposed by the afflictive nature of the human condition.

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The paper *Language in Literature: Communication or Politics?* surprises from the very beginning with a title resembling an equation. Its authors, **MICHAELA PRAISLER** and **ALEXANDRU PRAISLER** (the former a professor of English and American literature at the English Department of the Faculty of Letters, "Dunărea de Jos" University of Galaţi, Romania, and the latter a graduate of the Translation and Interpretation master's programme), agree that literary art exploits the word to rewrite reality, to communicate ideologies and to formulate policies. From this point of view, George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is a representative case which, beginning with its real-fictitious narrative thread and ending with the metalinguistic peritext of its Appendix, constitutes itself into a profound

study on language and literature, on the language of literature and on its communicative properties – supported or hindered by translation.

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STELUȚA STAN is in search of an answer to the question *To Be an Author or a Critic or Both? This Is the Question*. Possible answers are to be found in the literature on criticism. Here, Barthes, for example, defined the theoretical discourse to be self-reflexive as well as the export of critical expertise into the novel. Theoretical discourse was not only the proper manner to disseminate theory but also to attribute a critical function to the novel, an ability to explore the logic and philosophy of fiction, without making use of metalanguage.

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The problem of placing authors within different cultural trends may reveal itself to be rather difficult and some authors are to be placed somewhere in between, as is the case with **ANDREIA IRINA SUCIU**'s contribution, *Malcolm Bradbury between Modernism and Postmodernism.* The paper argues that Bradbury belonged to two worlds, his literary production being a bridge connecting two universes: he was a genuine British gentleman fascinated by North America where he would make travels aimed at inspiring a new culture and a new time, on the one hand, and a man of his time, keeping up with the trends, scientific discoveries and cultural developments, on the other. He would always come back to the past, and showed his consideration for the values of that past. Moreover, he was not only a genuine creator living in two millennia and feeling the pressure of transition, but also a thorough and objective analyst of the literary phenomenon and a playful wit who would very much enjoy using a comic voice in his novels. Deeply rooted in modernism and postmodernism, Bradbury masterfully used modern and postmodernistic techniques in a unitary and successful mixture.

Andreia Irina Suciu, who defended her doctoral thesis on Malcolm Bradbury at "Al. I. Cuza" University in Iasi, Romania, this autumn, teaches English literature at the University of Bacău.

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DANA MARIANA VASILIU, University of Bucharest, discusses the relation between Early Gothic architecture and medieval conceptualizations of the sacred space in the twelfth- and thirteenth-century England, in her paper entitled *On the Threshold of Bliss: Translating Sacred Space in Early Gothic Cathedrals*. Special attention is paid to the analysis of the west front of *Wells Cathedral*, a huge screen-like canvas of

magnificent beauty which translated medieval visions of the Church Triumphant and of Heavenly Jerusalem into stone.

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Within the section of **Foreign Language Teaching** another chunk of ten papers discussing some of the latest problems in language teaching methodology were selected for publication.

Professor **REIMA AL- JARF** at the King Saudi University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, thoroughly investigates aspects of the *Online Collaboration in Translation Instruction among Students and Instructors***.** For that specific purpose, a whole project was devised and the paper minutely describes the materials, participants, procedures, and the results of the respective study.

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ELENA BONTA tackles *"Performances" in the English Class* and advances an analysis of the English class as social practice, which takes place in a semiotic framework and which makes use of semiotic resources (words, gestures, images) at whose level one can identify elements and ritual components.

Elena Bonta, Ph.D., associate professor at the University of Bacău, Romania, teaches lexicology, pragmatics, discourse analysis, interpersonal communication, verbal interaction and conversation.

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YOLANDA MIRELA CATELLI, in her paper *The Role of the Protocol in Teaching Translation Skills* approaches the role of the so-called protocol in the teaching and learning translation skills in her paper. By using a working protocol as a strategy meant to develop the IT students' awareness of the kind of problems technical translation may place in front of them, the author considers that learners can be given support in acquiring technical translation skills. Technical translators have to transpose the scientific information in the original text by using the most appropriate terms, on the one hand, and to identify and use the correct mode of expression according to the requirements and expectations of the targeted audience, on the other.

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ONORINA GRECU, a young academic whose bilingual dictionary of law terms enjoyed remarkable success, has been teaching English at "Spiru Haret" University of Constanța, Romania. She discusses the *Case Briefing in Legal English Class* since law students are often required to summarize the facts and outcome of a case in the course of their studies. She shares the definition of a brief as a written summary of the case. It involves thorough reading, analysis of the case with a careful eye to detail, describing the case in one's own words and briefing. For all that, the author states that briefs

are a very good exercise in the legal English class.

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Teacher of French working for a private high school in Galați, Romania, **FLORENTINA IBĂNESCU** has been studying the French colloquial register for some time and she approaches it now from a didactic perspective: *Une approche didactique sur le registre familier.* Underlining the fact that a French teacher's task is very difficult because of the French lexicon, orthography and grammar, the author proposes a useful solution: teaching and learning the foreign language of the generation having the same age as the learners, she considers that such a double aim could be reached fsa long as learners are induced into learning the colloquial register and are involved in the acquisition of the most important linguistic problems.

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IULIAN MARDAR, a second year master student in the English programme on Translation and Interpreting, "Dunărea de Jos" University of Galați, Romania, with considerable ten-year teaching experience both in Romania and in Taiwan, embarks upon *Exploring the Matrix of the English Tenses in Classroom*. The paper is designed to reveal the ways in which the symmetry characterizing English tenses may be used in teaching students whose mother tongue is not English. The main idea of the paper is that the English tense system is very logic, very precise and transparent, easily comparable to a glass cube: irrespective of the angle from which one looks at such a cube, they will see all its sides and corners provided that the looker is familiar with at least one side of the cube. The various tables and schemata explaining the matrix of the English tenses form the background for observations regarding the use of this extremely useful instrument in teaching English tenses to beginner and adult learners, respectively.

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ANDREEA MIHAELA NEDELCUȚ, from the University of Craiova, Romania**,** in her paper *English in School Versus English in Mass-Media.* analyzes both the English that is taught in schools and the English that is promoted in mass media: television, magazines, newspapers and radio. Unlike the English that students learn in schools, the English used in mass media accepts strange abbreviations and grammatical mistakes in constructing a phrase with the single purpose of persuading, provoking or entertaining. The author considers that from the gulf between the 'two languages' the question arises: 'What should teachers do – include mass media material during their English class or ignore it?'

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ANCA-MARIANA PEGULESCU, a member of the Romanian Ministry of Education Staff, is the author of the paper *From Reflection-Based*

LTE to Competency- Based LTE. Language teacher education (LTE) has been placed between two sorts of contextual factors: *social, political and cultural* factors, on the one hand, and *provision* factors, on the other. Last but not least, a discussion on ideology and on the teaching process, including teacher's knowledge, students' learning and the teachers and learners' beliefs, is necessary. Starting from the general attitude of all the learning process actors and from the frame of reference offered by the documents of the European Commission and the Council of Europe, the Romanian institutions responsible for the language teachers' education have to re-think the whole system.

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ADRIANA TEODORESCU is a keen observer of the environment and discusses about the *ICT Skills for Translators.* The author states that in the information society, information and *communication technologies* have become essential to all fields of activity. The permanent and fast development of ICT has also influenced the translators' work. Nowadays translators are also required computer-related skills besides their knowledge of a *foreign language*. Technology has affected several aspects of the translator's way of handling his work: the communication process, the way of creating and formatting texts.

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Associate professor **ANGELICA VALCU**, member of the Department of French, Faculty of Letters, "Dunărea de Jos" University of Galați, Romania, is mainly concerned with language and specialized discourse.

She approaches the literary dissertation as a subject of university studies in her paper entitled *La dissertation littéraire comme objet d'enseignement à l'université.* A literary dissertation is an argumentative paper involving the arrangement of personal reflections based on texts and documents. As a scholarly exercise, it aims to develop the learner's reflexive skills along an analytical process pivoting around a certain topic.

The paper was devised as an answer to the questions: a) why is the literary dissertation one of the greatest challenges for the students in our faculty? and b) is the literary dissertation fit for the new socio-economic and cultural contexts of the foreign language teaching process?

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Elena CROITORU Floriana POPESCU

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DIMITRIE BOLINTINEANU'S *CONRAD* AND ITS ROMANTIC MODEL

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G. G. Byron, whose literary creation was intensively translated between 1830 and 1840, represents one of the dominating models for the Romanian Romanticism in the 1840s. The numerous odes dedicated to him by the main representatives of the Romanian literature of the time highlight the acceptance of a new psycho-social and aesthetic model. *Childe Harold*'s huge success, among other things, brings about the model naturalization and implicitly, modification through *Conrad*, Dimitrie Bolintineanu's poem of Byronian resonance. Thus, the existential archetype of the exiled patriot (Bolintineanu himself) happily meets the literary archetype of the outcast, of the damned exiled with further profits for Romanian romanticism. The Romanian literature of the epoch provides the initiated reader with a series of poems of lyrical masks which assume the fertile individualistically problem-creating trajectory of Byronian heritage. Against this background, *Conrad* is a most outstanding artistic product, mixing philosophical-descriptive structures and laying the basis for a romantic poem of ideas, for a type of hero, for lyrically marked documentary remakes, through reverie and meditation on *ubi sunt* and *vanitas mundi,* through the sea poetry and sometimes overrated exotic picturesque.

Despite certain weaknesses pinpointed by the critics such as excessive lengths and repetitions, prose-like monotonous tone, and lack of a coordinating principle (Regman, 1966: 121), probably due to the tenseness which emerges in the poetic text between the convention of the epic poem and the romantic poet's lack of rigour, Bolintineanu's text tries to find its way towards a creative remake of the model, *Childe Harold,* Byron's well-known poem.

Conrad is a romantic poem wherein the author's lyrical masks and the lyrical ego's voice dispute their primacy or trespass, in turn, each other's territories. In fact, Bolintineanu subjects himself to an imperative of lyrical-personal nature, i.e., unfulfilled life, manifest in the theme of ultimate failure in the general framework of *vanitas vanitatum*. The non-sense of the world is laid against a thematic network easily to intertextually relate inaccessible femininity, the feelings of isolation from the world, of futility of the creation act, the angel meant to save the damned spirit hiding behind phenomenal appearances, and the reconciliation through death.

The motif of the outcast (perhaps an allusion to Nicolae Bălcescu, whose code name in Frăția, a freemason-like secret society, was Conrad Albert) and that of the journey have a double relevance for a whole generation, irremediably touched by *le mal du siècle*.

The nocturnal Oriental space provides the background for spiritual evasion towards re-creative and problem-rising anamnesis and converts itself in points of strong lyricism. The evasion is complete and beyond the so-called pilgrimage, it gives birth to an (a-spatial and a-temporal) (Constantinescu, 1998: 52) aesthetic extra-reality, a compensating universe, arguing for seascapes, for the pompous and musical verb, supporting the condensation of the world and the lyrical ego into monologues.

In this respect, Negoițescu (1966: 54) notices the author's state of innocent surprise when facing manifestations of light epiphany and perpetual wedding of the liquid element to ether. And Bolintineanu's poetic style of congenial melodiousness has drawn most of the critics' attention – "the strange, ineffable, harmonious melody of his language" is noticeable, next to the musical fascination of proper names and the need of "a purer hearing which listens to the music of ideas and feelings". (Negoițescu, 1991: 76)

The lyrical-mask hero goes through a process of initiation and self-assessment in his quest of a profound motivation of his own and of the universal non-existence. The lyrical monologues of the Byronic despair proclaim the wrong structuring of the Genesis and claim for spiritual compensations. The Byronic hero's heavy melancholies and malaise synchronize in the symbol-hero (Călin, 1955: 127), a quintessence of Romantic and Enlightenment reverence, with the concern for the mother-country unhappy fate, for the destiny of the Romanian people as well as for the whole mankind. That is why,

Byronic disabuse and cynicism are strange to the hero, which is not the case with the moralising sense of history. Nevertheless, from this point of view, the poem loses substance and succumbs to prolixity through ample digressions of excessively rhetorical and ostentatiously moralising culturally-biased discourse.

The mythical creation of the society is brought to contemporariness, the hero visualizes old ruins, remakes the typical ritual of poetic re-investment in the pre-romantic descent. It is this very iterative character of rhetorical exclamations which provides for text stereotypy.

The absolute novelty through which Bolintineanu surpasses his contemporary literature frameworks lies in his inventing literature as a lived experience and as a regenerating act within the Romanian literature boundaries. Julia and Claricia, the feminine characters of the poem, impose the suave prototype of the *donna angelicata* before Eminescu had done it. The two women offer themselves to the sight of the symbol-hero, already fascinated by the landscape naturally framing angelic femininity. And the holy union with the sea symbolically embodies itself in the vision of femininity contemplated by the auctorial ego, who, next to or through the intermediary of his lyrical hero, sublimes his existential obsessions and tribulations.

In this same respect, a personal mythology of the author synthesized "in the eternal game of shades and lights – the eternal confrontation between the aspiration for purity and the earthly gravity of the human being." (Cornea in Bolintineanu, 1984: 413-4)

The beginning of the first of the four cantos, *The Ionians* (followed by *The Syrians*, *Egypt* and the last untitled canto, which has nevertheless, a dedication "To the Illustrious Master Philasète Chasles") is a description of the sea in the twilight. This is one of the numerous instances proving Bolintineanu's Neptunism revealed by "a fine intuition of the movement of the sea waters". Simion, the author of the preceding quotation, interprets the metamorphoses of the sea as a rather straightforward way of highlighting the symbol-hero's moods. (Simion, 1998: 125)

We consider that sometimes, (the author's) jubilation, as he contemplates the liquid shores, claims an autonomous status, thus escaping any determination. Fruit of an innocent sight, capable to distinguish the mysterious correspondences of the universe, the liquid element – often associated with earth, seen as a promise of the

world horizon – acquires a certain sensuality which may polemicize with the most thorough analysis of the source. Here, Bolintineanu reveals his very self. ”Pluteşte dulce vasul şi boarea suflă-n vele;/Scânteie-albastră mare sub ploaia sa de stele./Şi luncile-eferate cu flori de foc/Plutesc strălucitoare, strein şi magic joc!/Vezuvul varsă focuri în aria senină/Şi unda ce primeşte văpaia de lumină/Răspunde printr-o ploaie de spumă şi fosfor/Pe urma care trage pe mare-un vas uşor. (The ship is softly drifting with the breeze in its sails;/Big blue spark under its rain with stars./And the fields scattered with flowers of fire/Are sailing bright, strange and magic play!/The Vesuvius pours fires on the serene area/And the wave embracing the flame of light/Replies with a rain of foam and phosphorus/On the wake that pulls a light ship on the sea.) (Bolintineanu, 1984: 256)

Although reduced to two or three lines, poetical indeed are the “raisings” of some isles such as Cyprus from the sea, as an effect of the primary holy union: Colo s-arată marea sub soare scânteind/C-o mie de nuanțe, de aur şi argint./Din sânu-i iese Cipru, plutind pe marea lină,/Ca norul p-orizonte, în umbră şi lumină. (There it is sparkling the sea under the sun/With a thousand nuances of gold and silver. /From its bosom rises Cyprus, floating on the calm sea/Like the cloud on the horizon, in shadow and light.) (206)

And so are the moments of maximum emotional charge, when the sight contemplates the arduous descent of the sun into the sea. A nopții lungă rochie ce lunecă pe mare/Cu stele semănată, pe splendida cărare/A lumii, fluturează, dar brazda de argint/Ce trage steaua rece pe mare strălucind,/Nu este numai dânsa atunce luminată./Tot valul sub o ploaie de aur se arată!/Tot câmpul azuratic, atât pe fața sa/Cât şi în fundul mării, adânc se-nflăcără;/Şi peştii, şi lopata, şi vasul ce pluteşte,/Şi aripa de vânturi ce undele loveşte,/Păreau în umbra nopții văzute din ăst loc,/Ca printr-un vis feeric, că toate sunt de foc. (The night’s long dress trailed on the sea,/Scattered with stars, along the wonderful path/Of the world, waves but the silver trail/That drags the cold, shiny, star on the sea,/Is not the only lighted one./The entire wave shows from under a rain of gold!/The entire sky-like field, on the face/But also the bottom of the sea, deeply enflamed;/And the fish, and the shovel, and the ship that sails,/And the wing of winds that strikes the

waves,/Seemed, in the shadow of the night seen from this place,/Like in a magic dream, that all are of fire.) (227-8)

The ruins themselves become lyrical, when invested with the function of a sentimental pilgrimage anchored in the epic pretext of a dilemmatic hero's journey, uniting well-known romantic antinomies: the scepticism of those repelled by their mother-country, by the universe, defeated by their destinies, and their visionary aspirations. This feminine complement, "a model of perfection, an angel of kindness, honour, purity, hope, idealism," (Bolintineanu in Petrescu, 1983: 163) in the author's intention, takes upon herself the angelic mission of salvation. Conrad dies in the arms of his lover, who is more of a vision than reality, rather a projection of the lyrical-hero's poetic imagination and an emanation of the landscape, thus symbolically achieving the perpetual exile into death.

Structurally, the poetic text tries to harmonize the lyrical-descriptive style, the reduction of the wide historical and philosophical perspective, the pondering on *fugit irreparabile tempus*, the ode converted into romantic elegy. The poem, as a whole, could be seen as a chain sequence of elegies with classicizing tinges of an idyllic-Theocritus-like type.

A poet and the author's alter ego, Conrad writes and dedicates to Julia an ode wherein, beyond the ordinary figures of minor rhetoric, some Eminescian accents can be felt, the very end of the poem anticipating Angel and Demon Nu e rază, nu e soare /Mai frumos ca dorul tău!/Corpu-ți? Roua dupe floare/Sufletu-ți? Prefumul său!/[...] /Păru-ți valuri lungi, plăcute,/Cheamă vântul serii pur,/Care ca să le sărute,/Lasă valul lui d-azur. (There's no sunray or sun/More beautiful than your longing!/Your body? The dew on a flower/Your soul? Its perfume!/ [...] /Your hair long, soft, waves,/Call the pure wind of the evening,/To kiss them,/And leave its blue wave.) (idem: 165-6),

Equally, the images of the delicate pastel of the night falling over the sea could be mentioned as a digression argued for only through Bolintineanu's neptunism lent to his lyrical mask in the canto of the Syrians: Marea sub poleiul dulce/Mestecat cu trandafiri, / Tremură, scânteie, luce,/Sub săruturi de zefiri./[...]/Colo sub râpoase maluri, / Fața mării s-a umbrit;/Dincolo dorminde valuri/Gem sub malul de granit. (The sea under the sweet frost/Melted with roses,/Shivers, flickers, shines,/Under Zephyr

kisses./[...]/There, under steep shores,/The face of the sea got shadowy;/There, sleepy waves/ Moan under granite shores.) (193), Hero and Leander's legend, or the party song, slightly moving towards bitter meditation, in the last canto of the poem.

In its own way, Bolintineanu's poem highlights the existence of some strengths of the Byronic model in the Balkan spirit of the Romanian literature – the Ottoman and Hellenic Orient, Bosporus, the harem, the oriental-stemming hedonistic attitude, the fatal erotic passion and the appetite for the fabulous as well as the sum total of states and attitudes which make up the so-called Byronism: the indefinite melancholy, the nocturnal meditation by the graves, the feeling of humankind futility, the fascination stirred by a legendary past and egocentrism as a measure of all things.

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ANNOTATION AS TRANSTEXTUAL TRANSLATION

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1. Introduction: Translation as critical thinking

In an interview, Domenico Pezzini (former professor of English at the University of Verona and consacrated traslator) declares that "no approach to the text equals in depth that of the translator, where reading skill and writing skill meet." (2008: 49) I certainly agree with the translator's view as with his concluding remark, that "in every single study of language the practice of translation should always be there, both when learning to read and when learning to write." (2008: 49)

By the same token, I say that translation can help students/scholars/people get used to making good judgments in terms of thinking, of speech, of action, or of creation. As the practice of making good theoretical, practical, productive judgments — in short, critical thinking — depends on skilfully performed acts in any professional guise, it follows that critical thinking or applied thinking is as much process as productive activity. It involves, as Matthew Lipman explains, "using knowledge to bring about reasonable change." (2007: 427)

There are three essential characteristics which can, according to Lipman, signify the relationship between critical thinking and judgment. They are (1) reliance on criteria, (2) the capacity of being self-corrective, and (3) sensitivity to context. Once these characteristics are met, critical thinking turns a product, which is concerned either with the production of meaning, as in the case of responsible interpretation, or the preservation of meaning, as in the case of responsible translation. Any cognitive practice must base on such time-tested criteria as *validity, evidential warrant,* and *consistency,* which can, whenever necessary, be made available by their practitioners.

Translation is an activity which takes minute by minute decision-making based as much on logic as on reasoning: the former helps to validly extend our thinking; the latter to justify and defend it. If we want to help our students improve both logic and reasoning, then we must make them develop their ability to identify and give good reasons for the opinions they express. The necessary condition for achieving the goal is that teachers

themselves become models of intellectual responsibility, never faltering in justifying an opinion or grade, which will encourage students to do likewise. This will further encourage students to assume responsibility for their own thinking, and, ultimately, their education.

Translation can thus become an exercise of inquiry which encourages self-correction (i.e., self-criticism and self-control — the qualities C. S. Pierce (1931) identifies as deriving from self-correction) and sensitivity to context (i.e., inferential reasoning which is not dissimilar from Aristotle's call for understanding the individual within the general and not vice versa). It also helps identify fallacious thinking as well as recognize the logical basis of figurative language, as for instance in simile and metaphor. It further helps make and *exercise* good judgments, as when interpreting a text, critically responding to an oral message or building a sound argument. Translation skills, along with communication and concept-formation and reasoning skills can then ensure competency in inference.

It follows that education for critical thinking – translation being one suitable way among other[1] — is profitable on both short and long terms because it increases the quantity and quality of meaning that students derive from what they read and perceive and what they express in what they write and say.

2. Annotation: A transcultural and transtextual practice

Annotation, as etymologically assumed [L. *annotāre — ad,* to, *notāre, -atum,* to mark], means the making of notes, a note of explanation; a comment to be added to a book or piece of writing to explain parts of it (*Chambers Concise Dictionary*; *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*). As annotation transmits information, it follows that it is as much receiver-oriented as text/author-oriented. It then means that it veers more towards criticism/interpretation than translation proper. The latter, as partaking of the status of a work of art, is free-standing, that is, *foreign reader*-oriented, since art, as Walter Benjamin remarks, "posits man's physical and spiritual existence, but in none of its works is it concerned with its response." (1955: 69) Similarly, a literary work "*tells* very little to those who understand it," Benjamin points out in order to make the distinction between bad translation, (i.e. any translation which performs a transmitting function) and good translation (i.e. translation as a work of art) more conspicuous. In his now famous argument on 'The task of the translator,' the theorist postulates that "translation is a mode" and translatability "an essential feature of certain works" or "vital connection" between the original and its translation. (1955: 70; 71) This means that, of all literary forms, translation

has the special vocation of watching over the maturing process of the original language and the birth pangs of its own.

What about the annotation of a literary work? Is it charged with a similar potential of watching over the maturing process of the original? Does it link more to life (the author's, the work's, reality) than fiction proper?

I think that very much like in the case of certain literary works which cry out their translatability, the same goes for some such works which cry out their annotatability. But, it may well be for completely opposite reasons: The works' translatability is intrinsic, while the works' annotatability is extrinsic. The former happens at the level of creation, the latter, at the level of reception. It also seems that, in the case of annotation, the cause becomes its justification or *raison d'être*. To be more explicit, I'll just mention some examples of literary works that have annotation thrust upon them, so to speak: *Ulysses* (1922) — see Don Gifford's *Ulysses Annotated,* 2008; *Finnegans Wake* (1939) — see *Annotations to Finnegans Wake* by Roland McHugh, 1991; *The Confidence Man* (1857) — see Herman Melville's *Confidence Man,* edited by Hershel Parker, 1971; *Lolita* (1955) — see Carl R. Proffer's *Keys to Lolita,* 1968; *The Annotated Lolita* by Alfred Appel Jr., 1970; "Emendations to Annotated Editions of *Lolita*" by Leland de la Durantaye, 2007; *Ada or Ardor: A Family Chronicle* (1969) — see ongoing *Annotations to Ada* by Brian Boyd, 1993-2008; *The Satanic Verses* (1988) — see Paul Brians' project *Annotating The Satanic Verses: An Example of Internet Research and Publication,* 2004. To take only the most celebrated.

As dissimilar as these works may appear, they certainly share a common temptation for annotators. Here are some commonsensical reasons that come to mind: (1) the paramount feeling of intimidation the reader (novice or not) has in front of the maze of literary/ historical/ political/ religious/ cultural allusions; (2) the innumerable language games they display; (3) the recondite material in rich, multi-layered referential constructions (from elaborate intra-textual reference, through self-reference and textualized extratextual reference to hermeneutic reference); (4) the infinite intertextual patterns of thought and thinking within and outside the text; (5) the paratextual information to keep track of; (6) the baffling architextuality as part of transtextuality or transcendence (Genette's nomenclature) the work reinvents; (7) the inferential dialogue between life/reality and its fictional transposition.

Annotators like critics and certainly translators must develop a huge interest in the literary work they come to annotate. But, of course, the reasons for which they get so involved with the respective work can vary. For instance, Alfred Appel Jr. confesses that his *Annotated Lolita* addresses the needs of college students first, but also those of the general reader who

seems to be "more troubled by Humbert Humbert's use of language and lore than by his abuse of Lolita and law." (1991: xi) It is not unimportant that *The Annotated Lolita* (1970) was the first annotated edition of a modern novel to have been published during its author's lifetime — "*A Tale of a Tub* for our time," as A. Appel Jr. calls it (xiii). This implies that its author was not only consulted but he also had a chance to comment upon/ agree/ disagree with the notes — a real treat, if we may say so, for any living author. But, *not* for Nabokov, the author of *Pale Fire,* the great "Master of disguise" or "Enchanted Hunter," who distrusts fiction as much as he distrusts life or nature.

Or how else to read the Nabokov of prefaces, lectures, interviews, letters, glossaries to the novels, afterwords, notes, if not the writer who long learned self-inflicted language, deprivation and discovered the meaning of uncertainty, of exclusion, disarray, clumsiness, and poverty? The humanity Nabokov strives so hard to hide becomes what the quarry annotators are after and strenuously *translate out* in various forms. Proof stands the numerous annotating notes and even emendations to annotations to be read in the specialized journal *The Nabokovian*, which has been hosting Brian Boyd's ongoing annotations to *Ada* as a special gift to its readers since 1993. Brian Boyd's annotations come accompanied by a 'Forenote' and an 'Afternote' which amply contextualize the motifs identified and discussed in the notes. Boyd's annotations are also made available on the internet (http://www.ada.auckland.ac.nz/) and run almost concurrently with those published in *The Nabokovian.* The critic's passionate work of annotating the novel has definitely informed and shaped his latest critical study *Nabokov's Ada*: *The Place of Consciousness,* released online for download in December 2001 — a good example of how annotators and critics heartedly shake hands.

Still, A. Appel Jr. warns us that we should not take his annotations for critical statements, but, at their best, for assisting tools for promising critics.

It is now of interest to try to make some generalizations about the content of annotations and their form. Here then is a brief list of our findings about the *what* and the *how* of the matter. In point of content, annotations are concerned with:

(a) tracing literary, historical, mythological, Biblical, anatomical, zoological, botanical, and geographical allusions;
(b) tracking literary allusions and references to other cultures;
(c) giving reflecting biographical data on writers and artists both familiar and less familiar;
(d) mini-concordances of selective cross-references to identical or related allusions in same/ other Nabokov works;

(e) naming of motifs, cross-motifs, topoi, dubbed by brief cross-references;
(f) glossing place names and giving capsule histories of institutions and political and cultural movements and figures;
(g) supplying bits of cultural lore, and explaining various nomenclature and practices;
(h) explaining, defining, and translating portmanteaus, puns, coinages, comical etymologies, foreign, archaic, rare or unusual words;
(i) identifying and explaining neologisms;
(j) explaining extratextuality, especially with reference to items belonging to "popular culture" which may well be "another's esoterica," as A. Appel Jr. justly observes.

As to the format, annotations are given at the back of the book (A. Appel's notes), or, on the principle of organization of a hypertext with highlighted links (Boyd's annotations). They also come accompanied by prefaces, introductions, forenotes and afternotes, including directions of use for the novice or even experienced reader.

Here is Alfred Appel's ending to his 1991 'Preface,' pointing to Nabokov's secret artistic weapon, i.e. the fictionalization of fact so as to acquire power over the past, over memory and over his readers.

> This edition—now, as in 1970—is analogous to what *Pale Fire* might have been like if poor John Shade had been given the opportunity to comment on Charles Kinbote's Commentary. Of course, the annotator and editor of a novel written by the creator of Kinbote and John Ray, Jr., runs the risk of being mistaken for another fiction, when at most he resembles those gentlemen only figuratively. But the annotator exists; he is a veteran and a grandfather, a teacher and taxpayer, and has not been invented by Vladimir Nabokov. (xiii)

So, who does the annotator resemble more: the scribe, the translator, the critic, the teacher, the re-reader, Kinbote, John Ray Jr., Mr. Goodman, or the writer himself?

3. Conclusion: How bad can good annotation be?

Some books are born annotated, some achieve annotation, and some have annotation thrust upon them. Nabokov has grown all types. Most importantly, as Priscilla Meyer observes, annotation with Nabokov "bridges and differentiates the interpenetrating realms of life and art." "Without it," the critic continues, "his four-dimensional tic-tac-toe game is

invisible and the reader becomes Mr. Goodman failing to recognize the substitution of Hamlet's biography for Sebastian's." (2008)

As all great novels are refractions of their authors' lives, Nabokov being no exception, it follows that through annotation the reader can identify the writers' mode of transforming life into art and hence their principles of creation. It further reveals the most personal possible dialogue between life and literature they secretly hope to go undetected by all but one bosom self.

Note

[1] It is only fair at this point to congratulate the *Pathway to English* team (A. Achim, R. Bălan, M. Carianopol, E. Comişel, C. Coşer, F. Dinu, V. Focşeneanu, L. Mastacan, R. Popovici, V. Stan, E. Teodorescu, R. Vulcănescu) who have intuited the importance of translation for an education for critical thinking. They are the first Romanian textbook writers who have looked at translation as a language skill in its own right, i.e. an intercultural-specific form of communication. In the *Pathway to English* series (The Romanian Ministry of Education chose to omit it from the list of recommended textbooks), the authors have provided carefully-sequenced tasks on mediation techniques and cultural awareness activities designed to build the translation skill progressively.

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BLACK IDENTITY IN RICHARD WRIGHT'S *BLACK BOY*

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In 1846, when the question of genuine American literary creation became topical, Theodore Parker bemoaned that: "We have no American literature which is permanent." (Davis, 1985: xxi) This overtly critical view was refined in 1856 when, in his oration on *The American Scholar*, he found an outlet of American originality:

> So we have one series of literary productions that could be written by none but Americans, and only here; I mean the *Lives of Fugitive Slaves*. But as these are not the work of the men of superior culture they hardly help to pay the scholar's debt. Yet all the original romance of Americans is in them, not in the white man's novel. (Davis, 1985: xxi)

The pragmatic and political use to which slave narratives were put, rallied as they were in the Abolitionist cause, fossilized them into strict conventional forms. In the article "'I Was Born': Slave Narratives, Their Status as Autobiography and as Literature," James Olney (1984) provides a comprehensive list of the generic features of slave narratives: an engraved portrait, signed by the author; the title page, with the eager specification "written by himself" or "written by a friend"; testimonials and/or one or several prefaces/introductions by a white abolitionist friend, by a white amanuensis or editor in charge of the text which is declared "plain" and "unvarnished;" a poetic epigraph, and then the narrative as such, followed by an appendix comprising documentary material, reflections on slavery, newspaper items, sermons, and poems.

Stephen Butterfield argues that "The 'self' of black autobiography is not an individual with a private career, but a soldier in a long, historic march towards Canaan." (1974: 2-3); it "is a conscious political identity, drawing sustenance from the past experience of the group, giving back the iron of its endurance fashioned into armor and weapons for the use of the next generation of fighters." (1974: 3) As far as the autobiographical form is concerned, he considers that

> It is a bid for freedom, a beak of hope cracking the shell of slavery and exploitation. It is also an attempt to communicate to the white world what whites have done to them. The appeal of black autobiographies is in their political awareness, their empathy for suffering, their ability to break down the division of "I" and "you," their kind of oppression and discovery of ways to cope with that experience, and their sense of shared life, shared triumph and communal responsibility. The self belongs to the people, and the people find a voice in the self. (1974: 3)

Richard Wright's autobiography grows out of the tradition of slave narratives and goes beyond it. It preserves some of its *topoi* and stays committed to the goal of offering a genuine and generic description of the institution of slavery in the South, in its recontextualized form under the Jim Crow society. However, it depicts African Americans in extremely bleak tones, and makes one wonder if this deprecating representation sprang from total disillusionment with African Americans in the US, from the author's intention to awaken his reading public, both Black and White, or to revise the common, stereotypical understanding of Southern Blacks as either joyful slaves or victims at the hands of white exploitation. In its complete form (*Black Boy* and *American Hunger*, in one volume), it steers away from pure conventionality and relies more intensely, in the second part, on the representation of the *buildungs* of the protagonist and narrator as an author and an engaged intellectual who wishes to struggle with words, to revolutionize consciousnesses and to bring about social change.

Right's critical concern with and analytical insights into the Negro problem are shaped by his intellectual engagement with the Chicago School of urban sociology, whose main focus was the development of theories of urbanism, juvenile delinquency, human behavior, family wreckage, and immigrant and Black American transition from rural to urban environment. In the work of Thomas and Znaniecki – two early Chicago sociologists – an individual evolves only in struggle. One's self is not a given essence, but a dynamic result of the individual's struggle for self-expression and the society's struggle to subject him or her.

The struggle between the individual and the environment in which he lives (family, social and racial group, systems of belief, institutions) is the leitmotif of Wright's autobiography. In its procession through seemingly ritual repetitions of the pyromaniac action of the first chapter, the autobiography provides evidence of other cases when the protagonist sets symbolic fires to the institutions in his immediate environment. His seemingly deviant and violent acts appeared to him as survival tools that ensured his physical integrity, until he opts for isolation as a life choice in response to a severe crisis of group oppression.

Richard's journey from childhood to maturity, from the cultivation of his imagination to the search for a forceful realist style, from a plantation "Black boy" to an engaged Black intellectual, is paralleled by forays into various aspects of Black experience in America. Though Wright is identified by others as a Black Boy and a colored man, his personal sense of his uniqueness in his yearning for emotional liveliness indicates that his life, as he reconstructed it in *Black Boy* and *American Hunger,* stands in both metonymic and metaphorical relationship to collective Black identity and Black experience.

In an ironic gesture, *Black Boy* is framed by a Biblical quote, though throughout the book one of the author/narrator's main jeremiads is against religion: "His strength shall be hunger-bitten,/And destruction shall be ready at his side." (Wright, 1991: 4)

One hermeneutic key into the book then is via the figure of Job. Traditionally, Job has been considered an epitome of patience, resilience and mute acceptance of confrontations with divine violence. In the fundamentalist family of Wright's grandmother, Job must have served as an exemplary figure, whose life epitomized grandma's notion of "good life."

On a macro scale, "good life" in the South consisted in daily, more or less conscious surrender of one's self in the hands of white masters. Like Job, Black Americans practiced submission, renunciation of their own will, and complacent acceptance of their abuse at the hands of the whites. However, whereas Job put his life in God's hands out of an initial gesture of trust and faith, and in the hope of ultimate delivery, for Black Americans there was no earthly salvation to be expected from white Southerners, nor, in Wright's portrayal, any consistent concern to change the circumstances of their life and survive as a group. Social change is not only "not done", but not even thinkable, since Richard's constant questions about relations between Blacks and Whites in America always meet with stern denial of an answer. If there is any change in behavior, that change implies the refinement of one's ways to bow down lower in front of the whites, and to adapt to a culture of terror that requires complete submissiveness and denial of actions, words and thoughts.

Submissiveness, awe and lack of social and political agency make up an utterly non-flattering portrait of life in the South. This is surprising because by the time when Wright published *Black Boy* in 1945, two convergent tendencies had been crystallized in the portrayal of Black identity and Black experience in the South. On the first hand, there was the tradition of Black writers describing the vibes and warmth of plantation life and Black communities that found within themselves the resource to endure in the face of white regimes of absolute institutions. (Frederickson, Lasch, 1973: 123) In J. Lee Greene's words,

> Southern black literature since the turn of the century has shown that the Southern black character who lives close to his natural surroundings is nurtured and sustained by forces which minister to his spiritual being… Folk art becomes […] indicative of the luring powers of Southern black life, a life that may brutalize the body but one that nourishes the soul. (1991: 279-290)

On the other hand, there was the parallel tradition of white bucolic descriptions of happy Negroes enjoying their life and devotionally loving their masters. In a controversial study on *Slavery and Negro Personality*, Stanley M. Elkins mentions that almost all Southern writers described "the bubbling gaiety of a plantation holiday" or the "good humor that seemed to mark the Negro character, the good humor of an everlasting childhood." (1973: 104) He quotes the White journalist Edward Pollard, who confessed:

> I love the simple and unadulterated slave, with his geniality, his mirth, his swagger, and his nonsense… I love to look upon his countenance shining with content and grease; I love to study his affectionate heart; I love to mark that peculiarity in him, which beneath all his buffoonery exhibits him as a creature of the tenderest sensibilities, mingling his joys and his sorrows with those of his master's home. (in Elkins, 1973: 104)

Nevertheless, none of this Romantic, joyful master-slave relations transpire in Richard Wright's work. On the contrary, he strikes a very discordant note among his fellow African American writers by providing a thoroughly critical view of fellow African Americans in the South. In *Black Boy*, Black identity and Black experience in the South dwell in a sphere of negativity, and it is via negative dialectics that he constructs an identity of his self, against the identity, or lack of it, that he witnessed among his fellow Southerners.

In his early childhood, there was only one recorded instance of peaceful and comforting encounter with Negroes, when his parents took him on a boat to Memphis. Subsequent encounters in pubs reveal Black men and women as irresponsible and drunkard, and as having a bad influence on Richard by teaching him bad words and turning him into an alcoholic at the age of six.

From Richard's point of view, nothing in his immediate surroundings could conduct to intellectual or emotional stimulation. In a parenthetical remark in *Chapter II*, Richard, the narrator, enters in dialogue with the tradition that identified strengths and potential in the Negro character, only to contest and dismantle it:

> (After I had outlived the shocks of childhood, after the habit of reflection had been born in me, I used to mull over the strange absence of real kindness in Negroes, how unstable was our tenderness, how lacking in genuine passion we were, how void of great hope, how timid our joy, how bare our traditions, how hollow our memories, how lacking we were in those intangible sentiments that bind man to man, and how shallow even our despair. After I had learned other ways of life I used to brood upon the unconscious irony of those who felt that Negroes led so passional an existence! I saw that what had been taken for our emotional strength was our negative confusions, our flights, our fears, our frenzy under pressure). (33)

Moreover, starting from this bleak representation of Negroes, Wright speculates on the very possibility of leading a human life in the South, thus voicing, early in the autobiography, his allegiance to existentialist concerns:

> (Whenever I thought of the essential bleakness of black life in America, I knew that Negroes had never been allowed to catch the full spirit of Western Civilization, that they lived somehow in it but not of it. And when I brooded upon the cultural bareness of black life, I wondered if clean, positive tenderness, love, honor, loyalty, and the capacity to remember were native to man. I asked myself if these human qualities were not fostered, won, struggled and suffered for, preserved in ritual from one generation to another.) (33)

To a certain extent, these lines incriminate the absent agent – the Whites – for preventing African Americans from catching "the full spirit of Western Civilization." Implicitly, Wright replicates the hierarchical dichotomy of culture and civilization, where the second term ranks above the first, and points to the paradoxical situatedness of Blacks in America – in it, physically, but outside it, or, at the most, utterly marginal, from an intellectual and high-cultural point of view.

Ironically, the "in it but not of it" situatedness of Blacks in America parallels Wright's own situatedness with respect to his race and his nation. Although he writes about "our emotional strength … our negative confusions, our flights, our fears, our frenzy under pressure"(33), Wright persistently voices his emotional and intellectual apartness from his fellow countrymen, from his family and peers. After the experience of entering imaginative horizons by reading, Wright notes that "I realized that they could not understand what I was feeling and I kept quiet." (40)

As the quote above shows, Wright was skeptical whether African Americans could live a human life. What distinguishes his critical view of African Americans is that he denies them the possibility to generate

cultural values, and to nurture humanity – understood mainly in its emotional dimension in interpersonal relations.

Whereas for most African American writers before and after him the "soul of black folks" found an expression in folklore and in religious songs (the so-called spirituals), in the very severe environment in which he was socialized nothing else flourished but dogma, religious strife, domestic violence, verbal abuse and rigidity.

Neither volume of the autobiography features any positive example of family life. The destruction of the Black family, carried out at the time of slavery by selling parents and children to different owners, seems to be going on after slavery was abolished via loveless relationships, domestic violence, poverty, slack morality and lack of imaginative horizons.

In the family in which he was born, the father was the bread-maker and the tyrant, whose presence imposed silence and total obedience. In Jackson, the disappearance of the father from the family entails lack of money and lack of food. When Richard's father leaves, hunger possesses his body and mind, and defines his formative years in the South:

> Hunger stole upon me so slowly that at first I was not aware of what hunger really meant. Hunger had always been more or less at my elbow when I played, but now I began to wake up at night to find hunger standing at my bedside, staring at me gauntly. The hunger I had known before this had been no grim, hostile stranger; it had been a normal hunger that had made me beg constantly for bread, and when I ate a crust or two I was satisfied. But this new hunger baffled me, scared me, made me angry and insistent. (14)

This poignant bodily sensation, associated with the absence of the father, together with the portrait that Wright draws of his father as he sees him twenty five years later, justify Michel Fabre's argument that Richard had a dual relationship with his father and his birthplace – "both turned into negative metaphors,"– that "South mingles with Nathan Wright" and "geography with genealogy." (Fabre, 1987: 7)

Left only with his mother and brother, Richard has to learn how to survive, how to fight for his right to use the streets, how to hide his hunger and, later, how to act out the social role assigned and allowed to Negroes in the South. Initially, Richard had taken it for granted that the whites had all rights to beat the "colored" and that by nature, the two races that co-existed could only interact in violent ways:

> And when word circulated among the black people of the neighborhood that a 'black' boy had been severely beaten by a 'white' man, I felt that the 'white' man had a right to beat the 'black' boy, for I

> naively assumed that the 'white' man had the right to beat the black boy's father. (23)

Anxiety over irrational attack by the whites is the locus where Wright's experience in the South is the most representative of the emotional experience of fellow black boys. Yet, in the voice of the mature narrator, Richard – the child already took issue with the submissiveness and self-humiliation that he witnessed among his fellows. He could not understand how they stooped so low as to allow themselves to be hit, humiliated, plundered, and even killed without putting up resistance, without retaliating, or fighting together, as a group.[1]

Class mates who could keep a job did so by virtue of acting out a script into which they were socialized at home and in school. The script consigned them to keeping their head down, to being always cheerful, to always using "Sir" as a form of address to whites, to knowing when to be quiet, how to vanish when whites were around, what to tolerate as acceptable behavior from them, and how to master their reactions and emotions. Failure to do so could be fatal, as a few white youth in a car warn Richard, upon his omission to address one of them as "Sir."

Conformity and complacency were worsened by self-degradation. The climax of self-degradation appears to be embodied in Shorty, an elevator operator in a Memphis hotel who, for a quarter, allows and actually invites whites to hit him in the back. In the same city, women took no offence at being slapped by whites, and Harrison, a fellow worker in Memphis, has no scruples fighting Richard for money, for the pleasure of the whites who had stirred them against each other and provided them with knives.

Fear, hatred, hunger, submission and suffering are the defining signposts of the Southern emotional landscape. In leaving the geographical South, Wright is aware that he could

> …never really leave the South, for my feelings had already been formed by the South, for there had been slowly instilled into my personality and consciousness, black though I was, the culture of the South. So, in leaving, I was taking a part of the South to transplant in alien soil, to see if it could grow differently, if it could drink of new and cool rains, bend in strange winds, respond to the warmth of other suns, and, perhaps, to bloom… And if that miracle ever happened, then I would know that there was yet hope in that southern swamp of despair and violence, that light could emerge even out of the blackest of the southern night. I would know that the South too could overcome its fear, its hate, its cowardice, its heritage of guilt and blood, its burden of anxiety and compulsive cruelty. (228)

In the North, Wright encounters other ways of living as a black person: as bohemian would-be intellectuals, as persons who are nostalgic for their African roots (the Garveyites), and as believers in the ideological promise of communism. The former had enjoyed academic learning, had economic freedom, and "vague ambitions to write" (285). What was missing, however, was the authenticity of living and feeling. These middle-class Negroes seemed to feed on surrogates and to be cut off from their selves: "always friendly, they could never be anybody's friend; always reading, they could really never learn; always boasting of their passions, they could never really feel and were afraid to live." (286) The Garveyites, however, seem to have a better grasp of reality and the personal solution that they envision to the problems of living as a black person in the USA is simply the return to Africa "for they sensed with that directness of which only the simple are capable that they had no chance to live a full human life in America." (286)

Although Wright had held out tremendous hope for his future in the North, he soon learnt that, even though the Jim Crow segregation was not enforced there, discrimination and suffering were still at work in numerous subtle ways. They went from the white employees' indifference to the backbreaking pain of Black hospital janitors to the racialization[2] of knowledge; from the enforcement of biometric standards in hiring policies to lack of human solidarity with someone in pain.

Black identity and Black experience are represented in the latter half of the autobiography more as subjects to be speculated on rather than as issues to be supported by facts. In his philosophical ruminations, Wright grapples with the "Negro problem" in America, starting from the obvious paradox: "Though he is an organic part of the nation, he is excluded by the entire tide and direction of American culture. Frankly, it is felt to be right to exclude him, and it is felt to be wrong to admit him freely." (272)

Progressively, Wright changes his attitude towards Negroes. Whereas in the 1945 *Black Boy* he had represented them as creatures of the earth (his father and the black families on plantations), bigots (the grandmother and aunt Addie), patient sufferers (his mother), hopeless commoners (classmates and neighbors who fail to understand his need to read and write), and as the victims that were themselves to blame for their pitiable condition, the 1969 continuation shows the development of Wright's sociological thinking and understanding. *American Hunger* interprets the condition of Blacks in America as the obvious and logical result of subtle and perpetual forms of structural violence, of lack of understanding and compassion, of a generalized lack of human values in American society. Wright implies that the deep suffering of the Negroes,

intense enough for a tragedy, is ironical and paradoxical in its meaninglessness:

> The essence of the irony of the plight of the Negro in America, to me, is that he is doomed to live in isolation while those who condemn him seek the basest goals of any people on the face of the earth. Perhaps it would be possible for the Negro to become reconciled to this plight if he could be made to believe that his sufferings were for some remote, high, sacrificial end; but sharing the culture that condemns him, and seeing that a lust for trash is what blinds the nation to his claims, is what sets storms to rolling in his soul. (273)

Waste, meaninglessness, isolation and marginalization breed totally unhealthy relations among people. The only exception – Wright believes, up to a certain point of awakening – is the Communist Party. The Party provides a system of kinship and community, a counterpart to social atomism. As Cappetti mentions, the Communist Party "feeds Wright's secular hunger for a sustained relationship without racism, for an intellectual light which can dissolve the epigraphic 'darkness in the daytime' and the '[groping] at noonday as in the night'." (1995: 86) In addition, Wright was attracted by the Communist ideology that seemed to be a form of dedicated humanism, and by the prospect of having ample opportunities to publish.

As a matter of fact, the Party proves to work by tight control, to breed distrust and incompetence, to operate like the fundamentalist religions that Wright encountered in the South and to threaten his freedom of expression. Though through the John Reed club he was "meeting men and women whom [he] would know for decades to come, who were to form the first sustained relationships in [his] life" (317), most Negro communists disappointed him by their uncritical mimicking of White "mannerisms, pronunciations, and turns of speech" (294), by their inauthentic way of living, ignorance of their real selves, and futile magic thinking:

> Though they did not know it, they were naively practicing magic; they thought that if they acted like the men who had overthrown the czar, then surely they ought to be able to win their freedom in America… They had rejected the state of things as they were, and that seemed to me to be the first step toward embracing a creative attitude toward life… But these men had rejected what was before their eyes without quite knowing what they had rejected and why. (295-297)

The Communist Party appears to replicate patterns of behavior and of feeling that Wright had experienced in the South: dogmatic belief and total obedience, framings, control, distrust of anyone whose preoccupations

go beyond the ordinary, the creation and exploitation of personal guilt, scapegoating and exemplary punishments. Just as the normal relationship between Richard and Harrison was ruined when the Whites suggested them both that they wanted to kill each other, so the intricate schemes at work inside the Party organization cast doubts in Richard's and his friend Ross's minds with respect to Wright's interest in documenting Ross's story. Ross's trial on the false accusation that he had been acting against Party interests forewarns Wright that he himself could be set up and ousted in a public session, unless he complies with the Party requirements and agrees to become corrupted.

The lack of the Negroes' intransigence with themselves, their fear and corruption, make Wright doubt that his fellows can rise to what he considers to be their historical task: "to save a confused, materialistic nation from its own drift toward self-destruction." (298) This historical mission seems, however, to stand the chances to be actualized when Wright notices the emergence of a collective consciousness, through the sharing of personal stories of suffering and the shedding of illusions at the break of the Depression.

And yet, this gleam of hope cannot be substantiated. A collective consciousness implies empathy and solidarity, a constant concern for the plight of any American, and a genuine sense of one's identity in the face of society's drive towards massification. The final pages which retell Wright's humiliation during a Chicago May parade, when neither black nor white "comrades" volunteered to lift him up from the pavement, express in a bitter tone his disappointment with America and foretell his abandonment of the American land.[3]

His disappointment with the Communist Party adds yet another paradox to the list that Wright had identified as defining for the Negro condition in America. Though the official Party ideology supported people of low condition, who had struggled hard in life, those who interpret it are disturbed by the fact that he speaks "like a book," spends his time cultivating his mind and refuses to put his literary talent to the service of pure propaganda. Moreover, the Party cannot tolerate Richard's independence and isolation, yet it pushes him to choose existential isolation, as a possibility for developing his literary career and political consciousness.

To conclude, the whole autobiography runs from one extreme situation to another, to the point that the snow-ball effect of extraordinary accumulation turns extremes into normality. In the South, it seemed normal for Blacks to be beaten and even killed by whites; it was normal for a white man to be always right and for a black boy to be suspected of theft, treachery, dishonesty; it was natural to accept that there can be nothing

better than what already existed; that White employees throw Black employees into conundrums that would eventually, make them leave their jobs in fear. Likewise, in the North, at the time of the Depression, it was equally natural to lose the job, to be humiliated in front of Communist peers in public scapegoating sessions, and to be threatened to have the freedom of expression and of movement taken away. Wright, however, managed to create his own technologies of self-survival, and found in books the means to stay emotionally alive and to find fresh ways of looking upon the world, and of growing as a person, beyond racial constraints. Against the bleak background of the negative collective Black identity and experience that he depicts, his voice as a narrator and character in the story emerges as the singular, Jamesian "shriek of a soul in pain," which expresses its sense of uniqueness and begs, beyond words, for recognition and acceptance as a *human* being.

Notes

[1] Sociologists and socio-psychologists grappled with the same issue of explaining the near lack of resistance and of group agency among black folks. One theory developed by Elkins (1973) suggests that the Negro psyche was formed, or rather deformed, on plantations. Elkins likens plantations to concentration camps and argues that, just like camp inmates, slaves reverted to the mental state of childhood, of total dependence on a Father figure, be that the superintendent or the master. This theory was contested on the grounds that concentration camps emerged as deliberate experiments on the human psyche, whereas plantations were basically a form of economic production, where slaves counted as mere labor force. George M. Frederickson and Christopher Lasch reject any similitude with concentration camps and suggest that the impact of slavery on the Negro psyche might be better explained by resorting to Erving Goffman's notion of "total institution:" a "place of residence and work where a large number of like-situated individuals, cut off from the wider society for an appreciable period of time, together lead an enclosed, formally administered round of life." (Frederickson, Lasch, 1973: 123) The institutionalized persons mold their behavior in such a way as to please their "significant others" – in the case of plantations, overseers and masters. In light of these observations, the pernicious character of slavery comes not from the deprivations to which the Blacks were subjected by the Whites, but from "the degree to which the slaves … identified themselves with the system that bound and confined them, lending themselves to their own degradation." (Frederickson, Lasch, 1973: 130)

[2] In the hospital in which Wright worked, Black employees were left in the dark with respect to the experiments that the White researchers were performing.

[3] Wright spent the last years of his life staying in France, where he had been invited by the French government, and traveling to Africa.

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IMAGERY OF DEATH IN *HAMLET*

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Hamlet was written at about the midpoint of Shakespeare's playwriting career. The essential donné of Hamlet's story came to Shakespeare from Saxo through Belleforest: a king who is murdered by his brother is to be avenged by his son. The theme of revenge is thus central to the play and it is linked to the imagery of death, which is dominant.

The word *image* encompasses any kind of simile; by using it, a poet or prose writer illustrates, illuminates and embellishes his thought. (Spurgeon, 1952: 34) It may be a description or an idea which arouses emotions and associations in the reader's mind, thus transmitting something of the depth and richness of the way the writer views what he tells in the text.

The images Shakespeare uses are so rich and vivid that, in the human world of his plays, they form a second world. Shakespeare's choice of an image or simile at a given moment in a play is determined more by the dramatic issues arising out of that moment than by his individual sympathies.

In *Hamlet*, the image of death is introduced from the very beginning, in Act I, once the old king Hamlet's Ghost appears. In the plot, this appearance serves no rational purpose, since the murder of king Hamlet was unwitnessed. In Saxo's story, the murder of the king was public. Hamlet witnessed it and feigned madness to avoid being killed as a possible avenger of his father. As the murder was committed in the open, there was no need for a ghost to give an account of it. Later on, the ghost was introduced in the plot and its role was to inform Hamlet about the secret murder. Hamlet did not witness the murder, so there was no need to feign madness. Yet Shakespeare preserves both motifs: the ghost and madness. They intensify the idea and image of death.

It is not only the Ghost's presence, but also his words that suggest the idea of death, as the dead king tells his son how he was killed:

> Upon my secure hour thy uncle stole

With juice of cursed hebenon in a vial,
And in the porches of my ears did pour
The leperous distilment, whose effect
Holds such an enmity with blood of man
That swift as quicksilver it courses through
The natural gates and alleys of the body,
And with a sudden vigour it doth posset
And curd, like eager droppings into milk,
The thin and wholesome blood. So did it mine,
And a most instant tetter bark'd about,
Most lazar-like, with vile and loathsome crust
All my smooth body. (I, 5, 61-73)

The poison mentioned here is connected to death, producing that "tetter" or eruption which covers the skin with a "loathsome crust." The force of the image that this account creates lies in the fact that the Ghost does not tell *what* happened, but recreates imaginatively *how* it happened, the horrible atrocity of a murder which could have been quick and simple. The chosen poison visibly corrupts and makes the dying man's body look horrible. This leads to other images related to death, namely those of disease and decay which will be discussed later on.

Poisoning as a way of killing is not referred to only in the Ghost's account, but it becomes recurrent throughout the play, foregrounded both by *The Murder of Gonzago* and by the death of four characters in the last scene of the play. While Lucianus is poisoning the player king, Hamlet says: "A poisons him I' th' garden for his estate" (III, 2, 255). In this case, the word "poisons" goes beyond the literal sense by stressing Hamlet's animosity towards Claudius for gaining the throne (his estate) in such a deceitful manner (poisons him). In the final scene, after Claudius dies by Hamlet's poison-tipped sword, Laertes says: "He is justly served. It is a poison temper'd by himself." (V, 2, 333-334) The fact may also be added that Ophelia's madness, that leads her to suicide, is said to be caused by the "poison of deep grief." (IV, 5, 75)

The 'infection' in Denmark is also presented as poison. Claudius, the poisoner, kills the king, poisoning, at the same time, the whole country. The juice he pours in old Hamlet's ear is a combination of poison and disease, a "leperous distilment" that curds "the thin and wholesome blood." (I, 5, 64, 70) Once the king is poisoned, the whole country can feel the effect of the disease. Hamlet remarks that his "wit's diseased" (III, 2, 312), the Queen speaks of her "sick soul" (IV, 5, 17), Claudius is troubled by "the hectic" in his blood (IV, 3, 66).

Referring back to the Ghost's words, it may be added that he does not only tell what happened, but also calls on Hamlet to revenge: "Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder." (I, 5, 25) Although the Ghost does not

explicitly order him to kill Claudius, this is what the words imply, this is what "revenge" means. Hamlet is required to punish death by inflicting death, to commit a murder, a deed condemned even by the Ghost: "Murder must foul, as in the best it is." (I, 5, 27)

The image of death is also to be found on an intertextual level in *Hamlet*, in a speech from the play which is inspired by Virgil's *Aeneid*. The speech describes Pyrrhus raging through the streets of Troy to revenge his father's death, until he finds and kills the aged and defenceless Priam. This speech is not totally out of place here, as it creates analogies with Hamlet and his duty to revenge his father:

> Head to foot
> Now is the total gules, horridly trick'd
> With blood of fathers, mothers, daughters, sons,
> Bak'd and impasted with the parching streets,
> That lend a tyrannous and a damned light
> To their lord's murder. Roasted in wrath and fire,
> And thus o'ersized with coagulate gore,
> With eyes like carbuncles, the hellish Pyrrhus
> Old grandsire Priam seeks. (II, 2, 450-459)

The image of death is as violent in this scene as in the Ghost's account of the murder: Pyrrhus, beyond all control, is covered in blood that is dried and baked on to him, so that he is "impasted" or encrusted with it (in the same way in which the poison given by Claudius to the king caused his skin to become covered with "a vile and loathsome crust").

Death is present throughout the play, accompanying like a shadow almost all characters: Hamlet kills Polonius and sends Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to death; Ophelia commits suicide; Gertrude dies because she drinks from the poisoned cup. Hamlet speaks about his own death, but he also talks about Claudius's death. The latter dies in the end, but only after Hamlet receives his own death wound. Horatio is right to speak in the following terms:

> Of accidental judgements, casual slaughters,
> Of deaths put on by cunning and forc'd cause,
> And, in this upshot, purposes mistook
> Fall'n on th' inventors' heads'. (V, 2, 387-390)

The graveyard scene offers a meditation on death, first of all by the preparations for Ophelia's funeral. Ophelia's death introduces a slightly different tone, as it is associated with flower imagery, in opposition to the other cruel deaths (king Hamlet's, Polonius's). When she dies, she is surrounded by "crowflowers, nettles, daisies and long purples…" (IV, 7,

168). Even when buried, flowers are buried along with her. Gertrude strews Ophelia's grave not with "dust to dust" but with "sweets to the sweet" (V, 1, 236). Flowers symbolize innocence; they are pure and easily destroyed, just like Ophelia.

The presence of the skull in the graveyard scene also leads to a meditation on death. Beginning with the IVth century, the skeleton became the accepted Christian symbol of death. (Prosser 1967) The skull reminds man not of the futility of life, but of the inevitability and the meaning of death. Hamlet's contemplation of Yorick's skull induces a moment of mourning. When the bones tossed up by the gravediggers are anonymous, Hamlet is cynical; but his caustic cynicism ceases when Yorick's skull comes to the surface and the gravedigger names it. Holding it in his hand, Hamlet recalls his childhood, even if what is alive in his mind seems reduced to the decayed skull:

> Alas, poor Yorick. I knew him, Horatio, a fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy. He hath bore me on his back a thousand times, and now-how abhorred in my imagination it is. My gorge rises at it. (V, 1, 178-182)

There is a contradiction, a clash between what is still vital to one's memory and what is dead. Hamlet solves it by projecting the living memory onto the skull and lips onto the dead's head. He shifts from commentary to direct address:

> Here hung those lips that I have kissed I know not how oft. Where be your gibes now, your gambols, your songs, your flashes of merriment, that were wont to set the table on a roar? Not one now to mock your own grinning? Quite chop-fallen? (V, 1, 183-186)

The Yorick Hamlet used to know, the Yorick in his mind would have mocked at his own death, because this was his profession: he was a jester. The Yorick in Hamlet's hand is somber, "grinning" but quite "chop-fallen". The moment of direct address marks Hamlet's position in front of death; Hamlet becomes Yorick, the jester mocking at his own grinning. Hamlet's speech indicates that he resigns himself to death, but his is not a resignation of despair. The speech states the fact that man has no reason to fear the death of the body, but only the death of the soul. In this graveyard scene Hamlet confronts, recognizes and accepts the condition of man as a mortal being.

The imagery of death is also related to the idea of disease, sickness and infection. In the Ghost's description of his poisoning by Claudius, the process of poisoning is very vividly presented and the spreading of the disease is very well portrayed. The Ghost presents in this passage how the poison invades the body during the victim's sleep and how the healthy

body is destroyed, without even having the chance to defend itself against the attack. The idea of an ulcer, infecting and fatally eating away the whole body, becomes dominant and generalized. "Something is rotten in the state of Denmark", says Marcellus (I, 5, 90). The poisoning of the king is extended to the whole country. The corruption of land and people throughout Denmark is understood as the outcome of a process of imperceptible poisoning, caused by Claudius's crime.

Hamlet himself uses disease imagery in relation to his uncle's guilt, as when he spares the praying Claudius with the remark: "This physic but prolongs thy sickly days." (III, 3, 96)

Sometimes he uses disease imagery with reference to the Queen's sin: "It will but skin and film the ulcerous place,/Whiles rank corruption, mining all within,/Infects unseen." (III, 4, 149-151)

He compares the war between Norway and Poland to a tumour that grows out of too much prosperity. For him, the country and its people make up a sick body in need for medicine or the surgeon's knife.

Claudius, in his turn, uses disease imagery about Hamlet. When he hears of the murder of Polonius, he declares that this is the action of a man with "a foul disease" who "To keep it from divulging, let it feed/ Even on the pith of life." (IV, 1, 22-23) Later, he justifies his stratagem of sending Hamlet to England by the proverbial tag: "disease desperate grown/ By desperate appliance are relieved,/ Or not at all." (IV, 3, 9-11) He asks the English king for help, just like a feverish patient asks for sedatives (Spurgeon, 1952: 50): "For like the hectic in my blood he rages,/ And thou must cure me." (IV, 3, 69-70) When he speaks of Hamlet's return, he refers to it as "the quick of th' ulcer." (IV, 7, 121) These images reflect more on Claudius's guilty fear of his nephew rather than on Hamlet's character.

Images of disease are also to be found in Laertes's words, when he worns Ophelia about Hamlet:

> The canker galls the infants of the spring
> Too oft before their buttons be disclos'd,
> And in the morn and liquid dew of youth
> Contagious blastments are most imminent. (I, 3, 39-42)

The worm is a destructive force, and this image is reinforced in the last act, when Hamlet refers to Claudius as "this canker of our nature." (V, 2, 68)

Madness can be considered a kind of disease leading to death. Hamlet replies: "Sir, I cannot make you a wholesome answer; my wit's diseased" (III, 2, 312) to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern when they are sent by the Queen to give him a message. The imagery of disease here enclosed indicates that Hamlet is distracted by his suspicion about Rosencrantz and Guildenstern since they were caught spying on him for the king. Hamlet

also uses the word "diseased" to highlight his "antic disposition" and to make Rosencrantz and Guildenstern think that he is truly mad. This choice of words, "antic disposition", is significant because in Shakespeare's days "antic" did not mean "mad", but "grotesque", and was the usual epithet for Death. (Spurgeon, 1952: 82) Hamlet needs images for his "antic disposition." Under the cloak of madness he hides his real purpose. By using puns, images and parables, Hamlet pours "poison" into the ears not only of the poisoner himself, but of all who are guilty by association of the murder of his father. Hamlet is not only mad, but he also causes madness and even death.

Hamlet's madness is a spiritual illness. He has been contaminated by his mother's incestuous conduct. He has a sense of belonging to a diseased stock. He is haunted by all the ills and wrongs of his life from which only death can release him. Love, joy, laughter, hope, belief in the others are all infected by the disease of the spirit that is killing him.

Hamlet's feigned madness is one of the factors that lead Ophelia to death. Her lover's behaviour and her father's death make her retreat into madness. She recites tales and songs that present passages of transformation and loss/lost love, death: "He is gone, he is gone/And we cast away moan." (IV, 6, 194-195) This "profound consciousness of loss", which is one of the chief forms in which the theme of mortality reaches us, is also expressed by the Ghost when telling Hamlet how his "most seeming-virtuous queen" (I, 5, 46) betrayed a love which "was of that dignity/ That went hand in hand even with the vow/ I made to her in marriage." (I, 5, 48-50) She chose to "decline/ Upon a wretch whose natural gifts were poor/ To those of mine" (I, 5, 51-52) "O Hamlet, what a falling off was there!" (I, 5, 47)

Ophelia expresses the same idea when she hears Hamlet's denunciation of love and woman. She refers to Hamlet's disordered brain, to his breakdown:

> O what a noble mind is here o'erthrown!
> The courtier's, soldier's, scholar's, eye, tongue, sword;
> Th' expectancy and rose of the fair state,
> The glass of fashion and the mold of form
> Th' observ'd of all observers, quite, quite down!' (III, 1, 152-155)

And Ophelia is the next to fall off when she goes mad: "Divided from herself and her fair judgement,/Without the which we are pictures, or mere beasts." (IV, 5, 85-86) Mental breakdown, transposed into sound, should be discordant. Yet, Ophelia is coherent in what she says and, with her ballads, she turns "affliction" into "prettiness" (IV, 5, 185-186), discord into harmony. Gertrude recounts Ophelia's "muddy death" in a lyrical way,

emphasising her "melodious lay" (IV, 7, 181-182). Ophelia's death is presented by means of floral symbolism, which she invoked in her round of farewells and which has wreathed her in a special fragrance from her first scene to her burial.

Hamlet's and Ophelia's madness raise the question of death by suicide. There is a contrast between Ophelia's mad suicide and Hamlet's contemplated one. Ophelia's suicide is described by Gertrude as accidental ("an envious sliver broke" – IV, 7, 172), passive, involuntary, mad. Madness renders suicide innocent, while Hamlet's calm contemplation of suicide turns this act into a sin and a crime.

Death can be the result not only of disease, poison and sickness, but also of rotteness, corruption and decay. In the first part of the play, the atmosphere of corruption and decay is presented in a more general way. Marcellus says: "Something is rotten in the state of Denmark" (I, 5, 90). The imagery of decay used here foreshadows that the king's throne (the state of Denmark) is on shaky ground because Hamlet will shortly find out that his father was murdered and not bitten by a snake, as it was originally thought ; it also reveals an atmosphere of growing suspicion (something is rotten).

Hamlet declares in Act I how the world appears to him: "….ah fie, 'tis an unweeded garden/ That grows to seed; things rank and gross in nature/Possess it merely." (I, 2, 135-137) The image of the weeds (in the word "unweeded") is related to sickness and it appears two more times in the play. The Ghost tells Hamlet: "And duller shouldst thou be than the fat weed/That roots itself in ease on Lethe wharf." (I, 5, 33-34) The same image follows that of the ulcer in the dialogue between Hamlet and his mother:

> It will but skin and film the ulcerous place,
> Whiles rank corruption, mining all within,
> Infects unseen…
> …do not spread the compost on the weeds
> To make them ranker. (III, 4, 149-154)

He continues by presenting his view upon the world in Act II:

> …and indeed it goes so heavily with my disposition that this goodly frame the earth seems to me a sterile promontory, this most excellent canopy the air, look you, this brave o'ercharging firmament, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire, why, it appeareth nothing to me but a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours. (II, 2, 297-303)

In the graveyard scene, Hamlet meditates on "how long a man will lie in the earth ere he rot." (V, 1, 158) Even when he speaks of himself, he

uses images of decay: he compares himself with a whore, a drab and a scullion:

> That I, the son of a dear father murder'd,
> Prompted to my revenge by heaven and hell,
> Must like a whore unpack my heart with words
> And fall a-cursing like a very drab,
> A scullion! (II, 2, 579-583)

For Claudius,"the people are muddied,/Thick and unwholesome in their thoughts and whispers." (IV, 4, 81-82)

All these images present the state of things in Denmark as comparable to a tumour poisoning the whole body, while showing "no cause without/why the man dies." (IV, 4, 28-29) By marrying Gertrude, his brother's wife, Claudius violated the natural order and, by this violation, his state is "rotten" and evil is established. Although he was legally elected monarch, Claudius is a usurper and he tries to take over the body politic of Denmark. This unlawful take-over is symbolically suggested by the incestuous taking over of Queen Gertrude's body. The lustful seduction of the Danish queen's body stands for the rape of the body politic of Denmark. Hamlet uses the word "Denmark" ambiguously to refer to the body politic, to Claudius or to the murdered king, and this shows the inseparable link between the king and his state.

The Queen herself is associated with the idea of decay. The Ghost compares Gertrude's sin to preying on garbage. Hamlet compares Gertrude's second marriage to a "nasty sty" (III, 4, 95) and urges her not to "spread the compost on the weeds to make them ranker" (III, 4, 153-154). He describes her sin as a blister on the "fair forehead of an innocent love."(III, 4, 43) The emotions are so strong that the metaphor overflows into verbs and adjectives, all suggesting not only decay, but also disease: heaven's face, he tells her, is "thought-sick" (III, 4, 51). She has married Claudius, so her sense must be not only "sickly" but also "apoplex'd" (III, 4, 73, 80).

The smell of sin and corruption is blended with the parfume of flowers continually associated with Ophelia (the flowers she distributes in her madness, the flowers she wears at her death, the flowers the Queen drops in her grave) and together they give the scent of death that ponders over the whole play.

As they suggest violence, the images of war also point, indirectly, to death. Some of them are suggested by the old Hamlet's and Fortinbras's campaigns. Others simply underline the martial qualities of the hero. But their main dramatic function is to emphasise that Hamlet and Claudius are engaged in a struggle to death. This is clear when Hamlet speaks of himself

and his uncle as "mighty opposites." All through the play the war imagery reminds us of the characters' struggle. Laertes urges his sister: "And keep you in the rear of your affection,/Out of the shot and danger of desire." (I, 3, 34-35) Polonius, in the same scene, exhorts her to set her "entreatements at a higher rate/Than a command to parley." (I, 3, 122-123) Later, he compares the temptations of the flesh with a "general assault." Hamlet speaks of "The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune." (III, 1, 58) All these images suggest that the characters' minds and souls are tormented by the same idea of death.

Madness, disease, rotteness, corruption, decay make up the imagery of death that is determined by the plot, uttered by the characters and contributes organically to the whole that is *Hamlet*. This suggests that Shakespeare saw the problem at the heart of his play

> not as the problem of an individual at all, but as something greater and even more mysterious, as a condition for which the individual himself is apparently not responsible, any more than the sick man is to blame for the infection which strikes and devours him, but which, nevertheless, in its course and development, annihilates him and others, innocent and guilty alike. That is the tragedy of Hamlet as it is perhaps the chief tragic mystery of life. (Spurgeon, 1952: 318-319)

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THE QUEST FOR FRACTAL MIRRORS AND THEIR LITERARY RELEVANCE

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Within the larger framework of contemporary morphogenesis sciences, the theory of fractals brings up a new perspective on natural objects generating different processes which can no longer be discussed in terms of the one-sided Euclidean geometry. B. Mandelbrot, the founder of this mathematical theory, claims that various natural forms have irregular, fragmented structures so that Nature displays a higher qualitative level of intrinsic complexity than the one rendered by the Euclidean geometry. Thus, the theory of fractals advances a more profound understanding of universal patterns and of their in-depth structure which reveals a multi-faceted complexity of forms and meanings. Mandelbrot has shown mathematically and graphically how nature uses the fractal dimensions and the so-called *self-constrained chance* in order to create the complex and irregular forms of the real world.

In the light of this theory of fractals, it is then easy to see how our "natural consciousness", i.e. the stage of our consciousness before the individuation process is completed, is inherently fractal and fragmented. For, as a geometric figure, a fractal has not only zigzagging shapes, but also hides a certain sense of disorder in its irregular structure. Though apparently asymmetrical, these patterns turn out strikingly similar and the smaller the scale, the more obvious the resemblance. When one looks at a small part of a figure, (s)he can notice that the overall pattern of the fractal is similarly and sometimes even exactly replicated. It encompasses recursive structures. For instance, if one looks at the irregular shape of a mountain and then looks closer at a small part of the mountain, (s)he will find the same basic shape of the whole mountain repeated again on a smaller scale. When one looks even closer, one will discover the same shape again and again, *ad infinitum*. This happens within the Mandelbrot fractal itself where there is an infinite number of smaller Mandelbrot shapes hidden everywhere within the zigzagged, spiral edges of the overall form.

As Mandelbrot points out, this idea of *recursive self-similarity* was originally developed by the philosopher Leibniz, but it can also be related to Goethe's organicist view. Another basic principle that substantiates the fractal perspective is that entropic disorder plays a constructive role in creating order. A new approach has thus been advanced requiring, as N. Katherine Hayles puts it, "a shift from the individual unit to recursive symmetries between scale levels." (1990: 13) That means that research is focused on the similarities replicated across the scale levels of a system, be it existential, social or cultural. The phenomena associated to the scale-dependent symmetries are characteristic of a fractal point of view.

Therefore, the necessary coexistence of the two ways of approaching fractals in literature brings about the concept of *continuity in rupture* which appears to be the only productive critical pattern suiting the purposes of our approach. Thus, what the mathematics and the science of fractals have finally revealed can be applied in interpreting literature; to put it otherwise, the "microcosm" (the literary text) which is smaller or belongs to a lower level, is essentially similar to the "macrocosm" (the real world) which is larger and/or pertains to a higher level; the latter is not somehow superior to the former by virtue of its size or level; the literary text dynamics are such that the macrocosm springs from and is grounded in the microcosm (i.e. the fictionalised representation of the real world), not the other way around. What Blaise Pascal, the French mathematician and philosopher, noticed over three centuries ago can now be truly demonstrated:

> Nature (n.b. literature) imitates herself. A grain thrown onto good ground brings forth fruit; a principle thrown into a good mind brings forth fruit. Everything is created and conducted by the same Master – the root, the branch, the fruits, the principles, the consequences. (in Hayles, 1990: 226)

In our opinion, literature is a fractal object due because:

(1) it is subject to specific tension-engendering factors such as unforeseeability, deviation and ambiguity;
(2) its critical interpretation is reader-centred and fortuitous;
(3) being structured like "a fragment made up of fragments", the literary work creates a "fluctuating geometrical space" (different interpretations, open endings, puzzle-like structures, unevenly constructed, mirroring characters);
(4) the fractal potentiality can be applied in re-interpreting classical works;
(5) contemporary literature provides a fractal world mediating among the infinite possible - historical, cultural or artistic – worlds.

One can also notice that fractality is complementarily bi-dimensional. There is an *overt* fractal literarity as well as a *covert* one. The former occurs especially in postmodernist literature, where the skeptical solution of the modernists, who witnessed the failure of their utopias, is replaced by "the resurrection of the secondary, the fragment and the marginal, by disregarding hierarchies" so that the new sensibility might be said to be fractal, "post-dichotomous" and "post-reductive." (Monica Spiridon in Diaconu, 2002: 10 – our translation) The latter is implied by literature in general as its intrinsic feature.

Under these circumstances, the literary work reveals itself as a *continuum* which renders the multiplication of the same root-theme, equally structured by means of a collage of *mises en abyme* that can make up a liminal subtext developing the main textual idea in infinite variations and inversions. Being a "major mechanism of textual self-reflection", as Stephanie Sieburth puts it, the *mise en abyme* technique can be defined as a "textual segment which constitutes a microcosm, a schematic, condensed version of the entire text as macrocosm." (in Sánchez, 1992: 259) This concept is compatible with the idea of a fractal, as both relate to a textual representation whose complexity can be best approached by considering its inner self-similarity across textual levels. The recursive symmetries of the text-system turn into a puzzle of mutually referential fragments with no dominating voice. From this point of view, Sieburth describes the novel as a dynamic, non-linear system, predominantly fractal, as it grows out of the infinite replicas of the main story, thematic variations that always reflect the textual whole. The critic finds these ideas illustrated in Clarín's novel, *La Regenta,* where she notices that

> the meaning of any given fragment constantly shifts, changes, even inverts, depending on which other fragment is juxtaposed with it (...). Continual dialectic of diversity and similarity, and the freedom of juxtaposition resulting from the breakdown of the text's linearity, cause *La Regenta* to be a constantly changing body, whose meaning is never static and determinable, but always being created and dissolving as different segments are juxtaposed. (in Sánchez, 1992: 260)

Dällenbach's second type of *mise en abyme* comes into discussion here, namely the *repeated reflection*, as the inner textual sequence not only reflects the enclosing text, but, in its turn, includes a fragment which reflects infinitely the reflecting level. Mandelbrot's fractals are made up in the same way, as they can project a multitude of specular metaphors that share the infinite return of quasi-identical forms. (See also Antofi, 2005) Elisabeth Sánchez remarks that

> the internal mirror, regardless of the aspect of the text at which it is aimed, may create the impression of a faithful copy, but the duplication will always be inexact – a bare outline, a condensation, a partial reflection, perhaps even a polar opposite. The textual mirror provides only the suggestion of identity, but minds bent on finding identical structures will indeed find them, perhaps at the expense of noting the differences. For this reason, I think that the difference I outlined between the self-reflecting text as defined by the *mise en abyme* and the quasi-self-similar, mind-boggling structures which constitute a typical fractal is not so much a difference in kind as one of emphasis. The shift in emphasis, I believe, corresponds to the transition between structuralism and post structuralism. Because our understanding of literary texts has evolved since the time Dällenbach pinned down the *mise en abyme*, our use of the term has also evolved, and it has evolved in the direction of the fractal. Our textual mirrors are no longer smooth-surfaced, static reflectors emitting images of unified, regularly self-embedding and enclosed structures. They have become turbulent and fractured, and the images they project are of a text which is fragmented, dynamic, unpredictable, indeterminate, open, and much more complex than many of us had once imagined. *Fractal*, then may be the better term (...). Within these textual bounds, an infinite number of texts is possible. This is the beauty of the fractal: it allows for the possibility of infinitude circumscribed within a finite area. (1992: 261-262)

Or, to put it otherwise,

> All elements in the novel are part of a network of relations and not entities complete in themselves. Characters are shown to be merely particular instances of recurring patterns, while the text can be seen to break up into mutually reflecting segments which, like the characters, participate in an interrelated whole. I realize, of course, that all literary texts are networks of relations, but [...] *La Regenta* invites us to become aware of its reflexive structure as well as of the relational nature of its characters. (Sánchez, 1996: 6)

Another novel, *Pedro Páramo,* makes Elisabeth Sánchez comment in the following terms:

> In such a novel as *Pedro Páramo*, where boundaries dissolve and imagined wholes break up into fragments that echo each other and one another without ever quite connecting (except, perhaps, in the mind of the reader), the notion of fractal spaces – spaces that lie in the interstices of our thought categories – is made to order. We might say that Rulfo has produced an artistic object that looks very much like a fractal in its unwieldy surface structure, and that he has intentionally increased the

> complexity of his work by first breaking the story into bits and pieces, which in turn may contain smaller, self-similar bits and pieces, and then ordering the segments in such a manner that they reveal much more about his story, and in fewer words, than a traditional sequential ordering would. Whereas it is possible to view the novel as a mosaic to be pieced together, or as a broken mirror, I prefer the metaphor of the fractal, precisely because it brings the idea of the mirror into play by inviting readers to look for recursive symmetry, at the same time that it suggests a comparison with the mosaic, whose fractured pieces readers must reorder one by one if they hope to discover a recognizable form hidden within fragments. (1996: 232)

The act of reading itself seems to be characterized by spectral and fractal features as well. From this perspective, the text to be interpreted overcomes its traditional linear and static characteristics to turn into a process,

> a fractal in motion, an evolving shape (...). Whether we are attempting to represent our diachronic movement through the text or our synchronic overview of its parts, we always must do so by imagining or drawing *forms in space,* and, as we have seen, the form that best captures the temporal doubling (the spiral) is much more complex than it first seemed. It is more complex because we have become aware that it is possible to focus on different aspects or levels of the text and to chart their behavior over time. When we recognize the correspondences in behavior between the parts and levels (the repetitions with variations), we return to a synchronic reading. In this we are very much like the fractal geometricians who likewise have shifted their attention to consider what is going on between scale levels. (Sánchez, 1993: 203)
>
> We can draw maps of our temporal movement through the text, following the plot of a novel, for example, or tracing patterns of imagery or recurring themes; or we can draw a model of relationships among parts or between parts and the whole. There are many ways that a literary text can be represented as a form moving through space or as a form that the critic has frozen momentarily in order to examine the relationships between its parts. We should not forget, however, that our diagrams will be mere approximations of the infinitely rich and complex process of reading – of constructing a world through our interpretation of verbal signs and continually restructuring that world as our reading progresses. (Sánchez, 1993: 198-199)

All in all, the theory of fractals approaches the literary work differently, pointing out its textual intricacies and interrelated parts so as to grasp its 'illusion of the whole' in a recursive manner. The immediate effect of reading through the fractal mirror is that of revising the classical

patterns by means of which a literary text can be both decoded and understood in its inner structure.

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INTO THE LABYRINTH OF (META)FICTION WITH *THE MAGUS*

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In keeping with Linda Hutcheon's theory on metafiction which she calls *narcissistic fiction*, John Fowles's *The Magus* may be considered as a metafictional novel that addresses fundamental issues of human existence and offers, at the same time, a critical perspective of its own process of creation.

In his brief study on metafiction, Guido Kums ('Metafictional Explorations into Novel Theory') starts his analysis from Linda Hutcheon's distinction between *overt, diegetic metafiction* and *covert, linguistic metafiction*. Overt, diegetic metafiction takes its own status, the conventions of the novel and the process of narration as its theme, whereas covert metafiction uses intertextual references and parody that aims to demonstrate either language's inability to communicate meaningfully or alternatively "language's ability to create worlds which may be more coherent and meaningful than the 'real' one." (Hutcheon in Kums, 1996: 149) Guido Kums focuses on the overt metafiction sustaining that there are four main areas at which the questions raised by the metafictional novel are targeted (1996: 151-154), namely: the relationship between fiction and reality, the problem of the value of literature and its impact on social life, the domain of the novel itself as a genre with its own conventions, and last but not least, the area of language, as metafictional novels subscribe to the view that "the world cannot be represented in literary fiction, it is only possible to represent the discourse of that world." (Waugh in Kums, 1996: 154)

The next pages will prove that *The Magus* explores all these areas revealing itself as a self-reflexive narrative. Thus, the close analysis of the novel will focus on investigating those literary devices that make it an overt metafiction.

An element which is considered to be an obvious sign of self-reflection appears in the form of asides. It is known that the novel has an aside, a 'Foreword' in which the author himself 'explains' to the reader how s/he should approach his novel. Michaela Praisler comments that:

> This metafictional aside may be read as two things at once (in keeping with the kind of reader one is); on the one hand, it might be taken for a neutral ground where the freedom of choice is still very much possible, since it lies in the future; on the other hand, it might imply that, despite its preaching in favour of total freedom, it remains an intrusive exercise which, by telling the reader what not to expect from the text, is actually telling him/her what to read into it. In other words, the preface is illustrative of Fowles's fiction, one which demolishes pretensions of divine powers, both on the part of the writer (as author) and on the part of the reader. (Praisler, 2005: 78)

In *The Magus*, what Fowles seems to imply is that he tries to create an alternative linguistic structure or fiction which signifies or implies the old form (realistic novel), the reader being invited to re-construct the old form and the meaning. Even though the novel begins under the guise of a realistic novel, this is only one of the numerous tricks played on the reader. It may be said that *The Magus* is one of those novels which seem to be "focused on traditional means of conveying message, portraying characters and actions […] employing the conventions of realism as they acknowledge their artificiality." (Praisler, 2005: 70) It is interesting to see how in the first chapter of the book the conventions of realism and the "violent hierarchies" of the Victorian era are indirectly referred to and criticized. They are seen as "*the grotesquely elongated shadow*,[…], *of that monstrous dwarf Queen Victoria* and as an armoury of capitalized key-words like *Discipline and Tradition and Responsibility*." (1983: 15) Thus, from the very beginning, although indirectly, the author points to the conventions of the traditional novel which he rejects and turns inside out and upside down. Using the godgame as a metaphor for the complex process of writing, Fowles deals with the question of authority obliquely discussing and commenting on the paradoxical status of the writer and on the role and status of fiction itself. What Fowles constantly rejects is the notion of an author-god. In many of his metafictional novels, *The Magus* included, Fowles "*i*mplies not the disappearance of authorial control in contemporary fiction, but rather a shift toward its blatant exposure." Like many other metafictional writers, he "operates and functions with a freedom of exposing illusion for what it is – a device used to mask narrative as a construct and a figment of one's imagination." (Vieira, 1991) Fowles chooses "undisguised invention, against the duplicitous 'suspension of disbelief'" because he is one of those novelists who "perceive the need to face the fictionality so apparent in literature but not always so apparent in our daily lives." (Vieira, 1991)

If only implied in *The Magus*, this constant refusal to take up the position of the omniscient narrator is directly referred to in *The French Lieutenant's Woman*:

> The novelist is still a god, since he creates (and not even the most aleatory avant-garde novel has managed to extirpate its author completely); what has changed is that we are no longer the gods of the Victorian image, omniscient and decreeing; but in the new theological image, with freedom our first principle, not authority. (Fowles in Praisler, 2005: 152)

In *The Magus*, Conchis may be seen as the embodiment of the omniscient narrator, whereas omniscience is metaphorically rendered and constantly brought under scrutiny in the form of the godgame played at Bourani. Conchis says many times that "the masque is a metaphor" meant to educate Nicholas (to see the artificiality of the roles he plays) and the reader to see the inner workings of omniscience and its artificiality, its (dis)illusions. "The role of Conchis, and of God, for Fowles is like that of the novelist vis-à-vis his fiction." (Foster, 1994: 39)

Conchis is a god-like type of narrator who manipulates his characters and this seems to become clear enough from what his 'actors' (standing in fact for the 'characters') say about him. Julie will tell Nicholas that: "Everything we say, he hears. He knows." (196) […] There is a sense in which he perhaps can hear everything we say. […] Nothing to do with telepathy. That's just a blind. A metaphor." (213) Conchis himself emphasises the fact that Lily, as a character in the story he narrates, "…always does exactly what I want." (170) His ability to hear and know everything without being in their presence may be interpreted as a reference to the omniscient narrator's ability to be in several places at once and know everything about his/her characters, even their innermost thoughts and feelings.

Nicholas, in his turn, says "I feel I'm some sort of guinea-pig, God knows why." (218) and later, during the same conversation with Julie/Lily: "You must have seen you're in the hands of someone who's very skilled at rearranging reality." (219) He thinks that "Conchis was trying to recreate some lost world of his own and for some reason I was cast as the jeune premier in it, his younger self. […]; now I uneasily felt myself being manoeuvred into a butt." (192) Nicholas is very angry with Conchis because he has the power to create and then make disappear at will the world he creates: "I walked back through the darkness, feeling depressed, and increasingly furious that Conchis could spirit his world away; deprive me of it, like a callous drug-ward doctor with some hooked addict." (243)

Like Nicholas, Conchis is a self-conscious narrator (a technique specific to metafictional writings), aware of the fact that, as he narrates, he creates the story and its meaning and, just like Scheherazade, he wants to provoke a certain response from his narratee. He is a master of story-telling and even postpones the narration of the next story for the day or days to come, the effect being one of suspense.

> He stopped speaking for a moment, like a man walking who comes to a brink; perhaps it was an artful pause, but it made the stars, the night, seem to wait, as if story, narration, history, lay imbricated in the nature of things; and the cosmos was for the story, not the story for the cosmos. (150)
> There was silence. The crickets chirped. Some night-bird, high overhead, croaked primevally in the stars.
> 'What happened when you got home?'
> 'It is late.'
> 'But – '
> 'Tomorrow.' (132)

Commenting briefly on the writer's ability to be at once a *metafictionist* who experiments new techniques and an ingenious narrator who loves to tell stories, Thomas C. Foster states that:

> Fowles frequently points out that he is engaged in creating a literary artefact as well as giving narrative duties to his characters, who use their own stories to teach or convert other characters. The magical abilities of his Magus are largely narrative. The net result of these strategies is to remind readers of the uses to which narrative can be put and the fictiveness of his whole enterprise. (1994: 17)

The last pages of Part One may be considered as the threshold between the real world and the fictitious/fantastic world. Nicholas feels this change and expresses it long time before his leaving for Greece, when he says he feels as if he were a character from the universe of the romance, "a medieval king" (40). The new world that opens for him is one where there are only the mysteries of Greece: "But then the mysteries began." (63) The insistence on mysteries indicates that we enter a fictional world in which "Second meanings hung in the air; ambiguities, unexpectedness." (85) It is in this part (chapter 10) that *The Magus* begins its voyage into the fantastic, the imaginary, representing the perfect time and setting for Conchis's tricks.

On the island of Phraxos, Nicholas enters a mysterious world that is in fact the world of fiction itself. The references to this constant crossing of or rather…stop on the threshold between reality and fiction are numerous.

> But a strong feeling persisted, when I swung my feet *off the ground* and lay back, that *something* was trying to slip between me and *reality*. (120)
> Yet I enjoyed the walk back to the school. […] In a sense I *re-entered reality* as I walked. The events of the week-end seemed to recede. To become locked away, as if I had dreamt them; and yet as I walked there came the strangest feeling, compounded of the early hour, the absolute solitude, and what had happened, of having *entered a myth*; a knowledge of what is was like physically, moment by moment, to have been young and ancient, a Ulysses on his way to meet Circe, a Theseus on his journey to Crete, an Oedipus still searching for his destiny. […] It was […] an intensely mysterious present and concrete feeling of excitement, of being in a situation where anything still might happen. As if the world had suddenly, during those last three days, been *re-invented*, and for me alone. (157)
> 'Why must you always know *where* you are? Have you never heard of *imagination*?' (197)
> Alison could stand for the past and present *reality* in *the outer world*, and I would put her secretly in the ring with my inner adventure. (245)
> I had to see the roof at Bourani, the south of the island, the sea, the mountains, all the *reality* of the *unreality*. (279)

The borders become obscured and Nicholas loses contact with reality; he does no longer know what is real and what is not real; this fictitious universe becomes more real than the real one: "The rows of olive-skinned faces, bent black heads, the smell of chalk-dust, and old inkstain that rorschached my desk – they were like things in a mist, *real yet unreal*; obstacles in limbo." (242) It is exactly what Conchis wants to happen by manipulating him to believe that "reality is not necessary." (138) The Magus knows how to transform reality, how to reshape it, how to find its mystery: "That great passive monster, reality, was no longer dead, easy to handle. It was full of mysterious vigour, new forms, new possibilities." (309)

This constant exploration of the fiction/reality borderline engenders a permanent intersection of different worlds. The universe that Fowles creates is fascinating and mysterious, meant to foreground this interplay of alternative worlds: real, fictitious and even fantastic, magic ones. Elements of the real world intermingle with fictitious and magic elements in a complex, multilayered, labyrinth-like story. At one level of the story, the real one, Nicholas is a young English teacher who came to Greece in search for adventure and freedom. At another level of the story, the fictitious one, he stands for the 'character', "a puppet whose strings are held by Conchis – God/the puppeteer" (Praisler, 2005: 79). At the level of

magic, of legend and myth, the story seems to be the reenactment of an ancient myth: Ulysses's voyage and quest of the self or Theseus who enters the Cretan labyrinth.

The labyrinth that Nicholas refers to many times is a recurrent motif in *The Magus* and may stand for the labyrinth of the text itself which is in the making, which is created before us. "My heart was beating faster than it should. It was partly at the thought of meeting Julie, partly at something far more mysterious, the sense that I was now deep in the strangest *maze* in Europe." (313)

John Mepham (in 'Narratives of Postmodernism') states that post-structuralism considers that the labyrinth is the best image for the postmodernist text:

> The text as a reified locus of determinacy is replaced by textuality, often figured by the metaphor of the labyrinth. As it incorporates decentring, difference, differance and other grammatological moves, the labyrinth (image of the text) places writing before us as the setting of the abyss. (1996: par. 6)

Conchis is in fact a thinly disguised surrogate for the author himself and the use of such an author surrogate is also a sign of self-reflexivity (not to mention that Robert Foulkes shares with John Robert Fowles one of his two Christian names – Robert – and Foulkes seems to be a mispronounced Fowles, which is again an element that tie the real 'author' to his fictional work). There is little doubt that Conchis is a mask for his creator, a camouflage, an alter-ego, a voice for his deepest beliefs. Conchis is a persona that expresses Fowles's ideas and views on subjects ranging from music and art to literary realism, from good and evil to truth and beauty, from freedom of choice and existential authenticity to human selfishness and 'collector-consciousness'. Conchis's discussions with Nicholas become true essays on philosophical and literary issues. The status of the novel itself as a genre with its own conventions is brought to the fore. In Conchis's reply – "The novel is dead" (96) – one can easily discern an echo of the postmodernist debate on the novel and its conventions.

> 'What do you read?' […]
> 'Oh…novels mainly. Poetry. And criticism.'
> 'I have not a single novel here.'
> 'No?'
> 'The novel is no longer an art form.'
> I grinned.
> 'Why do you smile?'
> 'It was a sort of joke when I was at Oxford. If you didn't know what to say at a party, you used to ask a question like that.'

'Like what?'
'"Do you think the novel is *exhausted* as an art form?" No serious answer was expected.'
'I see. It was not serious.'
'Not at all.' […]
'Well – I am serious. *The novel is dead*. As dead as alchemy.' (96)

Earlier on, during the same conversation, Nicholas shares with the reader the thoughts triggered by Modigliani's paintings in a statement which appears as a bitter meditation on the condition of the artist:

> I stared down at those careless, drunken scrawls; felt the immediacy of the man; and the terrible but necessary alienation of genius from ordinariness. A man who would touch you for ten francs, and go home and paint what would one day be worth ten million. Conchis watched me.
> 'This is the side the museums never show.' (94)

A very interesting detail is the fact that during the same encounter with Nicholas, Conchis shows him Fra Angelico's famous 'Annunciation' which makes Nicholas aware of the similarity between the colonnade in the painting and that of the villa: "I looked over his shoulder and saw Fra Angelico's famous 'Annunciation'; and at once knew why the colonnade outside had seemed so familiar. There was even the same white-edged floor of red tiles." (94) The reference to this famous painting may be interpreted as a 'mise-en-abyme' sequence in which one can see the annunciation of a 'birth' or 're-birth': that of a better man, of a new Nicholas who, after having learned the lessons of the godgame, will be ready to become a magus in his turn.

We may consider that the comparison "Greece is like a mirror" (99) is what Brian Stonehill calls "a thematic image of reflexivity" (Stonehill in Thuleen, 1996: 7) which occurs in metafictional writings. Lucien Dallenbach considers mirrors as a symbol for mise-en-abyme and comments on different literary works which use this strategy. It is interesting to see how a quotation from Stendhal was rewritten by André Gide who changed it into a metaphor of self-reflexivity. Stendhal claimed that: "Un roman est un miroir qu'on promène le long d'un chemin" considering the mirror an emblem for fiction in general. This idea is expressed by André Gide, the author of the mise en abyme theory, who, in his novel *Les Faux-Monnayeurs,* has the character Edouard keep a diary defined as "…le miroir qu'avec moi je promène." This phrase may be regarded as an epitome of André Gide's own beliefs about the process of writing. The mimetic concept of the novel as slice-of-life began to be questioned by modernist writers and André Gide, who used Stendhal's quotation as an intertext, changed the 'mirror'

of fiction that faithfully renders reality into a 'mirror' which reflects its own process of writing. Postmodernists made extensive use of this metafictional 'mirroring' technique in order to create a text which offers a kaleidoscopic vision and not a realistic portrayal of life. (See Dallenbach, 1977: 45-46)

"Greece is like a mirror" for Nicholas the protagonist of the novel, because he can see himself as he really is in the complex system of 'mirrors' that Conchis creates for him. But the mirror may also stand for the self-reflexive nature of the novel itself: the entire process of writing is brought under discussion and reflected by the events that happened on the island of Phraxos in Greece. "Greece is like a mirror" may be read as a statement of Fowles's literary credo. It is as if he were saying: 'The events taking place on the Island of Phraxos are nothing but a metaphor for the act of writing itself. This is how I understand to write a novel; I think it should be experimental, challenging and above everything else, mysterious.'

In the second part of the novel, when Conchis 'remembers' and narrates his experiences during the war, the story becomes a long, complex account of history. This part of the novel may be seen as a piece of historiographic metafiction. Linda Hutcheon considers that the historical novel revived under the form of that "un-innocent paradoxical historiographic metafiction" (1988: 124) may be defined as fiction "which keeps distinct its formal auto-representation and its historical context, and in so doing problematises the very possibility of historical knowledge, because there is no reconciliation, no dialectic here – just unresolved contradiction…" (1988: 106)

This "unresolved contradiction" seems to be the result of the juxtaposition of past 'facts' or historical events alongside fictional narrative. What we witness with Conchis is the revisiting of the past and its rewriting. He tells the story of the battle of Neuve Chapelle the way it happened but he also presents his own interpretation of this terrible war episode. That history can be revisited and rewritten is an idea that Fowles foregrounds in the alternative story presented by the 19 year old (back then) Conchis to his parents on his return home:

> Until that moment of confrontation I had determined that I would tell the truth. […] But there are some truths too cruel, before the faces one has to announce them to, to be told. So I said that I had been lucky in a draw for leave […and not that he deserted from the front], and that now Montague was dead I was to rejoin my original battalion. […] I *invented a new battle* of Neuve Chapelle, as if the original had not been bad enough. I even told them I had been recommended for a commission. (148)

Thus Conchis's story juxtaposes 'real' historical events (such as the battle of Neuve Chapelle) along with unknown happenings from the fictional narrative (his desertion and his coming home as well as the fictionalised presentation of the battle to his parents). This juxtaposition of the fiction against historical events (considered as real facts) reasserts the idea that the novel is a work of fiction. Conchis interweaves in his stories 'real' events from the past with representations and interpretations of a 'personal' past not objectively, but highly subjectively rendered. He wants to shed light on those things most often hidden within the mimetic worlds of traditional historical fiction. Traditional accounts of war speak about the courage and the heroism of the combatants on the battlefield, but Conchis sees the horrors of a war he describes as a huge slaughter where courage and heroism are replaced by a mere instinct of survival.

> […] 'Five or six machine guns scythed us like grass. Montague spun round and fell at my feet. He lay on his back, staring up at me, one eye gone. I collapsed beside him. The air was nothing but bullets. […] The back of Montague's head had been blown away, but his face still wore an idiot's grin, as if he were laughing in his sleep, mouth wide open. A face I have never forgotten. The last smile of a stage of evolution.
> 'The firing stopped. Then, like a flock of frightened sheep, everyone who survived began to run back towards the village. I as well. I had lost even the will to be a coward.' […]
> 'A wounded lieutenant was now in command. He crouched beside me, with a great gash across his cheek. His eyes burned dully. He was no longer a nice upright young Englishman, but a Neolithic beast. Cornered, uncomprehending, in a sullen rage. Perhaps we all look like that. The longer one survived the more unreal it was. (128)

Conchis's narrative reinforces the idea that (our) past and (our) present alike may be seen as 'constructed' of a variety of points of view, "not all of which conform to the 'correct' view created by the political, social and economic 'factors' dominant at the time those events happen. In fact there is no unique 'correct' reading of the past which gains in supremacy over any other." (Lowes, 2005: 2-3) In this way the novel plays with the idea of historical 'fact' and historical 'fiction' and blurs their boundaries "questioning truthfulness or degree of reliability of past textual 'facts'." (Lowes, 2005: 2) Collective history is replaced by personal history or 'his-story' and, in so doing, Fowles illustrates the postmodernist credo according to which "much of the knowledge about the past is of a narrated nature since all past events are potential historical facts, actual facts remaining those which have been chosen to be narrated." (Praisler, 2005: 115)

Another marker of self-reflexivity is the presence in the story of a protagonist whose main preoccupation is with himself. One can easily

remark that Nicholas is a selfish and narcissistic young man who plays various inauthentic roles: the existentialist, the great poet, etc. He seems to be the perfect choice for a metafictional work whose rules are closely examined and turned into the focal point of analysis. Ironically, Nicholas uses the word narcissistic when he talks about the 'solitary heart' game he plays with women: "This sounds, and was, calculating, but it was caused less by a true coldness than by my *narcissistic* belief in the importance of the lifestyle." (21)

The process of writing which fictionalises real persons and transforms them into characters is foregrounded by Nicholas's desire to fictionalise real persons starting with himself. The quest for his true self becomes more difficult because of this incapacity to discern reality from fiction. He always imagines he is like a character in a story, like Robinson Crusoe, Pip from *Great Expectations*, Ferdinand from *The Tempest*, Orpheus, Theseus and so on. Through Nicholas as a character, the author brings again under discussion the question of the omniscient narrator and calls attention to the artificiality and the lack of freedom brought about by such a stance:

> […] always I had acted as if a third person was watching and listening and giving me marks for good or bad behaviour… a god like novelist, to whom I turned, like a character with the power to please, the sensitivity to feel slighted, the ability to adapt himself to whatever he believed the novelist-god wanted. (538)

It is as if Nicholas became all of a sudden aware of the restrictions that a god-like writer imposed on him and wants to get free.

Even the story created around his name 'Urfe' is indicative of his desire to present a fictitious, more interesting self to the others and not the real Nicholas:

> Only once did he seem really surprised. He had asked me about my unusual name.
> 'French. My ancestors were Huguenots.'
> 'Ah.'
> 'There's a writer called Honoré d'Urfé – '
> He gave me a swift look. 'He is an ancestor of yours?'
> 'It just a family tradition. No one's ever traced it. As far as I know.'
> Poor old d'Urfé; I had used him before to suggest that centuries of high culture lay in my blood. (91)

The way in which real people may become fictional, written characters on a page, during the process of creation is also exposed when Nicholas speaks about himself in the third person: "So we talked about

Nicholas: his family, his ambitions, his failings. The third person is apt, because I presented *a sort of fictional self* to them, a victim of circumstances […]." (347)

Conchis insists on the fact that 'Lily' is a fictional character and not a real person – "'She is not the real Lily'" (170), whereas 'Lily', when Nicholas tells her: "'There are so many things I want to know about the real you'," answers: "'The real me's a lot less exciting than the imaginary one.'"(291)

The Magus illustrates Fowles's conception of a novel as a literary game played with an intellectual reader who is his equal. This game played with an intelligent reader is indirectly referred to throughout the novel. One such reference is Nicholas's remark that:

> In some obscure way, one I was to become very familiar with, it flattered me: I was too intelligent not to be already grasping the rules of the game we played. It was no good my knowing that old men have conned young ones like that ever since time began. I still fell for it, as one still falls for the oldest literary devices in the right hands and contexts. (139)

Conchis asks from Nicholas a suspension of … belief: "'I do not ask you to believe. All I ask you is to pretend to believe.'" (137) This request may be read as an invitation to us readers to join the literary game. The author has one of his characters say that: "'It is like hide-and-seek, Nicholas. One has to be sure the seeker wants to play. One also has to stay in hiding. Or there is no game.'" (208) Fowles's literary game in *The Magus* has its own logic and purpose or, to put it in Nicholas's terms, there are "two elements in his game – one didactic, the other aesthetic" (162) and these two elements represent a thesis of the novel's own game. Fowles wants to offer both:

> …a pleasing surface for the reader who is eager to establish links between the real and the fictional, and give the text the depth expected by the active, inquisitive reader who seeks to reach the 'true' message underneath the dialogism of the text. (Praisler, 2005: 78)

As Michaela Praisler emphasises:

> Nicholas Urfe's incursions at the heart of fictionality and his analyses of the way in which it is constructed and perceived make the novel a document of postmodernism, with its obvious questioning of realist conventions and simultaneous parodic acknowledging that, unfortunately, realism still has control over the way in which literature is read, taught and evaluated. (2005: 81)

Katherine Tarbox, in her turn, states that:

> The author refuses to collect his readers. He desires in his fiction to allow the reader the same psychoanalytic, reconstructive experience as the protagonist, with its attendant, sometimes uneasy freedoms. (1988: 9)
> Through his unusual technical strategies Fowles shows in each novel how limited our seeing is in everyday life, how time bound and tradition bound we are, how accustomed we are to looking at the world with collector-consciousness […]. (1988: 8)

The story Fowles tells all readers in his novels is that of individual freedom. His main preoccupation seems to be that of making us all understand what an important role fiction plays in achieving this individual freedom. In his interview with Katherine Tarbox, Fowles pointed out:

> Life does condition us so frightfully, that it's terribly difficult to sense … the underlying nature of existence. You know, we are caged more and more by present society in roles, and I think being able to see through the roles is most important…. Most people like to be conditioned; unfortunately, it's a fallacy that everybody wants to be freer in the sense we're talking about. They're much happier I think, having fixed routines and a limited way of life. (in Tarbox, 1988: 8)

Fowles believes in the power of fiction to awake us from this "existential torpor" and in "his extravagant metaphor of the godgame," he implies that "fiction itself is the great awakener, the great teacher. […] Fiction is the great existential adventure." (Tarbox, 1988: 8)

Thomas C. Foster considers *The Magus* an "allegory of the act of reading" and we would like to add to his statement our own interpretation. Bearing in mind that, in John Fowles's conception, reading equates with self-knowledge, we think this is one of the reasons why the labyrinth, symbolic of initiation and self-knowledge, is so often referred to in the book. Thus, *The Magus* may also be seen as an allegory of the quest of the self. Entering the labyrinth of John Fowles's (meta)fiction, as uncomfortable as it may seem at a first glance, proves in the end stimulating and gratifying since our search will have made us achieve a better understanding of our true self and of the world.

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MODALITES DISCURSIVES ET FICTION METADISCURSIVE DANS LA PROSE ROUMAINE DES ANNEES '80. POINTS DE DEPART

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Etudier de l'intérieur un phénomène littéraire suppose, simultanément, des avantages et des risques. Celui qui se trouve dans une telle position n'a qu'à profiter des premiers et accepter les derniers. C'est d'ailleurs la démarche assumée par, au moins, trois titres qui ébauchent le profil historique et littéraire de la génération '80 : celui de Radu G. Teposu en 1993, mais datant, selon la préface de l'auteur, depuis 1985[1], celui proposé par Alexandru Muşina, en 1993[2] et celui de Gheorghe Crăciun, de 1994[3].

Cette hâte d'un regard rétrospectif trouverait son explication, selon les arguments qui préfacent ces démarches, dans la conscience de groupe qui a mis au clair ses repères théoriques dès la fin de la décennie en question. Ce qui s'impose dès un premier abord de ces volumes anthologiques est l'association de l'idée de *génération* à celle de *optzecism*[4]. Le livre de Craciun contient deux chapitres ayant des titres allant dans ce sens[5] et qui plaident en faveur d'une délimitation par rapport à la génération '60 : « Je crois qu'une des causes qui expliquent la redoutable conscience théorique des représentants de l'*optzecism,* (qu'ils soient critiques, poètes ou prosateurs) réside justement en ce *sentiment puissant de la différence et en son encadrement dans une matrice esthétique ayant de nouvelles lignes de force*, tout à fait différente de celles des générations précédentes. ».

Dans le même sens et dans le même volume, Ghiu[6] proposait, par un titre incitant, *Le projet historique de génération et le projet de la génération '80,* un texte qui abordait le problème de la génération, en 1982[7] déjà.

L'auteur de l'anthologie proposait aussi un texte de 1984 d'Al. Cistelecan, auquel il donnait le titre significatif de *La Génération et ses pôles*, opinant pour une image cartographique de la génération, par des textes choisis entre ceux écrits entre 1979 – 1989 et qui « consistent en principal en *articles, opinions et réponses spontanées* », c'est-à-dire « ces textes-là qui participent de manière significative à la formation d'une *idéologie commune* ».

Pourtant, au moment de l'apparition de l'anthologie, l'idée de « génération littéraire » et les modalités de la rapporter au monde littéraire roumain et étranger ne représentaient pas une nouveauté, car *Istoria tragică şi grotescă a întunecatului deceniu literar nouă* de Radu G. Teposu commençait son analyse de la « neuvième décennie » par un examen du critère de la « génération » dans les délimitations d'histoire littéraire, proposait une bibliographie « classique » du thème[8] et arrivait au *Discursul critic* de Piru qui, à son tour, concluait son tableau des générations par la « génération la plus récente », qui débutait en 1981.[9]

Le problème de la génération '80 et de ses délimitations est recouvrable aussi dans Simion, *Scriitori români de azi*, vol IV,[10] qui recherche les caractéristiques de la *nouvelle vague* dans le programme même de la génération '80, contenu par ses propres études théoriques.[11]

Dans *Incursiuni în literatura actuală*[12], Simuț s'interroge sur les solutions que les historiens littéraires pourraient adopter concernant la périodisation de l'époque 1945-1989, et propose l'issue des « quatre littératures », observant justement qu'il est impossible de trouver une seule réponse valable à ce problème. Dans le chapitre intitulé *Tendances dans la prose contemporaine*, il aborde « l'égotisme textualiste des jeunes », sans désigner explicitement la génération en tant que critère valide de périodisation.

Dans le volume publié en 1995,[13] Ulici prend le risque d'aborder le problème des générations, taillant un patron « générationaliste » par l'identification de signalements de groupe et caractérisant ainsi son point de vue : « une synthèse historique et littéraire de la littérature contemporaine, selon le modèle herméneutique offert par la périodisation en *promotions* et par le placement du lieu géométrique de la littérarité dans le contexte de la mentalité esthétique contemporaine ».

En fait, la préface représente l'abord théorique d'un critère : le groupement des écrivains en générations qui, à leur tour, incluent des promotions successives, sur la durée de dix ans chacune. Ainsi, il identifie « *la génération de l'après guerre* ou bien *la génération du réflexe conditionné*, avec les promotions '80, '70 et '60, comptant les écrivains débutants et affirmés entre 1956-1986 ».[14]

L'auteur fait remarquer le fait que toute périodisation finit par être conventionnelle et propose une analyse des problèmes qui existent entre la génération biologique et la génération de création, affirmant que, pour l'intervalle 1976 1985, il existe des cas d'écrivains qui « se sont formés et qui ont débuté en publications dans l'intervalle de la promotion '70, mais qui ont débuté en éditions et se sont imposés dans l'intervalle de la promotion '80.[15]

Ainsi, la dispute d'autorité canonique, visant la reconsidération des critères dans la dernière moitié de siècle, aboutit à la neuvième décennie ; au-delà des points de vue et des classifications des options des critiques consacrés, la *Génération '80* est entrée dans l'histoire, même si le changement de paradigme littéraire produit par les textes de la génération '80 se trouve encore minimisé, voire ignoré par certains auteurs[16]. Dans les revues littéraires, les textes de la génération '80 sont en permanence mis en rapport avec le mouvement postmoderniste, comme si ces écrivains étaient les protagonistes d'un régénérateur postmodernisme « tardif ».[17] D'ailleurs, ces problèmes liés à la littérature des dernières décennies, les canonisations prématurées mais aussi la déconstruction de la tradition littéraire font l'objet de quelques célèbres disputes. C'est le cas de celle dirigée par Philippe Sollers sur le thème de la « génération 1989 »[18] ou bien de certaines prises de position, entre autres celle de Vattimo[19] dans son essai *La fin de la modernité*.

Lorsque, en 1989, Simion[20], dédiait un chapitre au « Moment '80 », dans les « Scriitori români de azi », il faisait référence à la poésie du moment et étendait ses observations à la prose, ajoutant le postmodernisme entre les particularités de cette génération et trouvant – les dernières années - au *Cercul de critică*[21], des débats sur le postmodernisme et « implicitement, sur la génération '80 ». Dans le même volume, le critique signalait les numéros dédiés par *Caietele*

critice[22] « à la prose et à la poésie jeune », mais aussi à « l'initiation d'un débat *sur le postmodernisme, à référence spéciale à la poésie et à la prose de la dernière décennie* ». Le problème de lier les expériences littéraires de cette génération au postmodernisme – dans *Caiete critice* et dans le chapitre sur la génération '80 de *Scriitori români de azi* – partait justement des représentants de cette génération.

Il est intéressant de rappeler les opinions et les caractérisations proposées de l'intérieur de la génération après le « lancement » fait avec *Desant '83*[23] , dans la présentation du professeur Crohmălniceanu, lui-même dirigeant de cénacle estudiantin. Les prosateurs de cette génération « se couvriront s'interview et de points de vue »[24] de sorte que « les interviews des écrivains de la génération '80 pourraient aisément former à eux seules un livre mûr et très incitant ». En plus, les revues littéraires *Echinox, Orizont, Contrapunct, Amfiteatru* « abritent » des points de vue et des débuts littéraires.

D'ailleurs, aussi bien « la perception critique du domaine […] que les prosateurs avec leur propres opinions et manifestes » font l'objet d'une anthologie réalisée par un représentant de la génération, Crăciun[25] , pour la prose, alors que, une année plus tôt, avait été réalisée[26] *Antologia poeziei generației '80.*

La même année, 1993, avait paru un livre[27] qui, selon le dire de l'auteur, aurait été terminé en 1985 et qui, par une préface significative, liait la génération '80 au postmodernisme. L'auteur emploie, dans le titre du volume, un procédé de l'arsenal de récupération que la génération avait pratiqué : *l'histoire tragique et grotesque de l'obscure décennie littéraire neuf.*

Pour placer la prose de cette génération sous le signe du renouvellement, les études citées – et, en général, les abords de la prose de l'époque – ont commencé par définir le postmodernisme et par chercher dans les textes visés des arguments à l'appui. Le terme textualisme/textualiste allait caractériser le « prosateur postmoderne » ainsi que l'idée de récupération livresque, de jeu fantaisiste avec la tradition, d'allégorie et de parodie, de construction et de déconstruction.

Il est intéressant de remarquer que la totalité des études concernant les textes de cette génération essaie, au-delà des points de départ, bien enracinés dans le roman américain des années '60, de

trouver des sources et une base de dialogue dans la littérature roumaine, visant ainsi une continuité entre les différents moments de la littérature roumaine, mais aussi la perception et la récupération du modernisme européen.

Avant d'analyser les textes critiques notoires qui essaient de fixer l'essence de la littérature postmoderne, il est intéressant de voir, de l'intérieur de la génération même, *l'idée des liens avec la tradition culturelle*.[28]

En partant de l'observation que les écrivains de la génération '80 sont des intellectuels, et paraphrasant donc Frye, selon qui « l'expérience préalable de la littérature » fait naître « le désir d'écrire de l'écrivain », l'auteur de l'anthologie de la prose de la décennie '80 dans des études théoriques, intitule de manière significative : « Au début c'était la littérature » et trouve une source essentielle des expériences de ces prosateurs dans « l'expérience de la littérature ». Dans ce sens, Lefter, dans un texte de 1988, inclus dans l'anthologie[29], appréciait le recours à la tradition comme un « thème clé dans la stratégie des débats sur la littérature en question », « les années '80 plaçant en vedette le mouvement de séparation et de renouvellement de ces structures ». « Assumer pleinement la tradition » représentait « un terme de référence permanent » tout comme assumer « les procédés intertextuels affichés (la citation culturelle, la pastiche, la parodie etc.) ».

L'idée de « récupérer » la tradition dans certaines conditions est soutenue par la plupart de prises de positions dans le problème de la génération '80 ou du postmodernisme : dans son essai intitulé *La fiction postmoderniste*, publié dans le numéro spécial des *Caiete critice* de 1986, Barth tente lui aussi une réponse à la question « qu'est-ce que le postmodernisme » et « qui sont les postmodernistes ». En faisant deux observations essentielles à ce propos, il analyse le rapport avec le modernisme[30] et avec la tradition et, en même temps, indexe le corpus de procédés par lequel ce rapport se conserve[31]. La bibliographie du postmodernisme est déjà devenue classique, les grands noms du débat pro et contre sont présents dans toutes les anthologies. Il s'agit soit uniquement de critiques, soit des critiques et créateurs en même temps :

Jean François Lyotard, Ihab Hassan, Guy Scarpetta, John Barth, Raymond Fedeman, Linda Hutcheon, Thomas Pynchon.

Dans un essai publié en 1980, *Literatura reîmplinirii*, Barth tente un bilan – en tant qu'écrivain postmoderne *en titre* – et une définition des caractéristiques de la nouvelle esthétique narrative, et – en tant qu'analyste, – à douze ans de distance après un autre essai célèbre, à titre antonymique, *The Literature of Exhaustion* (1967)[32].

Pour illustrer le point de vue du prosateur américain, théoricien et pratiquant d'un postmodernisme imposé, nous transcrivons quelques séquences qui permettent la compréhension de la manière dans laquelle une grande partie des représentants de la génération '80 caractérisent la littérature postmoderne, et leur propre texte. Nous retrouvons ici l'autorité du texte critique, de l'intertexte culturel et la séduction des formes nouvelles, dont parlait, dans la préface du *Desant 83,* Crohmalniceanu, quand il essayait de caractériser la prose du volume. « Les romanciers se trouvent dans la situation d'utiliser jusqu'au bout différentes formes, d'épuiser certaines possibilités narratives, et dorénavant il ne leur reste que de parodier les vieilles histoires et les formes antérieures […] non pas un épuisement du langage ou de la littérature, mais de l'esthétique du modernisme supérieur, celui admirable, un programme non pas à répudier, mais décidément terminé […] toute convention artistique peut être éloignée, abolie, dépassée, transformée ou même utilisée contre elle-même, afin de générer des œuvres nouvelles et vitales».

Barth propose un dernier argument pour le dialogue entre les générations de prosateurs, placés aux confins, entre modernisme et postmodernisme[33] : «un large programme pour la fiction postmoderne, je pense que c'est la synthèse ou le dépassement de ces antithèses […]. Mon auteur idéal postmoderne ni ne répudie purement et simplement, ni n'imite purement et simplement ses parents modernistes du vingtième siècle, ni ses grands parents du XX-e ». D'ailleurs, pour la littérature placée sous le drapeau du postmodernisme, les artistes critiques ont proposé des labels plus révélateurs et plus appropriés : « surfiction », « fiction de la rupture »[34], toujours d'accord sur une vérité extralittéraire, qui se vérifie également au cas de la prose de la

génération ’80 ; l’anéantissement de la structure sociale et sa reconfiguration ont un effet simple sur la conscience et la littérature devient de-construction. Dans ce sens va la démonstration de la poéticienne canadienne Linda Hutcheon, auteur de quelques récentes synthèses sur le postmodernisme[35], qui voit la poétique du postmodernisme sous le signe de l’histoire et de la politique. « *La métafiction historiographique* » est considérée comme le seul fruit inventé et porté par le postmodernisme : d’une part, l’option politique est suggérée par le refus du figé aussi bien que par le pluralisme de l’option structurale, et, d’autre part, elle surgit par la thématique. D’ici, les jeux épiques, le fragmentarisme, les combinaisons type puzzle et la parodie – arme contre la tentation du pouvoir central. Observations vraies en égale mesure pour la construction de la prose des années ’80, jeu évident entre « posé et présupposé ».

Hassan offrait, à son tour, toute une liste de termes qui avaient en commun les tendances subversives les plus diverses du discours postmoderniste [36] : dé-création, dé-construction, dis-continuité, dis-jonction, dé-totalisation, dé-mystification etc. conduisant à l’anéantissement de l’idée d’autorité qui contraint le lecteur à réorganiser les sens, au « pacte de lecture ». Călinescu observe même que l’imprécision des limites est obtenue « par la mise au niveau de l’action et de la fiction, de la réalité et du mythe »[37], l’utilisation de la « palinodie ou la rétractation ».

Les rapports entre l’atmosphère théorique et la création artistique postmoderniste, le problème des formes nouvelles, soulevé par le roman américain des années ’60, constituent le thème de plusieurs interview et essais amassés par Crăciun, dans l’anthologie citée : Andru désigne des séquences de l’essai sur la prose des années ’80 sous le titre « Scrisul şi decondiţionarea », « la ligne de rupture », « ce combat lucide, implacable, avec sa position d’homme à condition multiple, cette destruction en vue de la reconstruction ».

Popescu («Compendiu despre noua proză »), dans le même volume, place le réel et la fiction sous le signe de la « discontinuité » : « Ce que l’on appelle technique littéraire n’est ni finalité ni surprise, mais une forme de la fidélité envers la réalité qui se présente tel un

mouvement brownien, dépourvue de structure, souvent sans aucune logique, *fragmentaire*. Non seulement que la réalité existe en elle-même, dans cette *forme "discontinue"*, mais elle est perçue subjectivement, toujours de manière fragmentaire et en succession […].

La réalité est recomposée par la mise ensemble de certains fragments qui visent un sens global, par l'agglutination de plusieurs discours qui entrent en dialogue, la réalité se trouvant placée à l'intersection de plusieurs manières de parler d'elle. »

Peut-être que le relativisme historique, le refus des formes pures, la récupération éclectique des thèmes, techniques et procédés recueillis de toutes sources et dans toute étape de l'évolution des arts s'expliquent, dans l'occident postmoderne, par le sentiment de l'artificiel, de l'aliénation, de la détérioration par l'excès du précédent artistique[38]. Néanmoins, chez nous, les symboles, les allusions, les citations appartenant à toutes les littératures et à tous les mondes du texte[39] , évoquaient dans les années '80, de manière indirecte, l'état d'incohérence, d'épuisement et de confusion du moi pour qui l'histoire s'était atrophiée et le lien authentique avec la tradition n'avait plus aucun sens.

Dans la prose roumaine de la génération '80, la dimension fondamentale est plutôt de nature *métaréaliste* : il s'agit d'un réel qui touche le dérisoire de l'existence mais en égale mesure le discours qui le commente – premièrement la fiction réaliste, mais aussi l'interprétation parodique de ses formules consacrées. En conséquence, les prosateurs de la promotion '80 écrivaient non seulement *autrement*, mais aussi *autre chose*, adoptant une position particulière devant l'écriture et devant le monde : les proses équivoques chez Groşan, les mondes marginaux et fantaisistes chez Nedelciu, les pseudo romans historiques chez Agopian, la relativisations des sens par la parodie, par l'autoréflexivité du texte et, de manière livresque – le destin de *Tobit*, qui descend directement du model biblique.

Conçue comme phénomène d'«école littéraire », la prose de la décennie '80 tourne autour d'une douzaine de personnalités littéraires, formées ou reformées dans les foyers estudiantins ou bien autour des revues, telle *Echinox* de Cluj : Ioan Groşan, Nicolae Iliescu, George

Cuşnarencu, Hanibal Stănciulescu, Alexandru Vlad, Mircea Nedelciu, Sorin Preda, Cristian Teodorescu, Daniel Vighi, Stefan Agopian, Vasile Andru, Bedros Horasangian.[40]

La zone la plus étendue est couverte par la prose courte qui a comme objet de « prédilection de son attention », « la réalité quotidienne actuelle ». Dans ce sens, l'«obsédante décennie cesse de les obséder ». « La préférence pour le fragment fonctionne elle aussi : les destins humains sont volontairement laissés ouverts, par souci de mettre en danger, par des explorations abusives, l'authenticité de l'observation exacte ». L'observation de l'auteur de la préface de *Desant '83* visait les générations '70 et '60, où « le pouvoir et la vérité », en tant que « ligne directrice », imposait aussi l'intérêt pour la remise en question de l'histoire. « L'intérêt de cette promotion ('70) pour le thème de l'histoire n'est pas accidentel, mais répond à un besoin interne de réévaluation du passé, comme modalité de réévaluation du présent »[41]

Notes

[1] Radu Gh. Ţeposu, *Istoria tragică şi grotescă a întunecatului deceniu literar nouă,* ed. Eminescu, Buc. 1993.

[2] Alexandru Muşina, *Antologia poeziei generaţiei '80*, ed. Vlasie, Piteşti, 1993.

[3] Competiţia Continuă. Generaţia '80 în texte teoretice. O antologie de Gheorghe Crăciun, ed. Vlasie, Piteşti, 1994.

[4] Terme par lequel on désigne ce qui est caractéristique du point de vue littéraire pour la décennie quatre-vingts du siècle dernier.

[5] Gheorghe Crăciun, *op. cit.*, „O generaţie incomodă. Căutarea unei generaţii".

[6] Ghiu, B., "Proiectul istoric de generaţie şi proiectul generatiei '80", sept. 1982 dans Crăciun, G., *op. cit.*, p.61.

[7] „Moştenitori şi moşteniţi", dans Crăciun, Gh., *op. cit.*, p. 323.

[8] *voir* Albert Thibaudet – „L'idée de génération" *in Réflexions sur la littérature* (1930) et *Histoire de la littérature française de 1789 à nos jours* (1936); Mircea Vulcănescu, „Generaţie", dans *Criterion*, 3/1934; Titu Maiorescu – l'idée de „génération de création" dans *Direcţia nouă în poezia şi proza română* (1872) et *Eminescu şi poeziile lui* (1889): „ pointe de notre poésie littéraire de la génération précédente"; „l'aspiration de notre *génération* à la culture universelle".

[9] Alexandru Piru, *Discursul critic*, Editura Eminescu, Bucureşti, 1987.

[10] Eugen Simion, *Scriitori români de azi*, vol. IV, Editura Cartea Românească, Bucureşti, 1982, cap. „Momentul '80".

[11] *Caietele critice*, dédient des no. entiers à la poésie, à la prose et à l'essai de cette décennie: les no. 3-4/1983; les no. 1-2/1986.
[12] Ion Simuț, *Incursiuni în literatura actuală*, Editura Cogito, Oradea, 1994, le chapitre „Cele patru literaturi"; voir aussi *România literară*, 29/1993.
[13] Laurențiu Ulici, *Literatura română contemporană, I - Promoția '70*, Editura Eminescu, Bucureşti, 1995, „Introducere".
[14] Laurențiu Ulici, *op. cit*.
[15] *Voir* Ştefan Agopian, né en 1947, qui débute dans la revue *Luceafărul* en 1970, *Ziua mâniei* (1979), *Tache de catifea* (1983). „ Monsieur Agopian, vous devez vous décider : soit vous passez à la génération de 70, selon, votre âge, soit vous restez à celle de 80, comme vous voudriez bien avoir l'air" (Eugen Uricaru, *Luceafărul*, 1/1995).
[16] Ion Manolescu, „Literatura contemporană în corsetul canonic", dans *România literară*, no. 24-25/1995.
[17] Ion Simuț, „Posibilități de regenerare", dans la revue *România literară*, no. 15 / 1994. „ une deuxième source de régénération de notre littérature peut être trouvée dans le développement des prémisses postmodernistes, malgré le retard avec lequel ceci arrive. Les écrivains de la génération 80 sont les protagonistes de cette tendance, même s'ils doivent reconnaitre comme précursseurs Mircea Ivănescu, l'Ecole de prose de Târgovişte et d'autres encore". Dan Silviu Boerescu, „Istoria literaturii române. Curs scurt. De la A. Toma la Paul Goma şi retur", dans la revue *Luceafărul*, 1 février, 1995. „ La première génération postmoderne de notre littérature boulverse effectivement les cadres généraux des tendances morales de l'écriture, en les abordant tous, simultanément, le mimétisme parodique de l'opportunisme, y compris. Il était tout à fait naturel, vu que le postmodernisme ne détruit rien de ce qui le précède, il refait les structures, réintègre sous le signe presque fétichisant de l'ironie toute l'archéologie - secrète ? frivole ? – de sa propre écriture.
[18] La revue *L'Infini*, 1995, dirigée par Philippe Sollers ramasse les contributions de plusieurs écrivains sur le thème de la Génération 1989.
[19] Gianni Vattimo, *Sfârşitul modernității. Nihilism şi hermeneutică în cultura post-modernă*, Editura Pontica, Constanța, 1993 (ed. italienne, 1985).
[20] Eugen Simion, *Scriitori români de azi*, vol. IV, Editura Cartea Românească, Bucureşti, 1989, ch. „Momentul '80".
[21] *Cercul de Critică*, créé en 1973, à Universitatea din Bucureşti, dirigé par E. Simion.
[22] *Caiete critice*, no. 1-2/ 1983; no. 3-4/ 1983; no. 1-2/ 1986.
[23] *Desant '83*, Bucureşti: Cartea Românească, 1983, Préface - Ov. S. Crohmălniceanu.
[24] Gheorghe Crăciun, anthologie: *Competiția continuă. Generația '80 în texte teoretice*, Ed. Vlasie, Piteşti, 1994, p. 23.
[25] Gheorghe Crăciun, *op.cit*.
[26] Alexandru Muşina, *Antologia poeziei generației '80*, ed. Vlasie, Piteşti, 1993.
[27] Radu G. Țeposu, *Istoria tragică şi grotescă a întunecatului deceniu literar nouă*, ed. Eminescu, Bucureşti, 1993, art. introductif: „Semnele schimbării. Postmodernismul".
[28] Les citations proviennent de l'anhologie de Gheorghe Crăciun, *Competiția continuă.*

Generația '80 în texte teoretice.

[29] *idem, ibidem*.

[30] Pour l'étude du rapport modernisme/tradition/postmodernisme, voir aussi: Gianni Vattimo, *Sfârşitul modernității*, ed. Pontica, Constanța, 1993, Manfred Putz, *Fabula identității. Romanul american în anii '60*, Institutul European, Iaşi, 1995, Lupan, R., *Moderni şi postmoderni*, ed. Cartea Românească, Bucureşti, 1988.

[31] „Comunicare şi limbaj în romanul postmodern", Mihaela Constantinescu, *in Caiete critice*, no. 6-8 / 1994 et „Structuri şi personaje în romanul postmodern", *in Caiete critice*, no.12/1994.

[32] *Atlantic Monthly Revue*, août 1967, *The Literature of Exhaustion*.
New York Times Book Review, mai 1982, *The Making of a Writer*.

[33] Il propose également un inventaire de prosateurs, dont ses congénères (Thomas Pynchon, Kurt Vonnegut Jr.) et les grands maîtres du modernisme : Samuel Beckett, F. Kafka, A. Gide, les grands prédécesseurs, Laurence Sterne et Cervantes. Les sud-americains entrent eux.aussi dans la liste : J. Luis Borges, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Julio Cartazar, point de vue qui se retrouve également dans l'étude de Ihab Hassan, 1982, *op. cit*.

[34] „Surfiction" – 1973, Raymond Federman; „disruptive fiction" – 1975, Jerome Klinkowitz.

[35] Linda Hutcheon, *A Poetics of Postmodernism, History, Theory, Fiction*, 1988; The Politics of Postmodernism, 1989.

[36] Ihab Hassan, „Sfâşierea lui Orfeu: Spre un concept de postmodernism" (Postface, 1982), *in Caiete critice,* no. 1-2 / 1986.

[37] Matei Călinescu, „Postmodernism literar. Formarea unui corpus", *in Cinci fețe ale modernității*, ed. cit., pp. 248-258: „une esthétique formaliste de la parodie, de l'autoparodie et du jeu"; „le redoublement et la multiplication des *incipit*, des *exit* et des actions narrées".

[38] Dans ce sens, nous citons et acceptons le jeu avec les formes littéraires, avec toutes les conventions du genre romanesque, qu'un texte, tel *Le nom de la rose* qu' Umberto Eco, nous propose. Les stéréotypes satisfont le lecteur moyen, les allégories et les manœuvres des formes, le « lecteur modèle », conduisant à une polyphonie postmoderne, née de pastiches, de modèles et de citations, que l'auteur signale: « Naturellement, un manuscrit ! »

[39] C'est le cas du roman « préfacé par son auteur », *Tratament fabulatoriu*, où Nedelciu réalise un collage de citations, à partir de la philosophie et de la sociologie jusqu'au textes les plus modernes de la théorie littéraire.

[40] Pour Ştefan Agopian, Vasile Andru, Bedros Horasangian, il existe un décalage entre la « génération biologique » et celle de création – leur début en volume les plaçant dans la décennie '80. Voir aussi la note 15. Andru est plaçé dans la génération '70 dans l'*Histoire* de L. Ulici.

[41] *Desant '83*, ed. Cartea Românească, Bucureşti,1983. Preface Ov. S. Crohmălniceanu.

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KNOWLEDGE AND REPRESENTATION IN THE CONTEMPORARY BRITISH NOVEL

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The novel is a flexible literary species which has developed heterogeneous ways of approaching and committing itself to a constantly modifying reality. The inherent constitutive movements within a novel are directed both externally, to a world that the novel attempts to describe, and internally, to the creative process itself by means of which the world becomes a literary construct. The modality through which these movements interact and combine gives rise to various interpretations, different from those of the literary work itself, and brings into discussion the problematic of representation as well.

Realism should no longer be associated with a set of literary techniques or with a particular literary movement. Realism is a rather cognitive process, a mimetic orientation to the world, the term mimesis not being interpreted conventionally as correspondence, but representing a creative process of building up stories/narrations which explain plausibly the data from the real world. The concept of mimesis is not a static one; it does not involve a passive reflection of a preexistent set of external events, but a dynamic, full of meaning configuration of the world, so that the latter could be understood. The external referent is productively transformed due to the mediating and constitutive role of language. Thus, realism becomes a flexible concept, open and heterogeneous.

The conflict between postmodernism and metaphysical realism bursts out when aspects related to plausibility and claiming the truth enter the stage. While postmodernism promotes the incommensurability of rival language games, thus undermining the possibility of claiming the truth, metaphysical realism offers the possibility of adjudging among different accounts of the world. If, in the case of postmodernism, the world is always impossible to embrace and we just face its various games and vocabularies, when we refer to realism "although there is no modality to know the world except by means of the particular descriptions more or less historically transient, what is known exists independently from those descriptions."

(Gasiorek, 1995: 116) While postmodernism does not recognize any objective cause and negates referentiality, metaphysical realism proclaims a causal description of the truth: "language is constitutive to knowledge, which is always mediated, but which, still, establishes a link with an independent reality which constrains what can be asserted plausibly about it." (Gasiorek, 1995: 199)

Realism is a presence within postmodernism, a direction of the contemporary British novel, the realist writers being aware of the epistemological and aesthetic difficulties involved in the literary representation, of the fact that any interpretation of reality is, partially, constituted from discourses. Situated within the inescapable context of postmodernism, novelists like Graham Swift, Julian Barnes, Salman Rushdie try to undermine and contest its limits and, being aware that absolute, complete knowledge cannot be achieved, they attempt to labor history into meaningful accounts of it, considering the moral implications of their interpretations as well.

Salman Rushdie labels as problematic the connection between the real past and the personal imagination past. In *Midnight's Children*, the difference between reality and fantasy should be established, as verifiable historical instances are constantly referred to and constitute the reference against which the fictitious experience works, establishing its limits. History is envisaged as collective fiction in which individuals choose to participate; if history can be made up of fiction, then fiction, in its turn, can be composed of history. (Batty, 1994: 212) The relationship between the historical and the fictitious dimensions is not necessarily a dialectic one: fabulation and history could be identical.

1. What is history?

For Rushdie, history is made up of those elements that are meaningful to the story-teller/narrator, the singular and apparently insignificant incident being often valorized. The survival in one's memory of the ordinary and the trivial transforms it into a symbol, a signifying element, into the extra-ordinary; the remembered past element is given value against the official variant. The final meaning of history is built from the memories related to certain fragments of the past. In *Midnight's Children* we witness the interpenetration of historical events and personal activities, the trivial and the important moments amalgamating and thus undermining the pretensions of history to neutrality and objectivity. Reality is a carnivalesque space; in fact, multiple realities, the space being open to various voices; history becomes the space for dialogue, not being controlled by any ultimate authority, the purpose being the dialogue in itself.

The novel exploits the carnivalesque meaning of the world, it valorizes plurality, variety and difference, the fluidity of forms and content, all of these being reflected in the style and mixed genres of the novel. Facts, events presented in the novel are ambiguous, interpretable; hence, the different meanings which can be built on them: "History is always ambiguous, and facts are hard to establish." (Rushdie, 1991: 34) History is the place of uncertainties and doubts.

Rushdie underlines, in addition, the changing character of history: events are questioned, deconstructed; proclaiming events as being unchanging, already given would mean being paralyzed, dominated by them. Reality is made up of our prejudices, our ignorance, our knowledge and capacity of reception. From the perspective of the immigrant, reality and history are artifacts; they do not exist until they are constructed and, due to their artificial nature, they can be deconstructed. Saleem Sinai's India stands under the sign of multiplicity, pluralism, hybridity, eclecticism, difference and heterogeneity.

Like reality, truth is relative and dialogic, not absolute and monologic, the role of the artist being to highlight truths. Rushdie mentions "the truth I can remember, the truth of memory." (1991: 34) Although history is not logical and objective, it can have a meaning; in fact, it can have more meanings and it is the role of the artist to uncover them. Reality/history exists in a latent form, the creator/writer making manifest only one history, one particular reality. From this perspective, history represents the conservation and combination of an infinite number of ingredients from an almost infinite range of choices: "Art consists in modifying the flavor in intensity and not in essence and, above all, it consists in giving the flavor a shape, which means giving it a meaning." (Rushdie, 2000: 425 – our translation)

2. How can history be known?

The recreation and the reproduction of the past both spatially and temporally imply an imaginary reconstruction depending on the way in which the subject perceives them: "Imagination is the process by means of which we build intensified images of the world, having a transformative capacity, able to determine both a falsification, distorting of the world and a clarifying of events, a discovery and intensifying of them." (Rushdie, 1991: 134) Our attitude to the world is essentially imaginative; we create images about reality, then we try to equalise the image with the world, yet we have to be aware that there are different images.

The memory which registers the events is distorted and distorting, liable to error; hence, the fragmentation of the rebuilt past, the partiality of

reproduction. The process of reconstruction and recuperation of the past is a transformative as well as a political act; the same reality, the same events could have different, sometimes contradictory representations. Remembering becomes a political act when versions of the official history are involved. By means of memory, the past is brought into the present, being reflected through the personal mirror of the 're-creator'; retelling history is the only way in which we can lend it meaning. Memory and forgetting involve, at the same time, truth and falsity; amnesia is thus associated with immorality, having dramatic consequences at the social level. This explains Saleem's obsession with retaining as much as possible from the collective and personal past. In *Midnight's Children* memory is associated with apparently unimportant moments, yet moments which have a special value for the individual memory. In approaching history, the focus is on this individual memory, and not on the national or cultural consciousness of the character; the past is available only from an individual perspective.

The individualized approach to history also means that the authority of all our representations of history can be questioned, which consequently involves the impossibility of an objective perspective upon the world. The partiality of the perspective is the only possible attitude, since a totalizing approach to the events is impossible. At the same time, there is not only one correct shape of history that waits to be highlighted, but a multitude of shapes, accessible to all. It is the role of the artist, of the creator to bring in the limelight different shapes, a situation which accentuates the importance of the individual in creating and interpreting history. Confronted with the events, Saleem Sinai can choose between two attitudes: getting involved or evading reality. Displaying postmodern moral cynicism, Rushdie thus underlines the necessity of the active participation in history, the obligation of the individual to represent (himself) the past in order to avoid falsification, to play an active role in modeling his own fate.

Rushdie allegorizes the history of India from the perspective of the 'Emergency Period', in his attempt to undermine the mythical embodiment of the nation by Indira Gandhi and to render a memory of the past that can constitute the basis for political recognition. The allegory in *Midnight's Children* underlines the fragmentary, dislocated structure of events, in opposition with its conventional perception, characterized by the cause-effect logic and sequence. The fragmentary, recursive structure of the novel proves the allegorical attempt of reconstructing the past, proposing a more critical version, in opposition with the authoritarian regime and the corresponding mythology of the 'Emergency Period.' Rushdie undermines the centralized authority and the constraints on representing individuality during the Emergency by reinstalling a form of expression that seeks the

"triumph of subjectivity"(Benjamin, 1969: 233). Saleem Sinai's story could be conceived anti-allegorically, as a parody that reveals the potentially repressive use of conventional allegoric representation.

3. Types of discourses. The process of narration.

Midnight's Children is a novel of the personal discourse, of self-defining through recalling and continuous temporal registration of the events, a discourse that interacts with the public discourse of history and politics. Although he is aware of the fact that the truth cannot be totally revealed, Saleem establishes as his goal the correct, accurate retelling. He accuses the ones who either fall prey to the personal fantasies on facts or distort the perspective upon the world intentionally, out of political reasons, so that the winner could impose his own historical variant and exert his own interests. "History means natural selection (…) history likes the ones who dominate her." (Benjamin, 1969: 134)

Saleem's attitude demonstrates the rejection of a radical postmodern textualism on the part of the author: reality opposes falsification due to the stories of the powerful. Simultaneously, Saleem admits the limitation of his own story: distortions are inevitable, but the process of revising should be constant and permanent; asserting the limits of narrating about the past and the present leads also to the reception of the provisory nature of truth and of certitudes.

Rushdie's position is to complete this postmodern approach, highlighting the importance/relevance of the moral values and the necessity of their defense, the importance of the differentiation between truth/falsity, the difference between the intended distortion of history and the recognition of the always-mediated access to reality. The multiplicity of discourses does not mean, for Rushdie, inexhaustive pluralism and valorizing the difference as inherently positive; even if there is no epistemological guarantee of these ethical and political beliefs, these beliefs have real consequences in the real world. For Rushdie, to use a discourse, to adopt it from the others, is not an arbitrary action, any other discourse being equally valid, but it implies taking an attitude, of an assumed position towards the world. The accounts of the world must tend to veridicality within the limits of the possible; objectivity must be aimed at, even if it seems to be unreachable.

Saleem perceives the act of writing as a weapon against absurdity; narrating means giving sense to events and building an identity; in addition, the historical events are valorized in order to form a personal perspective upon the world. The roles of narration in this novel are to reconcile the past with the present, to confer meaning to the past as the

only way of existing in the present, to facilitate the search of a coherent identity. Saleem is the promoter of the radically personal narration as opposed to the hegemonic, domineering and official conception of history. His narration proves uncertainty, is unreliable and does not claim to offer absolute, totalizing explanations. Saleem contradicts himself, makes mistakes, lies, still he pretends that he is India, that he plays an important role in its history; thus, by Saleem's allegorizing of his own history, Rushdie parodies allegory, showing its dangers. Reality cannot be read allegorically, but it must be created individually and, in the case of Saleem, the creation of history happens in the very act of narration.

4. The relation of the individual with history (Saleem Sinai).

From Rushdie's perspective, the individual is always an interested part when one speaks about the narrated events. This accounts for the subjective approach to the historical fact or to the present moment; the artist cannot evade history, confronting himself with it in the self-defining process and in the process of understanding temporality. "Being conscious of one's own person as a homogeneous entity in time, a blend of past and present, is the thing which unifies personality, keeping together our past and our present." (Rushdie, 1991: 35) Saleem Sinai represents, from this perspective, an example of 'reading' the world. Being a participant in the events around him, situating himself temporarily in their immediate vicinity, Saleem is an unreliable narrator, demonstrating a partial and fragmentary perspective upon facts. Saleem confers significance to the historical events in relation to himself as an individual, creating, in this way, a personal sense against history; making history personal, Saleem fragments the official history. Situating himself in the center of his own universe, Saleem embodies a radically humanist perspective on history, the process of narration and identity. Like Oskar in *The Tin Drum*, Saleem is 'chained in history', forced to be the witness of his own epoch, a time that determines his identity and becomes the material of his stories. The two protagonists' impulse to search for their identity is a phenomenon similar to that of the birth of history in the time and space in which they live. Saleem and Oskar's identities are established through the stories they narrate and to narrate, in their case, does not mean to inscribe themselves in the self-sufficient sterile space of discourse, but to answer as thoroughly as possible to the circumstances of the world in which they live. This means to be realistic.

In the same way in which Rushdie's hero in *Midnight's Children* suggests his version of history by refusing to adhere to the official history, Julian Barnes's novel *A History of the World in 10 ½ Chapters* offers the

reader only variants of the past. It is a series of digressions/deviations from the main course of history, proving that one cannot talk about History, but about a multitude of histories. The lack of continuity or totality of perspective is the logical consequence of all this.

For Barnes, a novel represents "a piece of prose of extended dimensions, mainly fictional" (1989: 40), which implies the existence, within its own limits, of non-fictional material, of references to events that took place in real life, to places which can be really identified. Creativity and fiction are present within each history or biography, acting at the level of information ordering and of data selection.

Writing history is strictly related to fabulation. "You invent a story to cover the facts that you do not know or do not accept." (Barnes, 1989: 130) Yet, "we have to face facts as they are; we cannot rely on fiction. It is the only way to survive." (Barnes, 1989: 131) The purpose of involving fantasy in the narrative about history is to undermine the reader's belief in the differentiation between true/false, history/story. The above-mentioned novel insists on proving and declaring the unreliable character of history. In 'Parenthesis', Barnes suggests two answers to this status of history: on the one hand, we should act as if this status were not true: "yet we still have to believe that the objective truth can be obtained (…) if we do not do this we are lost, we fall into misleading relativism." (1989: 167) On the other hand, we should declare love as the only feeling that could redeem us: "the history of the world would be ridiculous without it." (1989: 177) The position promoted by Barnes relies on the need to believe in the objective truth and in the feeling of love against the evidence that denies them. The arguments brought in 'Parenthesis' undermine the postmodern relativism towards which the arguments about history lead. Joyce Carol Oates labelled Barnes as 'a quintessential humanist […] of the pre-post-modernist species." (1989: 12-13)

Therefore, history as narration, as a form of fiction, and not as event is only a partial image of the event; what saves the writing of history from the trivial myths of progress is the possibility that the 'will to fiction' be overcome by 'the will to truth'. For Barnes, love and truth represents the essential connection:

> We know that the objective truth cannot be obtained; when something happens, we shall have a multitude of subjective truths which we evaluate and then we transform into history, under the disguise of fictitiousness, obtaining an omniscient version of what really happened. Yet this objective perspective is false. But, although we know that, we still have to believe that truth is liable to be obtained 99%. 43% of objective truth is better than 41%. If we don't do this, we are lost, we fall into the alluring relativity, we value a liar's version in

> the same degree as that of someone else. (…) The winner will thus take not only the laurels but the right to truth as well. (1989: 156)

Barnes's plea for conquering veridicality is similar to Rushdie's. Both for Barnes, and for Rushdie, falling prey to fictitiousness means adopting relativism, giving way to the metanarratives of those who want to falsify history in order to obtain power. In this way, Barnes either insists in a postmodern manner on the necessary plurality of meanings while he tries to avoid the accusation of relativism, or he subscribes to the postmodern historiography school represented by Hayden White and Michel de Certeau. According to them, the suspicion referring to the act of historiography should not involve a radical relativism or subjectivism, or lack of concern about the past.

The ten and a half stories are linked by the writer's common concerns (the nature of history, the dangers of binary thinking, the difficulties of knowledge and of historical representation), as well as by his recurrent motifs (the Apocalypse, the Flood, the Ark). As in Rushdie's novel, we deal with a refracted perspective upon history, with a cyclical collage that annuls teleology and totality, promoting the fragmentary. History is perceived as a vast compendium of diverse *petits récits*, each presented from a different perspective and by means of a different conceptual system.

Another important aspect of Barnes's novel is represented by the rejection and deconstruction of various polarities (clean/dirty, sacred/ profane, masculine/feminine, nature/civilization, and believer/non-believer) which allow groups to transform their systems of belief into totems, this resulting in celebrating plurality. Approaching and dealing with the Other makes the novel a celebration of heterogeneity too.

As in Graham Swift's case, in Julian Barnes's novel, the importance of knowing history is postulated in view of understanding the present existence, both authors tackling issues like validity, necessity and difficulty of confronting and acknowledging both the official and the private past. In their novels, as in Rushdie's, one can speak about a wreathing of the modern accent on epistemology with the postmodern fascination with ontology. Moreover, their novels belong to the same type of fiction dealing with the margins of life that, nevertheless, succeed in occupying a central position.

The history of the world starts with the story, from a diminished perspective, of a clandestine woodworm, a stowaway, the text aiming, due to this approach, at questioning grand narratives. Barnes continues with an interrogation of tradition and authority, a common theme with Walter Benjamin too. Both suggest a model of the history of humanity dictated by a perception of destruction; history means registering catastrophes, moments of unweaving, so that the meliorist perspective on history is

regarded as suspicious. Both Barnes and Benjamin are the adepts of an apocalyptic philosophy of history, which implies a repudiation of the concept of historical progress, a concept that means, according to Benjamin, the privilege of the winners' perspectives and interests.

For Barnes, the history of the world is a continuous series of ironic coincidences and unhappy accidents. It may be represented by the voyage of a fleet of shipwrecked arks, floating randomly on the ocean of time; thus, the human voyage is an uncoordinated floating from one disaster to another, disaster representing, for Barnes, the engine of the historical continuum. "The concept of progress should have as its basis the idea of catastrophe. The fact that things continue to happen represents the catastrophe. Hell is not something that waits for us in the future; it is this very life, here and now." (Benjamin, 1969: 64) Barnes's theses refuse the meliorist trajectory promoted by classical historicism, the writer rejecting the concept of progress associated with the cause-effect logic; his historiographical approach is ark-ologic. (Buxton, 2000: 116)

The official, totalizing and authoritative history is opposed to the revisionist perspective of the apparently insignificant character that manifests his will of being recognized as the protagonist of history and that proposes the integration of the omitted fact within the 'coherence' of the historical events.

With Benjamin, the role of quotation/quoting is essential in reading, writing and making history, consisting in making a past moment approach a present one in an illuminating constellation that plays a revolutionary role and determines a better understanding of history. With Barnes, the web of ironic repetitions, of auto-reflexive quotations makes out of quoting the way in which history functions. Barnes differs from Benjamin in that, with him, quoting means farce (e.g. the sinking of the Titanic is an echo of the sinking of the ships from Noah's fleet; the archetypal journey of God's chosen ones becomes a journey of the cursed). Yet, with Barnes, farce appears at a large historical scale: "Does the world progress? Is there a benevolent divine plan? Or just chaos?" (1989: 190) The logical consequence of all these questions is the lack of certitude and safety, both sustaining the pessimist outlook on history, reflected in the essay on the work of art, where a catastrophic perspective on the history of mankind is put forth (Shipwreck). Gericault's painting becomes the transcendent allegory of human history: "We are lost at sea, floating between hope and despair, acclaiming something that will probably never come to save us." (Barnes, 1989: 207) The vision upon the past is dominated by an accumulation of shipwrecks that make up a unique and huge historical catastrophe; that is why salvation/redemption is mentioned from a caustic perspective. The history of repeated disasters ends parodically with an image of heaven that

becomes a cyclical hell, an endless present in front of which the only possible human attitude is the recognition and assertion of the will to death, an attitude that climactically proves the catastrophic perspective on history.

Although almost the entire text, i.e. ten chapters, asserts our resignation in front of an endless catastrophic history, the half chapter suggests the possibility of some oppositional attitudes to historical pessimism as the only redeeming ones: love as an assertion of the personal truth and the perpetual will to discover/uncover historical truth. It is by means of this optimism that Barnes, like Salman Rushdie, resists gloriously and opposes the inevitable fall into the abyss of postmodernist relativism.

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SIR GAWAIN AND THE GREEN KNIGHT: [RE]TRANSLATING THE MEDIAEVAL CODE OF CHIVALRY

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Sir Gawain and the Green Knight remains the most intriguing Arthurian romance written in English and its anonymous writer proves to be a scholar of wide moral and intellectual scope, in an age (the second half of the fourteenth century) when feudalism's most cherished offspring, chivalry, was slowly and irreversibly disintegrating, and the need for a change was contemplated more as a nostalgic retrospection than as a viable solution. Beyond its spectacular plot, this courtly romance anticipates Malory's *Morte d'Arthur*, the swansong of feudal chivalry in England, and advances a moral allegory, mustering archetypes and symbols with a view to offering a metaphorical diagnosis to an inevitable *fait social*. Unfortunately, in the temporal interval which separated *Sir Gawain* from *Morte d'Arthur*,

> there was nothing much left out of the true chivalry: a score of deceiving exterior appearances that could be sold and bargained for, or an instrument of social promotion, or a bundle of warriors, proud of their rank, but deprived of means and in a perpetual search for solutions to muddle through. (Cardini, 1999: 100) [our translation]

As collective betterment of the knights is too much of a utopia in an increasingly aggressive lay world, the conscientious poet explores the ways of individual conversion that might vindicate chivalry and champion its return unto moral balance by attempting a poetic translation of the chivalric code into a language that would supposedly reconcile the divine and the human planes near the end of the most God-haunted period in man's history – the Middle Ages.

At the beginning of the first fitt the anonymous poet sets the stage for the 'demonstration' to come in Camelot, King Arthur's court, where the king himself and the carefree knights of the Round Table are feasting on New Year's Day – apparently a romantic celebration of chivalry in its

heyday. Some scholars have argued that the Court of Camelot is surprised in its very prime, in the heroic age of chivalry, in a time when innocence was still exalted and chastity was observed, when jousting and warlike exploits lay at the core of the knightly demeanour rather than the sophisticated courtly ritual. The first warning as to the gradual and perilous distancing of chivalry from its original intent, as a solidary army of devout *confrères* in Christ's service (*militia Christi*), is Arthur's rather childlike desire to either experience or be told of some extraordinary happening, an *aventure*, before dinner was served. In fact, this prolonged celebration of Christmas has something frivolous about it, as Arthur's whimsy is completely devoid of religious devotion, just like the pilgrims' story-telling in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, which was forbidden by the Church and labelled as a vehicle for sin and debauchery. Presently, the king's desire is met as a ghastly apparition brutally interrupts the joyous feast, and it is met in a manner that will dramatically expose the fragility of the code his court abides by and of the ideals they all stand for. The would-be harmony of Camelot is severed once the Green Knight or the Knight of the Green Chapel, as he ceremoniously introduces himself to the bewildered audience, rides into the banquet hall, axe in hand.

Heinrich Zimmer attempts to attribute him an identity:

> Who exactly was that unearthly imperious creature, entitled to challenge, put others to trial, unmask and sentence them? ... We may assume without the fear of being mistaken that the giant apparition, as green as death, from "the deserted valley of the most accursed church", carrying on his shoulder an ancient battle axe instead of a contemporary knightly Christian sword, and riding a steed as remarkable as himself, in terms of both colour and dimensions, was none other than the Grim Reaper, Death. (Zimmer, 1994: 78-9) [our translation]

If Zimmer is right, then the poet's true intention exceeds the complexity of the narrative pattern and the element of surprise, as it focuses on a symbolic as well as initiating assessment of a public and private morality, of Christian descent, embedded in the Round Table. Death, borrowing the features of the superhuman instigator, is *nomina Dei*, to the same extent as Life is, and God may qualify him as a deliverer of punishment for sin, or as a grim invitation to radical change. Thus, the Green Knight, it may be implied, has been called for by a spiritual crisis that the knights of the Round Table unawares undergo. This crisis was begotten by the conspicuous discrepancy between the spiritual love knights owe to Christ and the sophistication of the courtly ritual, which tended to replace God, the Heavenly Suzerain, with a feudal lord, and Virgin Mary

with a flirtatious lady of sorts. Originally, knighthood was an institution devoted to the service of Christ, formed by warrior monks who rejected worldly dignities and waged war against the infidels, while lovingly and disinterestedly protecting their fellow-Christians.

By the fourteenth century, open conflict burst out between the relinquishing *militia Christi* and the emerging *militia saeculi*, or the lay knights, who were more concerned with their hairstyle, jewels and garments, than with their communion unto Christ in a Heavenly Kingdom, – the new Jerusalem – , so ardently sought for by the crusaders of the three previous centuries. For this *militia saeculi* conversion to a superior code of ethics and morality could only assume the form of a pious and sincere return to a former *status quo*. Analysing the apparently irreversible moral decay of this social corpus, Franco Cardini captures the stigmatising dimension of its contemporary literature:

> The pages devoted to the satire at the expense of the handsome lay knight – and implicitly to the acrimonious condemnation of the emerging new culture at the courts of the day – are extremely bitter: with his delicate hands clad in iron gloves, his curly and perfumed hair protected by a masterfully forged helmet, in his coat of mail... covered by luxury mantles of coloured or embroidered silk, with his large, almond-shaped and beautifully painted shield, the worldly knight gallops across blossoming meadows towards eternal damnation. (1999: 83) [our translation]

After all, the anonymous provincial poet (the periphery holds a more conservative grip on reality than the centre; Chaucer's London, in our case) chose courtly romance, much like Ulysses when choosing the Trojan Horse, in order to expose the profound crisis of a social corpus, co-founder of feudalism, whose divine descent has degenerated to mere lip service. The same knights of the Round Table – Briton Christian warriors fighting the Anglo-Saxon infidels, historically speaking – who gave zest to the foundation of the religious orders of knights, in the dawns of the Middle Ages, have turned into a bundle of lay lords, thirsty for adventures and pleasure. In keeping with the above-mentioned crisis, the Knight of the Green Chapel (a title with religious significance) needn't be Death himself in order to prompt conversion, or at least repentance: he arrives as the diagnostician of a disturbing *fait social* (the estrangement of chivalry from its primeval destination); he is not merely Jack-o'the-Green from the Celtic lore, the Green Man whose ritual sacrifice will ensure nature's rebirth. (Zimmer, 1994: 78-9) The Green Knight's miraculous apparition may be regarded as an agent of the divine plan/plane (like other divine instruments of persuasion: floods, plagues, pests, prophetic dreams and

apparitions, and many others); it is one of those metaphysical accidents that constitute the ferment of any form of conversion (or re-conversion).

He makes his entrance at a temporal threshold (New Year's Day), a time fit to issue a process of moral regeneration, but also on a day when Christians celebrate the Feast of Christ's Circumcision (the holy infant who enters the male community and honours, through a sacrifice of blood, the sealing of God's covenant with man). His superb detachment while awaiting decapitation, his invulnerability despite physical dismemberment (the spirit's reign over the flesh), uplift the mysterious visitor to the standard of a potential moral reformer, who might as well be in search of a disciple.

Mediaeval scholars, as well as the reading public (a rather small caste though), were exceptionally well-endowed to apply Neo-Platonism to any sort of literature, which may have allowed for an ambivalent reading of the first fitt, where the human plane mirrors the divine plane. The apparition clearly calls for vigilance, as the noble party of guests and Gawain, their champion, are at a loss: the giant's appeal to magic (in surviving decapitation) may have been inspired by the devil, as it were. It is, after all, the devil's ominous custom to purport temptation through the voice of false prophets. The hilarious kicking around of the severed head by the knights, like in a gruesome game of football merely aids their disbelief and renders them incapable of understanding the plight of their sinful mortality, while Gawain, the symbolic executioner, is let into a mystery of initiation, taking the very first steps on his route to conversion.

In a study entitled *Transformations of the Wild Man*, Edward Savage draws an interesting parallel between the Green Knight's beheading and that of John the Baptist, as both instances carry a significant semiotic load. The Baptist prepared the way for Christ and converted the masses through baptism, asking solely for sincere repentance and willingly sacrificing himself to fulfil the scriptures; would it be then too far-fetched to assert that the Green Knight, in his turn, may be regarded as a prophetic character who also invites conversion through self-sacrifice? Savage equates John the Baptist and the Green Knight with the pre-Christian myth of the *wild man*, a sacrificial deity who ensured fertility and moral regeneration:

> It is in John's beheading, however, that we see his greatest kinship to the wild man. I have already noted the wild man's kinship to the Green Knight. I have also mentioned the wild man's resemblance to Jack-o'the-Green, the foliate beheaded deity of Celtic lore. Finally, we have noted the wild man's role as the decapitated and resurrected nature god of early English folk drama. (Savage, 1985: 38)

Other scholars, notably Carolyn Walker Bynum, expand the Neoplatonic reading of the romance and are of opinion that the story of Sir Gawain displays several isomorphisms with Biblical narrative instances, other than the Green Knight's affiliation to a line of notorious beheaded. Camelot is thus transfigured into a reflection of God's court, with Arthur as "a lesser image of God" (Walker Bynum, 1987). As for the Green Knight, he mirrors "Lucifer in God's court" (Walker Bynum, 1987), while his giant features remind a mediaeval, Bible-conscious audience of the Antichrist. In his turn, tackling the fiendish visitor's offence, Gawain is much alike Christ himself or Michael fighting the dragon, whose head he severs in defence of the Christian values he abides by.

With all these, the nature of the Green Knight's person and apparition remains pretty much ambiguous. The return of the knightly community to long-forgotten values seems unlikely (as the knights of the Round Table fail to see beyond the surface of the Beheading Game), and consequently, the Green Knight contemplates the single viable solution: to single out the most apt individual and guide him along the path towards conversion. The disciple's moral maturation is nonetheless preconditioned by the prescriptions of the same knightly code he is chosen to reform: by word of honour, Gawain must come full circle and keep his head of the bargain.

The beginning of the second fitt describes the glamorous arming of the hero prior to his departure; as he is only too human, Gawain thinks death to be the terminus in his voyage of initiation. Doubt has already crept its way into the soul of the chosen knight and his practical wisdom labels the journey as 'folly', while the court mourn for him in tragic tones, still unable to grasp the true essence of the experience they had all witnessed:

> (...) By Christ, it is evil/ That yon lord should be lost, who lives so nobly!/ To find his fellow on earth, in faith, is not easy./ It would have been wiser to have worked more warily,/ And to have dubbed the dear man a duke of the realm./ A magnificent master of men he might have been,/ And so had a happier fate than to be utterly destroyed,/ Beheaded by an unearthly being out of arrogance.(XXIX: 674-681)

A victim of his fellow-knights' compassion, Gawain prepares himself for the quest in a manner that shows him as yet unaware of any purpose in his *peregrinatio*. To regard it solely as a deathly adventure is to be, as Gawain exemplifies, quite remote from the Stoic heritage of the Christian teaching. As Sidney E. Berger shows, "every man's life is a journey from birth to death, from the temptations of the world to one's symbolic reward, from a bodily to a spiritual existence, from sin to salvation (or damnation)."(1985: 87) By now, the crisis of chivalry has been deepened: the five basic virtues of chivalry that inspire the knight on errand

("Liberality, Lovingkindness, Continence, Courtesy, Piety" - XXVIII: 652-654) and their associations as hierophanies (The Five Wounds of Christ, The Five Joys of Virgin Mary) are unequivocally outshone by the magnificence displayed in the description of Gawain's armour and garments (XXV-XXVII). Gawain's arming brings to mind the General Prologue in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, where the author, animated by the same sense of crisis, contrasts the stern portrait of his Knight (a crusader, characterised by frugality, poverty, obedience and chastity) with the lavish portrait of the Squire, his son.

The unfolding narrative of the romance seems to undermine the Green Knight's interplay of conversion. The poet, somewhat mischievously, but with a clear intent, pretends he has forgotten about Gawain's notoriety as a skilled, uncompromising womaniser, from the intertext of other Arthurian romances, and introduces his hero as Virgin Mary's Knight. The Heavenly Lady is his sworn protectress by the vow of the Pentangle, the most puzzling, as yet, piece of imagery displayed in the poem. The Pentangle (*pentagram*, *pentalpha*), an ancient token of perfection, as analysed by Pythagorean geometry (after Pythagoras, 586-506 BC), became an early Christian symbol, present, along with the *chi-ro* stylized cross, on the seal of the first Roman emperor who embraced Christianity, Constantine I (whose military and religious takeover of the Roman empire took place in 312 AD). The mediaeval folk tradition cherished the pentagram under the name of the Endless Knot, and it was supposed to help protect from demons, as it was a symbol of truth, in contrast with the deceit professed by the demons.

Although the cross (which translates suffering) won the upper hand over the pentagram (a symbol of truth, as it were), the latter safely circulated as a lesser-used Christian glyph. It was the resounding trial of the Templars (1310-1314), whose echo must have been still vivid in the mind of the anonymous scholar who composed *Sir Gawain* (some time between 1380-1400), that turned it into an anathematic symbol – the devil's own. Along with Pope Clement V, who saw personally to the termination of the Templars' Order, in 1316, the Church lapsed into a long period of the very diabolism it strove to fight back. The pentagram now became an instrument of deceit, an imprint of the devil (the Goat's head), a *nomina odiosa*: it was the *Baphomet* (a phonetic corruption of *Mohammed*, as the French Inquisition implied), the main object of worship in a heretical cult. Political interests, as well as personal ambitions, led to the annihilation of the Templars, and the merciless fight fought by the Church against the so-called Baphometic heresy obliterated the thin borderline between the elimination of heresy and the promulgation of lies under the authority of

the Church. Could the pentagram really have been the symbol of the Templars' conversion to a new religion, in fact a demonic cult?

Sadly enough, we do not know much about the spiritual affiliation of the poet who wrote *Sir Gawain*, let alone his identity, and consequently there is little room for speculation as to whether the presence of the pentagram on Gawain's shield is an attempt to exonerate the Templars of their mass condemnation and carry on their legacy, or not. Maybe, this is why the poet stayed anonymous after all. However, it is more likely that the pentagram should be regarded as a symbolic reiteration of the initiating trajectory from suffering to truth, whereof suffering is not necessarily physical (a prospect of decapitation), but moral, as an acceptance of failure.

On Michaelmass, Gawain starts his journey North, easily traceable on a map due to given references, through inhospitable lands in Northern Wales (the Wirral). The moment of departure is illustrative of the hero's incipient process of initiation (the celebration of the Archangel); consequently, his warrior's craft takes its course in complete solitude, while the hostile landscape and the creatures he does battle with (dragons, wolves, wild men, bulls, bears, boars), highlight the components of his true nature as a knight: the complementary virtues – prowess (*la prouesse*) and wisdom (*la sagesse*) – and the result of their harmonious cohabitation, the balance (*la mesure*), governing the knightly behaviour, be it devoid of the perspective of moral betterment or not. (Cardini, 1999: 82) Furthermore, Cardini points out that a knight "hunts only ferocious beasts (...) – a symbol of *pugna spiritualis* as well", as "in the allegorical science of the age, wild beasts often stand for a symbol and an image of the devil." (1999: 83) [our translation]

The hero's solitude during his peregrinatio is the portent of his conversion, and prowess, along with religious fervour, constitutes warrants of survival in an intricate maze of symbols and rituals. Furthermore, "survival was a spiritual concept, and it depended on one's innermost thoughts, apprehensions and beliefs." (Berger, 1985: 88) When his survival is imperilled by frost and exhaustion, Gawain prays to his protectress in order to find shelter and hear mass on Christmas, at a place of harbour for his soul, when in fact it is his body that is afflicted, as the poet implies. According to Berger, "symbolically, one is at a safe place, a place of harbour for the soul when one prays sincerely to God (...)" while Gawain's "prayer is for physical comfort only." (1985: 93)

However, the mystical exercise of prayer (*the Lord's Prayer*, *the Hail Mary* and *the Creed*, XXXII) finally secures Gawain's harbour at Hautdesert, Lord Bertilak's court, whose castle seems to have sprung out from thin air. The fact that Hautdesert is the other mundane reflection of the Heavenly Court, after Camelot, becomes evident as the castle's porter invokes Peter,

the heavenly porter. Carolyn Walker Bynum suggests that Gawain travels down the hierarchy, in this series of Neoplatonic reversals, and Bertilak's court is a lesser image of God's court, even a lesser image of Arthur's (Walker Bynum, 1987), but the reader of the romance in question is in no mood for discriminations and does not fail to take the readiness with which Gawain's prayer is answered as the signpost of a divine plan to guide the hero's steps on the road of his spiritual advancement.

In the ensuing fitt, the castellan, a reflection of God in Heaven, teaches Gawain/Adam (Walker Bynum, 1987) a portentous lesson, which will eventually disclose the intrinsic value of the hero's conversion: the ability to eliminate any possibility of confusion between the chivalric code and religious devotion. However, the means through which Sir Bertilak exercises his mentorship are undermined by an ironic undertone: courtly love and women were precisely the elements that the spiritual reformation of feudalism and of its main instrument, the chivalric code, was trying to isolate.

The harsh voyage of initiation merely begins. Virgin Mary's knight, so far undeterred in his attempt to respect the bargain with the Green Knight, once arrived at Hautdesert, is confronted with a rather anticlimactic perspective: the castellan and his court make it explicit that they are not interested in Gawain's warrior's craft and religious fervour, but rather in his prowess and resourcefulness in the game of courtly love. Somewhat dismissingly, Bertilak allures his guest into the Exchange of Winnings game, politely imprisoning him in his luxury bedroom, while reserving for himself the manly sport of hunting, a reminder of the different kind of *pugna spiritualis* Gawain is about to undergo.

The *Gawain* poet subtly interweaves the hunting scenes with the bedroom scenes and deliberately blurs the fragile boundary between the hunters and the hunted, symbolically paralleled with Gawain's pangs of hesitation between the requirements of spiritual love and courtly love, respectively. Lord Bertilak, like God in Eden, is ubiquous, but at a mental level: he introduces Gawain/Adam to Lady Bertilak/Eve, and his periodical checks upon the Exchange of Winnings game re-enact God's notorious comings and goings at Eden. Clearly enough, Lady Bertilak shares with Eve the Biblical archetypal image of the Lady Temptress, and according to Maureen Fries, Lady Bertilak, during the complicated alcove negotiations of power and seduction, "becomes the ambivalent mirror in which the knight pictures his own potential for moral achievement or moral failure in terms of the male warrior ethos such literature was designed to glorify." (Fries, 1981: 28)

Should Gawain fall a victim to the sexual allurement of the lady, in the confines of his bedroom, his conversion would turn to debasement and

he himself would become an insignificant figure in this equation of perdition: woman=lust=sex=sin=death. During the elaborate alcove *luf-talk*, Gawain's tribulation is illustrative of his desperate try to keep a sense of balance between his chastity and his courtesy. At a certain point, the lady seems to have turned the tide in her favour since their courtly dalliance blinds Gawain to his duty of spiritual love for his protectress: on Christmas morning, he languishes late in bed and is captivated by the conversation with his temptress, apparently having forgotten about the true significance of the day and about his all-too-recent supplication for harbour in the frozen forest.

In the game of courtly love, a knight – a man subjected to the feudal system of loyalties, for that matter, – is forced to walk on quick sands as he is put on equal footing with a woman, and the negotiations do not follow the established set of rules derived from the male hierarchy. On the other hand, moral requirements hold that a knight on errand, such as Gawain, should avoid amorous entanglements, while, by the law of hospitality, he must not "plunge into sin,/And dishonour the owner of the house treacherously" (LXXI: 1774-1775). The poet's attitude is ambiguous enough to puzzle the orthodox reader; with a sigh of relief, the latter rejoices that Gawain has not indulged into sinful sex with Lady Bertilak after all. Indeed, the morning of the New Year's Eve sees the unsuccessful consummation of the woman's sexual advances. However, it is still ambiguous why Gawain's stronghold resisted: was he animated by a higher moral commandment dictated by the chivalric and moral codes, or by the fear of severe punishment in the event that the Exchange of Winnings be kept to the end? One should bear in mind that mediaeval precepts abhorred homosexuality far more than adultery.

But, by now, the chameleonic poet has set the stage for Gawain's ultimate moment of truth: his conversion to a higher moral order. Once the maturation test of chastity has been passed, Gawain is taken one step further and plunged into a more serious moral dilemma. While truthfully returning the kisses to the lord of the house, Gawain vigilantly avoids giving or receiving any gift. He declines acceptance of the lady's ring, because "to offer a ring as a gift means to offer a certain power, an authority to speak or to act on someone's behalf", as Heinrich Zimmer points out (1994: 73). Furthermore, "a king will entrust with his ring the counsellor empowered to herald decrees and seal papers on his behalf, and a lady will give her ring to that knight who is *her* knight." (1994: 73) Nevertheless, Gawain will accept the lady's green girdle, as a gift of life. He appears to have abandoned the Pentangle with his Marian symbolism, and adopted the girdle, which supposedly would protect him from violent

death. Thus, the lady manages to undo the *Endless Knot*, and talks Gawain into trading a divine symbol for a secular one.

Richard Green parallels this situation with a famous apocryphal Biblical story, in which Virgin Mary bestowed her girdle (the *Sacra Cintola*) upon Doubting Thomas, on the eve of the Assumption, as a token of faith in Christ and truthfulness. The girdle Gawain receives is, in its turn, a "secular travesty of the Sacra Cintola" (1985: 9), and renders him as a serious candidate for failure in his moral trial. Though deceitful, the lady, through persuasion, teaches Gawain a lesson of humility; paradoxically, her ultimate power resides in the humility with which she proposes the girdle, and the temptress triumphs by means of Christian ethics.

Finally, on New Year's Day, Gawain, restored in his confidence by the girdle's grant of invulnerability, reaches the Green Chapel, a forest clearing actually. Though guilty of *cowardice* and *covetousness* (CI: 2508), as he grievously rebukes himself, Gawain is spared by the Green Knight – Bertilak, his metaphysical instigator, who masterfully directs the ceremony of Gawain's confession and absolution. The fearsome axe, which barely nicks Gawain's neck, is the final move in this complicated scheme of humility and power.

This, in fact, stands for the so-called *colée* (accolade), the *alapa militaris* with which the suzerain confirms his vassal, and the aspirant is let into initiation. (Cardini, 1999: 86) The Green Knight now displays a sort of protective irony, as he translates Gawain's failure as an individual hypostasis of humanity's global plight: conversion and martyrdom are fatally separated by man's love of his own God-given gift, life. His lenient laughter "is the laughter of the insider, of one privy to a set of second meanings for common signs, one who comprehends and encompasses all of the possibilities." (Estes, 2000: 75)

Gawain returns to Camelot contemplating his fellow-knights' future contempt and laughter, but instead, they welcome him as if he were returned from the Inferno. The decoding metaphor of the romance is both humorous and sceptical: private shame becomes public pride in the anticlimactic denouement when the knights of the Round Table adopt the green girdle as a badge of honour. The symbolic conclusion of Gawain's romance is that feudal aristocracy is no longer able to survive a potential Beheading Game, at any given moment of truth, and the sole salvation of chivalry is the honest attempt to keep the right balance between power and humility. The final message is suffused with a strange sense of resigned dignity since, at all times, man is perilously tempted to choose the easy path and not the *Via Dolorosa* of spiritual uplift through self-sacrifice.

Ultimately, according to the mediaeval poet's courageous but at the same time bitter, though humorous, retranslation of the chivalric code, why

blame Sir Gawain? He enjoys the choice company of several illustrious forerunners (Simon Peter, Levi Matthew, Doubting Thomas), who, for some time, resisted conversion for pretty much the same reasons.

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LANGUAGE IN LITERATURE: COMMUNICATION OR POLITICS?

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Human communication, that direct and efficient strategy of socially influencing the political behaviour of individuals, has an extremely powerful impact on attitudes and beliefs which, in turn, determine a given culture. Part of the cultural context is literature – technically, a discourse-generating mechanism – which cannot exist in complete isolation from the political situation and cannot but breathe of ideological substrata. In other words, within a closed circle or along a repeated, cyclical pattern, communication, politics and literature coexist, mutually influencing and revisiting one another. Things however are more intricate than they appear at first sight, with the fictions of politics overlapping the politics of fiction, and with both converging towards the act of communication – mediated (or not) via translation.

Along these lines, a good example of how literature functions as an act of political communication and translation seems to be George Orwell's ground-breaking novel, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. The text in question illustrates all the above mentioned and formulates an artistic credo at the same time.

In a letter written to Julian Symons, dated 10 May 1948, Orwell says: "I am not a real novelist anyway… One difficulty I have never solved is that one has masses of experience which one passionately wants to write about… and no way of using them up except by disguising them as a novel." (in Brown, 1977: 16) The literary wrapper Orwell refers to clearly underlines at least two ideas: that reality and fiction constantly contaminate each other's territories and that, if one needs to make one's voice heard, the best communication exercise remains fiction itself. *Nineteen Eighty-Four* assumes them both at the level of structure and at the deeper level of content.

Structurally, the novel is made up of three parts: the first sets the scene, the second contains the simple plot and the third evolves around Winston Smith's breakdown and re-education.

Textually, it presupposes a similar pattern, made up of a frame, an embedded narrative and a metafictional/metalingual aside. From the surface diegetic layer or framing story, to the diary it hides underneath and to the explanatory Appendix rounding up the novel text, the reader is taken along meandering paths imbued with philosophies of life while, at the same time, he/she sees them resumed in the language of various texts, all resonant of voices which reflect the social carnivalesque.

Thematically, it is concerned with the limitations imposed on human freedom by a totalitarian regime and with human love and aspiration in the face of overpowering odds forbidding their open expression and manifestation.

Nineteen Eighty-Four inscribes itself in the tradition of modernist writing through its rejecting (but not denying) the contingent and through building a parallel, future reality which, despite its obvious fictional scaffolding, impresses upon the mind haunting images that linger and raise existential questions.

The novel gives its language (thick, with multiple meanings and varied connotative forces – opposing the structures of authority it is careful to bring to attention) the principal role in creating a complex sense and cultural construction of reality. All the language functions that Jakobson mentions in his *Linguistics and Poetics* may be seen at work in George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, which adds a further reason for it to have been considered in view of supporting a commentary on literature, communication, politics: the emotive function, although seemingly obliterated, remains that desired goal of all communication situations in the novel; the referential function, with its neutrality, is deliberately predominant in this book about limitation, constriction and manipulation; the conative function, whose main objective is that of determining effect, may be observed in the propaganda sections of the novel; the phatic function, with its communication channel maintenance, is the bitter-ironic element that reiterates and increasingly tightens the knot of imposition around the neck of the receiver/manipulated; the metalingual function – especially in the Appendix, where it is overt, but also throughout the text proper, where it remains covert – is probably the most valuable component of Orwell's literary achievement; the poetic function serves character drawing and presentation of setting, but, most importantly, reveals the novelist's own position towards the utopian dystopia/dystopian utopia he imagines.

These and more are the arguments for sustaining that literature communicates affectively and effectively on political issues which govern everyday life and which can only be intervened in during the very private

act of reading, or the very public one of translation, however cumbersome due to the intricacies of language or the censorship involved they may be.

Interested in dictatorial regimes, a subject presented in parodic and parabolic fashion, George Orwell uses his novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* to propose a utopian model of reorienting communication towards another code than the habitual one. From this perspective, his merit lies in the fact that he has brought to attention the danger of distancing speakers from the meanings of words and the abandonment of common language use with a view to adopting a code meant to impose ideology. Orwell's model demonstrates an extraordinary intuition, which captures the notion that the mechanism of a new (political) language sets the goal of paralysing reason and of destroying, through politically biased translation, everything that world culture has contributed with. His *Newspeak* is mechanical, frozen in clichés, exclusively transitive (allowing no reflexivity), built to efface not only the differences among speakers, but also any traces of tradition and the past.

A vehicle of ideology, *Newspeak* reflects on the spectacle of his (and our, since the book has the value of a premonition) political context. Words become weapons which contribute to the alienation of language. Their meaning is distorted by the totalitarian ideology, the vocabulary being constantly enriched by the violation of word meaning in current use and the invention of new words that the writer calls *prêt a penser* because they no longer permit the manifestation of the emotive function of language. Fictional, of course, is the total abandonment of old patterns of linguistic expression (impossible to achieve in a real life context), which Orwell uses however to somehow underline the extremism at work within all kinds of imposition.

Newspeak is introduced early in the novel, which opens with a zooming in and out of the London of Oceania so as to capture Winston Smith, the central character, in its midst. As the latter looks through the shut window-pane (no accidental symbol!), his eyes rest on different corners of a world he no longer recognises as his. From among the buildings in front of him, the one that attracts his attention is *The Ministry of Truth – Minitrue, in Newspeak**. (Orwell, 2000: 744) Immediately, the reader is sent to the footnote which says "Newspeak was the official language of Oceania. For an account of its structure and etymology see Appendix." (744) At the end, the *Appendix* postulates *The Principles of Newspeak*. (917-925) It is particularly this section (peritext) that we intend to dwell on in developing the arguments for sustaining that communication through and against language is a political act that literature does not hesitate to foreground for the sake of formulating subtle observations on the quality of

life in society and its repercussions on future involvement in social processes and cultural enterprises.

In the *Appendix* mentioned, *Newspeak* is introduced minutely, firstly presented in broad terms related to the place and time of the fictional universe rounded up by the novel, and secondly in concrete terms connected to its lexical and grammatical aspects.

The introductory section posits the following:

> Newspeak was the official language of Oceania and had been devised to meet the ideological needs of Ingsoc, or English Socialism. In the year 1984 there was not as yet anyone who used Newspeak as his sole means of communication, either in speech or writing. The leading articles in *The Times* were written in it, but this was 'a tour de force' which could only be carried out by a specialist. It was expected that Newspeak would have finally superseded Oldspeak (or Standard English, as we should call it) by about the year 2050. Meanwhile it gained ground steadily, all Party members tending to use Newspeak words and grammatical constructions more and more in their everyday speech. The version in use in 1984, and embodied in the Ninth and Tenth Editions of the *Newspeak Dictionary*, was a provisional one, and contained many superfluous words and archaic formations which were due to be suppressed later. It is with the final, perfected version, as embodied in the Eleventh Edition of the Dictionary, that we are concerned here. (917)

The objective quality of the discourse gives the text an air of verisimilitude which, in turn, contaminates the fictional text proper which precedes it. Even if the authorial intention is not necessarily that of creating an impression of reality (since Orwell remains a modernist, experimental writer rather than a traditionalist interested in mimetic representations and omniscient perspectives), what stays with the reader is, on the one hand, the almost apocalyptic projection of the present into the future (now having already become his past) and, on the other hand, the power of oracle contained in the inscriptions on the pages of a dictionary setting the norm and manipulating into subjection with regard to language, literature and translation – all political barriers rather than vehicles of communication.

The next paragraph adds the ideological component to the discussion opened:

> The purpose of Newspeak was not only to provide a medium of expression for the world-view and mental habits proper to the devotees of Ingsoc, but to make all other modes of thought impossible. It was intended that when Newspeak had been adopted once and for all and Oldspeak forgotten, a heretical thought - that is, a

> thought diverging from the principles of Ingsoc - should be literally unthinkable, at least so far as thought is dependent on words. Its vocabulary was so constructed as to give exact and often very subtle expression to every meaning that a Party member could properly wish to express, while excluding all other meanings and also the possibility of arriving at them by indirect methods. This was done partly by the invention of new words, but chiefly by eliminating undesirable words and by stripping such words as remained of unorthodox meanings, and so far as possible of all secondary meanings whatever. To give a single example. The word free still existed in Newspeak, but it could only be used in such statements as 'This dog is free from lice' or 'This field is free from weeds'. It could not be used in its old sense of 'politically free' or 'intellectually free' since political and intellectual freedom no longer existed even as concepts, and were therefore of necessity nameless. Quite apart from the suppression of definitely heretical words, reduction of vocabulary was regarded as an end in itself, and no word that could be dispensed with was allowed to survive. Newspeak was designed not to extend but to diminish the range of thought, and this purpose was indirectly assisted by cutting the choice of words down to a minimum. (917-918)

It new-speaks of the creation of a language which, as soon as it is adopted by everyone and the old language is forgotten, will cease to be thought – if thinking is dependent on words. Political manipulation will thus be facilitated and the individual dis-individualised, levelled down and easier to handle.

The fact that, in what follows, *Newspeak* is related to English, helps in deciphering the hidden Orwellian message: of English growing out of proportion and, in colonising the world, losing its particular attributes and therefore dying slowly.

> Newspeak was founded on the English language as we now know it, though many Newspeak sentences, even when not containing newly-created words, would be barely intelligible to an English-speaker of our own day. Newspeak words were divided into three distinct classes, known as the A vocabulary, the B vocabulary (also called compound words), and the C vocabulary. It will be simpler to discuss each class separately, but the grammatical peculiarities of the language can be dealt with in the section devoted to the A vocabulary, since the same rules held good for all three categories. (918)

The classes mentioned are further developed on, almost in the fashion of user guides or self-help manuals, to orient the reception and influence the understanding of the new linguistic principles.

The so-called *A vocabulary* constitutes itself into level one – ordinary, everyday, but lacking connotation.

> The A vocabulary consisted of the words needed for the business of everyday life - for such things as eating, drinking, working, putting on one's clothes, going up and down stairs, riding in vehicles, gardening, cooking, and the like. It was composed almost entirely of words that we already possess, words like hit, run, dog, tree, sugar, house, field - but in comparison with the present-day English vocabulary their number was extremely small, while their meanings were far more rigidly defined. All ambiguities and shades of meaning had been purged out of them. So far as it could be achieved, a Newspeak word of this class was simply a staccato sound expressing one clearly understood concept. It would have been quite impossible to use the A vocabulary for literary purposes or for political or philosophical discussion. It was intended only to express simple, purposive thoughts, usually involving concrete objects or physical actions. (918)

The B vocabulary, or level two, serves another 'practical' purpose: that of engaging in political talk, as alienating as the political system itself:

> The B vocabulary consisted of words which had been deliberately constructed for political purposes: words, that is to say, which not only had in every case a political implication, but were intended to impose a desirable mental attitude upon the person using them. Without a full understanding of the principles of Ingsoc it was difficult to use these words correctly. In some cases they could be translated into Oldspeak, or even into words taken from the A vocabulary, but this usually demanded a long paraphrase and always involved the loss of certain overtones. The B words were a sort of verbal shorthand, often packing whole ranges of ideas into a few syllables, and at the same time more accurate and forcible than ordinary language. (919-920)

The third level, or *The C vocabulary*, is the scientific, paradoxically useless one, whose void in terms of meaning undercuts pretensions of research and innovation:

> The C vocabulary was supplementary to the others and consisted entirely of scientific and technical terms. These resembled the scientific terms in use today, and were constructed from the same roots, but the usual care was taken to define them rigidly and strip them of undesirable meanings. They followed the same grammatical rules as the words in the other two vocabularies. Very few of the C words had any currency either in everyday speech or in political

> speech. Any scientific worker or technician could find all the words he needed in the list devoted to his own speciality, but he seldom had more than a smattering of the words occurring in the other lists. Only a very few words were common to all lists, and there was no vocabulary expressing the function of Science as a habit of mind, or a method of thought, irrespective of its particular branches. There was, indeed, no word for 'Science', any meaning that it could possibly bear being already sufficiently covered by the word Ingsoc. (923)

The three are meant to cover and fulfil all human needs and actions, reduced to what the words in the language might have as referent. Strikingly enough, however, the metalanguage of this linguistic propaganda is not envisaged at all, although its role is predominant and domineering.

The central idea with *Newspeak* is that, if something cannot be said, then it cannot be thought, this giving rise to the question of whether we define ourselves, as speakers, through the language that we use, or whether we are the ones to define the language we are using.

"Divorced from thought" (Thom, 1993: 78 – our translation), political discourse is characterised by simplicity, primitive mechanisms and uniformity of stylistic processes. This is observed and developed by Orwell in a novel which uses the influencing powers of fiction to denounce the annihilation of the richness of language when the political class denies the members of a society the freedom of speech – an element defining totalitarian ideologies in general. He shows how language grows uglier as a result of the degradation of thought, and thought undergoes a similar process of degradation due to language becoming increasingly ugly. He underlines the notion that political discourse is destined to make lies sound true and crime respectable. The dictatorship Orwell imagines intends to modify language completely, and in this respect it acts firstly at the lexical and semantic levels so as to limit thought. In so doing, it no longer allows language to function as a vehicle for communication but, as already stated, as a vehicle for ideology. Secondly, it is directed against communication and cultural or diachronic, intercultural or synchronic mediation (usually the task of translation), rendered obsolete, anyway, if language is dead and thought prohibited.

> Considerations of prestige made it desirable to preserve the memory of certain historical figures, while at the same time bringing their achievements into line with the philosophy of Ingsoc. Various writers, such as Shakespeare, Milton, Swift, Byron, Dickens, and some others were therefore in process of translation: when task had been completed, their original writings, with all else that survived of the literature of the past, would be destroyed. (764)

At this point, it seems necessary to return to the issue of the literariness of literature, to its status of communicator of values, credos and beliefs. When Orwell, tongue in cheek, refers to the impossibility of using *Newspeak* to serve literary purposes (in the section on *A Vocabulary*, 918), does he announce the death of literature? Or, when having Winston Smith write a diary, which "was not illegal (nothing was illegal, since there were no longer any laws), but if detected it was reasonably certain that it would be punished by death, or at least by twenty-five years in a forced-labour camp" (746), does he mock at the incapacity of many to decode the literary text and, consequently, at their dismissing it as worthless or, worse, deciding it is high time it were outlawed? Or, when defining translation (in Oceania) as "a slow and difficult business, […] not expected [to be] finished before the first or second decade of the twenty-first century" (925), does he accuse the translator of partisanship or censorship?

The answers may be found in the text about how the text gets written, in the fiction about the fictions that we all live but that we never expect to read (since, while reading, we are sooner interested in finding reality beneath the texture of the writing). All in all, however hazardous an affirmation it might be, it must be said that what Orwell manages to attain with his *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is not simply a critique of the social, historical or political situation but, more importantly, one of language and literature, of the language of literature and its communicative properties – supported or hindered by translation. It is precisely this aspect of his fiction that has made George Orwell a representative name in the literature of the twentieth century, a memorable figure at the crossroads of modernist formal experimentation and postmodernist historiographic metafiction.

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TO BE AN AUTHOR OR A CRITIC OR BOTH? THIS IS THE QUESTION
- Translating criticism into fiction and viceversa –

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> [m]etafictional novels are [...] novels written by people who do know how to tell a story but whose narratives turn back on themselves in differing levels of self-consciousness, self awareness and ironic self-distance.
>
> (Currie, 1998: 62)

It would be wrong to describe the new trends in literary theory as being the only cause for the changes in fiction. If we take as an example the relationship between Saussurian linguistics and literary modernism, we notice that both are areas focusing on the self-referentiality of language as well as on its capacity to refer to an extra-linguistic world.

For Saussure, referential language is implicit and self-referential, in the sense that it depends on the hidden system of differences at a systemic and contextual level, conferring value to each sign. According to this argument, language disguises the conditions allowing for the production of signs, and the structuralist is bound to make these conditions – differential relations, contextual factors and conventions – explicit. At the same time, through a hard to explain coincidence, the modernist novel undertakes a similar project, trying to reveal the hidden conditions of fiction – structural principles, creative process, conventions. The self-referential dimension of literary modernism aims, to a great extent, at the rejection of the conventions of realism, of traditional narrative forms, of principles of unity and transparency of the referential language, in favour of 'defamiliarization' techniques meant to break the crust of the habit, to dare and lure the readers outside the inevitable patterns of thinking and representation they are accustomed to, in favour of frequent intertextual reference, multiple points-of-view and a poetic language much more opaque and, consequently, demanding. In modernist fiction, these

tendencies fall into two categories: those foregrounding fictional conventions and those foregrounding language itself. In both cases, transparent and invisible structures are transformed into visible and defamiliarized structures, articulating the referential meaning with a self-reference to the conditions of its own possibility.

James Joyce became a fascinating example of the above because many post-structuralist theorists of the '70s and the '80s turned towards his writings to find a source of inspiration and a place of origin of their theoretical analyses. Joyce was a writer of theoretical fiction, not in the sense that he abandoned theory for fiction, but that he was perceived as a writer who explored the theory of fiction using the practice of writing fiction. Especially post-structuralists considered Joyce a proto-post-structuralist, completely confusing the relationship cause-effect (between fiction and theory) or between narration and its reading: is Joyce a post-structuralist or are his writings, only, post-structuralist? Attridge and Ferrer (1984) think that "there is no metalanguage: the text reads the theory at the same time as it is read by it." (in Currie, 1998: 58)

Time and again, Derrida invoked the influence Joyce had on him, as if he would rather be associated with a literary avant-garde than to the well-known Swiss linguist; as a matter of fact, his whole work confirms his hostility towards linguists and a barely disguised affection for modernist writers, suggesting that *Ulysses* was a monument to deconstruction even before the latter was born, while the post-structuralist perspective was not subsequent to re-visiting and (re)reading Joycean texts, but contained by them: "There is little that deconstructive theory of narrative knows about the undecidability of words or of story lines which Joyce did not already know." (Miller, 1982: 4)

Derrida also maintains that nothing new can be said about Joyce, although hardly anyone in the business of writing, in general, can agree with him:

> [A]ll the gestures made in the attempt to take the initiative of a movement are found to be already announced in an over-potentialised text that will remind you, at a given moment, that you are captive in a network of language, writing, knowledge and even narration. (Derrida in Attridge, 1992: 281)

What we can agree to is that some narrations are more theoretical than others, and that *Ulysses* is a text suitable for deconstructivist reading because it *programmophones* its own deconstruction, pre-dicting and pre-narrating the hypotheses of deconstructivist narrative theory. Consequently, the theorist penetrates as deeply as he can Joyce's texts, even claiming them as his, giving

the impression that he wished he had written *Ulysses* himself. But, as he honestly admits, he knows not how to tell stories.

In 1979, at the 7th International Joyce Symposium, J. H. Miller said that the deconstructive reading of Joyce is positioned on both sides of the border between fiction and criticism, being, at the same time, a secondary critical act and a creative one. Derrida's essay is itself a fiction imitating Joyce's, and in the act of doing it, the problem of critical reference to a text-object reproduces the problem of fictional reference to Dublin: it is a fiction with critical realization. All those aspects of the novel seemingly working for the creation of referential illusion – lack of plot, absence of the author, lack of unity of the narrative voice, general multitude of voices, dilution of the distinction between the exterior and the interior worlds, mimetic experiences creating the illusion of the lack of any fictional technique, sensation of direct access to the mind, thoughts and syntax of characters, unmediated and live presence of Dublin, redundant visual detail – are interwoven with other layers of techniques meant to destroy the very illusion of reality. The mission of the reader becomes, under these circumstances, much more difficult; this change of direction needs an educated, cultivated, and, why not, patient receiver, willing to give up the hope to find pleasure in the experience of reading literature, and to undertake a serious study of fiction, not only the reading of it.

For things to become even more complicated, as if it were not enough to see critics writing fiction and novelists concentrating on theory, the university professor enters the landscape, with the mission to keep everything together, in a confusing puzzle, and instruct already over-solicited readers:

> Some thirty years ago, the relationship between fiction and criticism was comparatively unproblematical. Criticism was conceived of as a second-order discourse dependent on the first-order discourse of fiction. Novelists wrote novels and critics criticised them. (Lodge, 1984: 11)

Literary theory, on the other hand, faced the same abandonment. Is it more attractive to be a writer than a critic? Barthes, accompanied by so many others since, seems to have thought so when he gave up scientific rigour for the 'erotic pleasures' of the text and, finally, headed towards fictional writing.

After sharpening his pen with writing about the distinction between metaphors and metonymies, David Lodge began to write novels about the sexual life of academics, spreading, more than anybody else, structuralist and post-structuralist ideas about fiction. In his academic trilogy (*Changing Places. A Tale of Two Campuses*, 1978, *Small World*, 1984, *Nice Work*, 1988), the

professor-character is thus constructed as to become a vehicle for ideas, principles and concepts, and pinpoint 'literature-about-literature' and 'language-about-language' in the text of the novel. The consequences of such strategic manipulation seem to be at least two: the reading process is more difficult and many of the meanings are often ignored, added, mistaken, the signifiers sending to multiple signifieds that differ from one reader/reading to another. Given the writer's talent, the hard and barely digestible theoretical core is, nevertheless, clothed in a comic that, through parody and self-parody, fully rewards the reader, as the writer himself shows understanding and compassion for the difficulties he is confronted with. The criticism of criticism and of the critic is the main purpose of a metatext 'virused' by regurgitations of critical discourse by some characters who seem to have lost their humane features and replaced them with labels and concepts. Fulvia Morgana – the marxist, Sigfried von Turpitz – the German expert in the theory of reception, Michel Tardieu – the narratologist and Arthur Kingfisher – their mentor and superior, all characters in *Small World* are good cases in point.

Open to (re)interpretation, Lodge's academic novels play with the reader's horizon of expectation, distracting and challenging it, while revealing the most hidden corners of the exterior or interior life of the text.

When Julia Kristeva wrote in 1990 her first novel, *The Samurai*, in which she proposed a bet with fiction, politics and the intellectual credo of an age, she asked herself the same question as Proust: whether to treat a problem that preoccupied her in a theoretical or a fictional manner. One of the answers she gave reflects the frustrating suppression of passion in the intellectuals' life:

> The imagination could be considered as the deep structure of concepts and their systems. It may be that the crucible of the symbolic is the drive-related basis of the signifier, in other words, sensations, perceptions, and emotions; and to translate them is to leave the realm of ideas for that of fiction: hence, I have related the passion-filled life of intellectuals. (Kristeva, 1993: 78)

Another explanation might be that "everybody understands literature." (Kristeva, 1993: 22)

Giving up theory for fiction and 'taming' it inevitably result in narrative self-contemplation. Barthes defined theoretical discourse as self-reflexive discourse, export of critical expertise into the novel, and a means not only to disseminate theory, but also to attribute a critical function to the novel, to lend it an ability to explore the logic and philosophy of narration without resorting to metalanguage. In Mark Currie's opinion, theoretical fiction is rather performative than constatative narratology, because it does

not attempt to affirm the truth about a narration-object, but 'directs' what it has to say about the narration, being itself a narration:

> [I] prefer the term 'theoretical fiction' to the term 'metafiction', by which this kind of narrative self-contemplation has been named in the past two decades. Metafiction implies a difference between normal fiction and its metalanguage, even when that metalanguage is fiction itself. Theoretical fiction implies a convergence of theory and fiction… (1998: 52-3)

If the sliding towards criticism represents a sort of aspiration of the critic to a writer's status, there is also the reciprocal aspiration of a number of novelists to assimilate the perspectives of criticism in the narrative process. A writer-critic can personify the border between fiction and criticism, but theoretical fiction must be regarded as a discourse dramatising that border or using it as a source of energy. Sometimes, this may imply the (re)presentation of some academics' life, as we saw in Lodge's, Kristeva's or Eco's novels, although the academic critic is the version of a wel-known fictional device that narratology calls, among others, the 'surrogate-reader', someone inside fiction, meant to represent the receiver of fiction. Alongside him, since Chaucer's elaborate frameworks in *The Canterbury Tales*, or Shakespeare's theatre-in-the-theatre, or Fielding's and Richardson's intrusive-narrators, we have also become familiar with the 'surrogate-author', that figure who, inside the narration, dramatizes the process of fiction production. All are, one way or another, versions of this type of *theoretical self-awareness*.

Quite justifiably, it has been shown that the metafictive strategy is a function inherent to any novel, or, as Gerald Prince puts it, "the narrative sign is a moment of reflexivity in narrative which, like Jakobson's referential function, can happily co-exist with straightforward referential aspects of the narrative." (Prince in Currie, 1998: 53)

At this moment, we could ask ourselves: if this narrative self-awareness is not something new, then why have so many commentators presented it as the defining characteristic of the postmodernist novel? A possible answer might be that anything described as postmodern(ist) is not necessarily new. Novelty was the most outstanding value of literary modernism, whereas postmodernist literature obsessively *re-visits* and *re-reads* its own past. Another answer could be that this narrative self-awareness has always been a feature of the novel, but has become predominant in contemporary literature, when it may be considered either the reflection of a more obvious cultural self-awareness (due to movies, architecture, fashion and/or television), or a more specific answer to developments in the theory of language and literature, that make the

writing of a novel that does not reflect on its own role in constructing reality more difficult.

The focus is on the reciprocal influence of literary theory and fiction, taking the novel in the territory of narratology or, as Patricia Waugh says, towards the exploration of "a theory of fiction through the writing of fiction." (Waugh, 1984: 2)

Finally, like Derrida, the theorist who claimed he did not know how to tell stories in an article providing an example of deconstructivist reading, many writers have spent much energy and paper writing stories to demonstrate that words do not make sense.

But then, this is exactly what critifiction and fictional theory are for.

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MALCOLM BRADBURY BETWEEN MODERNISM AND POSTMODERNISM

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1. The 'history man'/ the chronicler and his transgressing ages

"Contradicting", "dichotomous", "self-invalidating" are just some of the epithets which made this "portmanteau phenomenon" (Eagleton, 2007: vii) thatt came to be called postmodernism one of the most debated literary trends since it did not remain between the pages of fiction but it created a new type of CNN – the contemporary network of negation. The negation of the past (as a historical period or as the bearer of a certain mentality), the discarding of old values, the rejection of classical precepts, the denial of old positions, the dismissal of old codes, the discrediting of old roles, turned postmodernism into one of the 'whizz-kids' of our times and one of the 'prodigal sons' of literature and literary criticism, and "everybody's favourite *bête noire*" (McRobbie, 1994: 1), a maelstrom of change or a breath of fresh air as different from modernism's reflexivity and seriousness as the Lilliputians from the Brobdingnagians. It brought with it new, well-received things (such as literary experiment) as well as controversies (such as the celebratory promoting of the marginal and the minority). Language becomes more sexual and sex becomes linguistically articulated in an interplay which is supposed to introduce highly academic debates on such topics as "Putting the anus back in *Coriolanus*" (Eagleton, 2007: 4) or "La Fornication comme acte culturel" or "I LOVE DECONSTRUCTION".[1]

Pragmatism effecting pessimism, freshness resulting in or residing in liberalism came from and then issued "the recalcitrance of power, the frailty of the ego, the absorptive power of capital, the insatiability of power, the inescapability of the metaphysical, the ineluctability of the Law, the indeterminable effects of political action." (Eagleton, 2007: 4) The disclaiming of any form of authority (philosophically speaking, but why not politically as well), the uncertainty of hierarchy in role attributing and acquiring, the new power of currency, the permanent tendency to theorise, the new imperatives of political correctness, the new global implications of decision making have all turned postmodernism into "a cult of ambiguity

and indeterminacy" (Eagleton, 2007: 5) in which hesitancy, negativity and undecidability have only become new variables and not dilemmas.

The proliferation of the postmodern was not only felt in the artistic field, but also in sociology (see Zygmunt Bauman's works), psychoanalysis and philosophy (see Deleuze, Guattari, Foucault), economics, social geography and urban planning (David Harvey's study is recognized as a valuable picture of contemporary society), law, and it led to a spectacular upgrading of cultural studies. Such proliferation was even proven statistically taking into account the number of articles on this topic. As Hans Bertens quotes Lance Olsen: "in 1980 21 articles appeared in major American newspapers such as *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *The Los Angeles Times* that used the word 'postmodern'. In 1984 there were 116. In 1987 there were 247." (Bertens, 2005: 12)

This is the reason why the subsequent sections will focus on such manifestations of both complex artistic strategies and loosely coherent theoretical assumptions taking into account the arbitrariness and relativity with which the contemporary world is imbued, displaying perspectives on postmodernism which range from visions of liberation and emancipation to visions of the apocalypse. This is also the reason why I have considered it necessary to begin my analytical inquiry with a presentation of the moment of transition from modernism to postmodernism and to present the manner in which society, literature and critical theory, and Malcolm Bradbury himself experienced this change. I have noticed that the general feeling is that of loss and bewilderment or even awe at the new developments of a society in which everybody de-constructs (and reconstructs distortedly), de-centres (promoting the local), de-defines (and explains through oppositions or through practical examples), de-historicizes (and hails the end of history), de-naturalizes (creating a false, counterfeited or simulated reality), de-patriarchalizes and de-totalizes (recognizing no absolute authority), de-mythicizes (and introduces new false myths), de-creates (and creates using the principles of collage and pastiche) and so on. Malcolm Bradbury built a strong, savory satire against such practices derived exclusively from the prefix "de-" or "dis-" which functions in the same way condemning the postmodern world for having forgotten to build and appreciate the inner world which issued such creations.

The main difficulties of our analysis started from the very term "postmodernism" which many theorists consider a solecism on account of the inappropriate prefix. But despite the various other prefixes that were proposed ("trans-", "ultra-", "sur-", "super-", "hyper-", "pseudo-", "cyber-", "para-", "meta-", "counter-") or the alternative independently formed denominations ("surfiction", "fabulation", "post-contemporary fiction", "post-industrialism", "contemporary post-realistic novel" or "anti-

aesthetic") or even the other terms related to the previous period ("late modernity"), one thing was definitely accepted – postmodernism exists as a clearly defined period or condition and one of the new questions that arose even in Bradbury's mind was: "How long is it here to stay?". Some, among which the writer-critic that is our subject of inquiry, have already declared its extinction and, while having already identified the new traits of the new period, are simply looking for a new term to describe of what is to be post-postmodernism.

2. PREmodernism/ MOdernism/ POSTmodernism or PrePOSTterous?

Motto:
Son, whenever faced with two extremes,
Always pick a third.
(Jencks, 2007)

Mere etymology places *modern* within the sphere of immediacy. According to Raymond Williams (1983: 208-209), it derives from the Latin root *modo* meaning "just now". *Modern* was regarded in opposition with *ancient*, or *medieval*, describing at first a new type of architecture, spelling and language, or fashion in dress and behaviour. Unfavourably regarded at first, the term came to be appreciated positively only in the twentieth century when it "became virtually equivalent with improved" (1983: 208-209) experimental art and writing. This does not mean, however, that any newly arisen movement is also modern. As Thomas Docherty states,

> to be 'modern' implies a particular self-consciousness, a consciousness of one's difference from the immediate historical locale and an alignment elsewhere or with another time than the present. (1996: 2)

Such was the case of the artistic experimentations of the twentieth century but also of particular moments of the Renaissance and of the Enlightenment as they brought about some kind of revaluation of classical models, modes and values. This is, for instance, the exact type of behaviour manifested by Diderot as Bradbury imagines him in *To the Hermitage* where he appears encouraging Russia's reform, modernisation, progress and invention in his dialogue with Catherine the Great of Russia (2001: 291) for, after all, "ours is the age that made the difference." (2001: 480)

Historically speaking, modernism was launched as an urban phenomenon and a reaction to the new conditions of production (the machine, the factory, the expansion of the city), transportation, communication and consumption, to the new political views or to the articulation of new needs. This contributed to the shaping up of a new

consciousness, at a time when almost everything was disintegrated and then renewed on account of the revolution of progress and of emancipation. The power of knowledge and the self-assertion of the intellectuals as "legislators of the avant-garde" (Docherty, 1996: 4) led to a democratically-willed rationality. The adventure, power, and growth that this brings about are only threatened by the disintegration of the old, by rising contradiction and anguish. "To be modern is to live a life of paradox and contradiction" says Marshall Berman (1982: 13), and he continues by mentioning the sources of modern life: great discoveries in the physical sciences, the industrialisation of production, demographic upheavals, urban growth, development of communication systems, the affirmation of national states, mass social movements, and the development of capitalist world market. All these build a frame of constant transformation in areas spanning from science to philosophy, from urbanisation to state bureaucracy. Malcolm Bradbury had clearly foretold this aspect of the contemporary society no sooner than 1965 in *Stepping Westward*:

> 'We all live under the pressure of facts,' said Walker. 'I mean, look how the world is going. Look at this vast urbanized and technologized mass-society that we are going to have to live with if we don't evade the issue – as I do. What a foul empty life that promises to be to people who have some idea of what the good life was like'. (1968: 251)

Man, sometimes in despair, is caught up in the inevitable progress of history: 'roots' are plucked out and 'branches' of thought are projected into a future which is expected to hold in store radical differences. In his study on postmodernity, David Lyon clearly warns that any investigation of this issue cannot be done without relating extensively to modernity. Thus, he too connects modernity to the social order that followed the Enlightenment and created a world that

> is marked by unprecedented dynamism, dismissal or marginalizing of tradition and global consequences. Time seemed to speed up, and space to open up. Modernity's forward-looking thrust relates strongly to belief in progress and the power of human reason to produce reason. (Lyon, 1999: 25)

Malcolm Bradbury also separates the two epochal moments placing the period between 1889 and 1939 under the 'embrace' of modernism that found its buds in the "great upheavals in the political, scientific, sociological, and familial orders of the last two decades of the nineteenth-century" (1995: 764) that set new directions and configurations in painting,

sculpture, music, architecture, poetry, drama and fiction, design and fashion. After setting the temporal borders, Bradbury identifies two main moments of crisis (which may have generated at least two important types of modernism) – the first in between wars, and the second after World War II which 'signed the death certificate' of a great age through the contradictions, conflicts, self-doubt, progress as cultural and political collapse, fragmentation, and loss characteristic of the new coming age.

Thus, it can be said that after the conquests of modernism, the last two centuries of the second millennium have brought with them the marking effects of war, famine, slavery and death-camps. This is the reason why people feel the "exile, the pain inside modernity" (2001: 411) and the great utopian Enlightenment ideal seems to have been lost forever giving way firstly to a deeper plunging into the inner world of the individual (modernism) and then to a discarding of all these political and historical scars behind the curtain of scepticism, irony and parody (postmodernism). Artists evaded the concepts of truth, justice, ethics, or beauty by seeking individual growth and affirmation or by parodically reinterpreting them through the contemporary cultural context which brought with it a heavy load of scepticism and a bitter dose of syrup labelled "all is relative" that people had to swallow almost daily after wondering whether to jump off the brink of threatening worldwide transformation. Nowadays, intellectuals are no longer legislators, but interpreters.

Malcolm Bradbury strongly amends this loss that occurred in the shift from the Enlightenment values to the modern 'computational' values. One of his professor-characters in *To the Hermitage*, Jack-Paul Verso, professor of Contemporary thinking at Cornell University, delivers a speech in which he tries to demonstrate that "we no longer live in the Age of Reason":

> We don't have reason; we have computation. We don't have a tree of knowledge; we have an information superhighway. We don't have real intelligence; we have artificial intelligence. We no longer pursue truth, we pursue data and signals. We no longer have philosophers, we have thinking pragmatics. We no longer have morals, we have lifestyles. We no longer have brains that serve as the seat of our thinking mind; we have neural sites, which remember, sort body signals, control genes, generate dreams, anxieties and neuroses, quite independently of whether they think rationally or not. So, starting from reason, where did we get? We have a godless world in an imploding cosmos. We have a model of reality based on a glorious chaos. We have a model of the individual based on biological determinism. (2001: 193)

Though Bradbury makes a somewhat parodic character deliver such a speech (his first name seems to be a reminder of all great contemporary thinkers – Jean Baudrillard, Jean-François Lyotard, Jacques Derrida, while also bringing, in pure postmodernist melange, a flavour of Jean Paul Gaultier, for, after all, he does wear "Calvin Klein jeans, Armani jacket, and a designer baseball cap saying I LOVE DECONSTRUCTION", 2001: 89), the fundamental concepts are precisely those appearing in theories of the postmodern change from modernism: the emergence of excessive computational technology to the detriment of knowledge and thinking, discarding truth on a market whose main paradigm is transaction, adopting a new life style in which traditional values have become obsolete and have been replaced by much libertine behaviour, chaos and anarchy brought by the mixture of concepts and new social concerns as well as by the sense of loss of one's self among technical gadgets. This may be accounted for by the fact that the new age is said not to be interested in any debate upon grand narratives but to deal with the ideology of globalization; it does not promote value, but conformity and consumerism, cannot deal with strategy as it is overwhelmed with anarchy and fundamentalism.

If modernism was highly symbolic and transmitted the minimum of reflexivity necessary, the rest residing in the intertwining of metaphor, postmodernism places things out in the open (sometimes vulgarly daring) making the mirroring of reality so much more colourful, more entertaining, more bitingly acid. We witness a movement away from the modernist dictum by Mies van den Rohe, i.e. "Less is more", which encourages the simplistic construction and supports minimalist philosophy, to Robert Venturi's "Less is a bore" encouraging multiple levels of meaning. If modernist architecture tried to eschew traditional environments in favour of a universal architectural grammar in a rational and functional organisation, using up-to-date materials and rejecting ornamentation, postmodernist architecture is "eclectic by borrowing styles from different periods and 'quoting' aspects of other buildings in its designs" (Malpas, 2005: 15), performing at the same time both a return to the past and a movement forward by playfully reincorporating the modern 'tradition' into futuristic designs. Postmodernist architecture moved from the modernist representational function towards a parodying of old styles, techniques and embodied principles, a rejection of universality, being the first field that announced the death of the modernist 'tradition' at the risk of intense disorientation and overthrow of consensus, sometimes even shocking or scandalising public taste.

Though continuing the technological and communicational developments of the modern discoveries, the new age engendered, at the

same time, "a widespread loss of faith in the idea of teleology" (Eagleton, 2007: 16), a reaction against the impossibilities that it bred. In this line of thought and more or less metaphorically, Terry Eagleton defines postmodernism as "the Oedipal child of that age [modernism], squirming with embarrassment at the gap between the big talk of the father and his feeble deeds." (2007: 63) Thus, a process which is not new takes place – that of subverting the law of the father as any new trend seems to have done it in its own time. The main idea of progressively increasing emancipation led to a continuous progress in all sectors of life from the technological ones to those concerning personal values. According to some critics, we have been living "through the death throes of Modernism and the birth pangs of Post-Modernism" (Fiedler, 1971: 461) because the postmodernist (fictional or theoretical) narrative draws away from and registers a break through the modernist impersonality, authorial detachment and richly saturated tissue of subjectivity.

The major movement that marked the passage from modernism to postmodernism was the transgression of the modern self-reflexive exploration which discarded narrative in terms of classical or historical scenes and the return to a type of narrative which practises a different form of self-reflexivity by radicalizing it and introducing a very personal perspective which would not be the bearer of universal values. It is only in architecture that critics have identified a turning back to history through pictorial, representational elements. Hans Bertens, for example, states that:

> Depending on the artistic discipline postmodernism is either a radicalization of the self-reflexive moment within modernism, a turning away from narrative and representation, or an explicit return to narrative and representation. And sometimes it is both. (2005: 5)

This type of simultaneously oppositional thinking is specific to postmodernist art and criticism and it is the one which gave rise to such a maelstrom of theories and artistic manifestations. Unlike the "either/… or" modernist rationality, this type of "both… and" postmodernist thinking led to paradoxically convergent theories. It is, in other words, a new type of dialectics in which opposing means and principles lead to a synthesis which, though heterogeneous, fragmented and diffuse, introduces a new logic, for, in Lyotard's terms, it is dissensus that allows us to experience invention, the freedom to choose any/all subjects and positions, and to think. Hans Bertens (2005: 66-67) identifies, for instance, the same simultaneously existing tendencies in characterising major postmodernisms in the late 1970s and early 1980s by noticing, firstly, the existence of a postmodernism which is equivalent to a return to representation and narrative (even if disbelievingly, through irony and

fragmentation, and in a whimsical manner), secondly, the simultaneous attack on representation and narrative (following the Derridean/Barthesian denial of presence, origins, coherence of the subject and so on), and thirdly, the emergence of postmodernism as a non-discursive immediacy marking the disappearance of comprehensible discourse.

At the same time, postmodernism allowed for an escape from the narrowly rationalist, almost inimical, modernity towards human desires and needs through revolutionary cries for liberation from intellectual, social, and sexual constraints. It is true that this may have led the world from the forms of authority of modernism as an antiquated phenomenon towards the anarchy of postmodernism that Ihab Hassan speaks about:

> It is already possible to note that whereas Modernism created its forms of artistic Authority precisely because the centre no longer help, Postmodernism has tended toward artistic Anarchy in deeper complicity with things falling apart – or has tended toward pop. (1987: 44-45)

But then again the two concepts – authority and anarchy – cannot be fully separated as one may breed the other. That is why, Hassan continues by considering postmodernism more para-modern than post-modern.

Another aspect registered in the gliding from modernism to postmodernism is the veer from the centre towards the margin. The newly introduced art forms, labelled by some as subcultures, were popular rather than elitist in orientation and any form of populism was marginal in modernist thinking. Mass-culture reshapes high-culture in a permanent process of adapting to the requirements and necessities of the contemporary age. Postmodernism has put an end to the modernist avant-garde and introduced a democratisation of art by breaking down the "Great Divide" between high-brow art and popular culture:

> We live in a mass culture to which we do not simply submit. We take its images, its narratives, its formulations of desire, and measure them against our real experiences of a real world. At the same time we re-work and re-use them, in our conversation and gossip, in our fantasies, in every aspect of our lives. And this re-use is our individual form of resistance. (Wyver in Bertens, 2005: 100)

Thus, popular cultures gain a political potential, they are the new voice through which the people address the system. This is the moment when the mass media (TV, video, advertising, the newspapers) become the instruments of the new politics of the people. At the same time, the political

potential of high culture is devalued, it ceases to exercise any large scale influence.

Malcolm Bradbury referred in his work to this process of centring the margins: on the one hand, he used it in his fiction by promoting the local campus and the people in the provinces, and, on the other hand, he outlined this phenomenon of comprehensive condition bringing together margin and centre (to the detriment of the centre) in his critical writings:

> By the 1980s this view of postmodernism, as an all-inclusive definition of a cultural epoch typified by stylistic glut, by pluralism, parody and quotation, by the disappearance of traditional cultural hierarchies and the randomization of cultural production, had becomes the common place. What was taken away from the cultural centre was, admittedly, often restored at the cultural fringes; political writing was granted to the repressed cultures of eastern Europe, to post-colonial societies, to emergent ethnicities, but not to dominant centres. (1995: 770)

This is the line of thought followed by Fredric Jameson who comments on postmodernism in terms of periodization. He sees the new developments in western capitalism as the direct cause of the rise of postmodernism and of the movement away from modernism. Thus, postmodernism is regarded as

> a periodizing concept whose function is to correlate the emergence of new formal features in culture with the emergence of a new type of social life and a new economic order – what is often euphemistically called modernization, post-industrial or consumer society, the society of the media or the spectacle, or multinational capitalism. This new moment of capitalism can be dated from the postwar boom in the United States in the late 1940s and early 1950s, in France, from the establishment of the Fifth Republic in 1958. The 1960 are in many ways the key transitional period, e period in which the new international order (neo-colonialism, the Green Revolution, computerization and electronic information) is at one and the same time set in place and is swept and shaken by its own internal contradictions and by external resistance. (Jameson in Brooker, 1994: 165-166)

Jameson identifies clearly the cause of the shift from modernism to postmodernism in the changes in the commercial and industrial market, in man's embracing technological (especially communicational) means, in the new approaches to the world we live in (for instance, an agricultural or environmental approach in agreement with world consumption).

Thus, we can say that, instead of simply designating a period after modernism, postmodernism seems to have rather grown out of it especially because, culturally speaking, it appears to mark a historical period, but philosophically speaking, it seems to have manifested for a long time. In Brian McHale's words, postmodernism "follows *from* modernism […] more than it follows *after* modernism." (2001: 5) The same opinion is held by Jean-François Lyotard who paradoxically posits that "a work can become modern only if it is postmodern" and thus postmodernism is regarded "not as modernism at its end but in the nascent state, and this state is constant." (2005: 79) Postmodernism is not an age, a chronological event through which we can say farewell to modernism and welcome to the postmodernist predicament. Some would say that it merely signals the "awakening from the nightmare of modernity with its manipulative reason and fetish of the totality" and the shift to "the laid-back pluralism and the heterogeneous range of life styles and language games which has renounced the nostalgic urge to totalize and legitimize itself." (Eagleton in Harvey, 2007: 9) Seen from a more or less pessimistic perspective, this is also Bradbury's view of modernism – as a tradition, a precursor that only "helped to bring into currency the term 'post-modernism'." (1995: 763) The dilemma may seem to arise when establishing and defining what comes after postmodernism. Bradbury wonders whether this is a post-postmodernism because, after going through more stages of its own, even this period reached a new, positively different status.

Other critical theories concerned with the same dilemma regard postmodernism as "modernism in its self-critical phase", "in its reformist and reflective mode" or view it as "Critical Modernism" (Jencks, 2007: 46). That is why postmodernism is regarded more likely as a mode of critique of what modernism stood for, and, on the other hand, as a trend that seems to have permeated any age as a mode of human understanding. In Brian McHale's words,

> modernism and postmodernism are not period styles at all, one of them current and the other one outdated, but more like alternative stylistic options between which contemporary writers are free to choose without that choice necessarily identifying them as either "avant-garde" or "arrière-garde." (2001: 9)

Thus, we cannot speak in the case of the shift from Mo to Po-Mo about registering two successive stages taking readers from one less advanced obsolete practice to a more advanced contemporary one. However, this cannot mean that a writer is modern and postmodern at the same time. One can have elements of the two, but because both writer and creation are culturally determined, because the cultural impulses that one feels must be

set against the background of a main "force field" (Jameson, 1993: 6), the writer and the work must be circumscribed to a primary tendency and a cultural dominant.

But Bradbury also sees in "What Was Post-modernism?" a smoother transition, an almost imperceptible transgression of features from modernism to postmodernism claiming that the latter (at least at its beginnings) even takes up and continues a lot of the characteristics of the former:

> The post-modernism of the years of postwar 'reconstruction' is both modernism extended and developed onward into new times from similar *avant garde* presumptions, and a transformation of experiment and the *avant garde* itself in an age of historical change, rising Western affluence, a growing mass consumer society, and a new attitude to modernity. (1995: 767)

A moment of transition exists nevertheless and this is culturally backgrounded in the struggles of the 1960s concerning the experiences of the new social movements comprising a general feeling of emancipation and the break away from an academia too much enclosed in abstract thinking. This is precisely the atmosphere registered by Malcolm Bradbury in *Eating People Is Wrong* (2000). It is a period announcing the advent of Generation X with its nonconformism and its sense of disrootedness.

3. Conclusions

My analytical inquiry aimed at demonstrating that Malcolm Bradbury was a man of two distinct worlds coexisting in a unitary whole and that his work attempts to bridge the two universes: he was a critic of modernism, but also a writer who experimented boldly with the postmodern rules; he was an Englishman fascinated by America, where he travelled to take fresh breaths of a new culture and of a new time; he was a man of the present keeping up with the trends, the scientific and cultural developments, but also a man who liked to turn towards the past and cherished its cultural values; he was a man living in two millennia and feeling the pressure that the chiliastic turn put upon all the strata of society; he was a serious, objective analyst of the literary phenomenon almost all the time projected against the social background, but also a restless playful spirit that found an extreme pleasure in using a comic voice not only in most of his novels (some of them focusing exclusively on linguistic, structural or ideological games), but also in his criticism where the subtle voice of the critic was spiced with commentaries that surpassed the seriousness of the pipe-smoking analyst and reached the mouth-cornered smile of the satirist.

It is known that the time frame in which a writer or critic lives usually pinpoints him on the map of a literary period and sets him against the background of a certain mentality that permeates his work. But how much of the previous periods, trends and theories does he preserve or to what extent does he mark the transition between them? Malcolm Bradbury was surely fascinated with modernism in his critical studies, he described its multiple manifestations and stages of evolution, but his fiction renders the skeptical, parodic and ironic mood of a genuine postmodernist who rejects the absolute laws of any self-claiming superior system (and this spans from aspects such as modernism to communism or capitalism), who rejects the excessive theorization that postmodern decades displayed, but also regards unhopefully the fragmentary society that emerged after the demolishing (that would be an appropriate term since the most fervent movements in this direction started in the world of architecture) of the myth of modernism, and the invasion of a culture based on consumption, an anything-goes or throw-away type of culture that flaunts collage, pastiche, intertextuality, multiculturalism and plurality of perspectives because of the risk of promoting a pragmatic, kitschy way of thinking.

Note

[1] Malcolm Bradbury's invention of study written by his hero Henri Mensonge in *My Strange Quest for Mensonge*, respectively, the inscription on the cap of one of the conference-participating professors in *To the Hermitage.*

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ON THE THRESHOLD OF BLISS: TRANSLATING SACRED SPACE IN EARLY GOTHIC CATHEDRALS

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The Age of Gothic cathedrals was the age of the 'light' defence. The medieval man understood that to be fortified against the ever-pressing forces of evil did not necessarily imply to fortress one's faith. Unlike Romanesque ecclesiastical architecture which emphasized physical strength and structural sturdiness by its thick walls, bulky towers, massive stone pillars, low barrel vaults and small rounded clustered windows, the Gothic highlighted spiritual domination and verticality. It was less ponderous and more airy, less intimidating and more inviting. "One major change from the Romanesque plan", as Richard Kieckhefer noticed "was the creation of elaborated entrances not only at the west end of the nave but at the end of each transept arm." (2004: 298) This transformation was indicative of another change which occurred at the level of religious spirituality. The image of the temple as *domus dei* and house of the ark, as the Old Testament emphasized it, was gradually superseded by that of Jesus as a living temple "gathering up into himself in an ontological fashion all that sacred places had endeavoured to do in religion through doors, gates, thresholds, and other 'entrance phenomena' (…) ." (Turner, 1979: 139) The transference of temple functions to the Second Person of the Trinity ('I am the way … no one comes to the Father except by me' and 'I am the door') also changed the orientation of the devotional flux. Although in the High Middle Ages Jerusalem, the city of the temple, remained the centripetal centre of devotion which gathered all the spiritual energies of the Christian world, the continual increase in building other magnificent centres of devotion to house the shrines of the most popular intercessors of the medieval lore opened up the landscape of devotional practice.

Within the urban area of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, Gothic cathedrals functioned as huge lenses which captured the light of God and, after filtering it through colourful pieces of stained glass windows, precious gems, and exquisite materials, they radiate it out in a sort of a centrifugal flow to the heterogeneous congregation of kings, knights, bishops,

merchants, tradespeople, craftsmen, pilgrims, and peasants all gathered to praise the Incarnated God, the door to mankind's salvation. The image of Christ enthroned in majesty carved above the great west doors of many French cathedrals or high up on the screen-like façade of Early English cathedrals signified not only that it was through Jesus, the God made man, that the believer would gain access to the house of the Lord, but also that He was the beacon, the 'light born of light' spreading the beam of divine illumination over the entire world.

The radiating power of Christ is more evident in the treatment of the space between the pointed arch and the lintel of the central portal at Chartres Cathedral. The decorative arrangement of the tympanum is dominated by the figure of Christ seated on a throne, in a mandorla of light, holding a book in his left hand and raising his right in a gesture of blessing. Flanking the two upper parts of the mandorla and the other two lower corners of the tympanum are the signs of the Four Evangelists: the winged man, the eagle, the winged lion and the winged ox corresponding to Matthew, John, Mark and Luke. Underneath, on the lintel separating the space of divine confirmation from the disquieting space of liminality associated with the entrance, are the twelve Apostles enthroned. The two additional figures thought to represent Enoch and Elijah, the only two men that had been taken up to God bodily and without dying, complete the lintel composition. The complementary figures carved in the archivolts surmounting Christ represent, according to M. F. Hearn, the Twenty-four Elders of the Apocalypse (Rev. 11: 15-18). However, their role is not as Hearn suggests simply to "complete the cast of the standard image" (1981: 203) of apocalyptic iconography although it is undeniably true that the Romanesque program of tympana decoration included them frequently. The representation of Christ in a mandorla was a favourite subject for Romanesque portals too and a standardized icon of the Second Coming and Last Judgement imagery. So were the twelve Apostles supporting the enthroned Saviour, but the overall treatment of all these characters was different from the Romanesque sculptural program.

If we compare the carved representations of Christ in Majesty decorating the tympana of Chartres and Autun cathedrals, the difference between the Gothic and Romanesque treatment of the subject will become more evident. First of all, let us consider the thematic approach. The Romanesque sculptural program, of which Autun cathedral is just an example, focused on the representation of the Last Judgement in the semicircular space above the central west portal. The emphasis was obviously laid on the sinful nature of mankind who was constantly reminded both of the promise of salvation granted to the virtuous and of the terrible punishments awaiting the wicked at the end of all days. Central

to the composition, the figure of Christ as Judge divided the space of the tympanum in two halves while the figures of the redeemed and of the damned were distributed accordingly to the right and left of Him. The elongated spectre-like figures of both the blessed and the damned were counterpoised to the dwarfish figures aligned in dramatic postures carved on the lintel beneath Christ's feet. These were "diminutive representations of emotionally differentiated souls" (Seidel, 1999: 7) whose grieved, fearful, miserable, cheerful, relieved or rejoicing poses communicated the condition of their progress.

Contrasting the mobility and diversity in postures of all the sculpted characters, the figure of Christ is represented in "an exceptionally passive poise; the mandorla within which his flat form is poised separates him from the events depicted in adjacent segments of the surrounding semicircular fields." (Seidel, 1999: 10-1) The figure of Christ, arms spreading symmetrically to the right and to the left and pointing from waist level to the polarized zones of the blessed and of the wicked, functions more as a symbolical demarcation line and a hierarchical ordering principle than as an active centre of divine retribution and illumination. Viewed from a hierarchical perspective, the entire composition reads as follows: Christ is the centre of all created world; the angels who partake of His wisdom are the ones represented closer to Him supporting from both below and above the frame which encapsulates His body. Virgin Mary and John the Baptist are slightly sketched in the area corresponding to the upper half of the Saviour's body while the entire humankind, both those who aspire to eternal life and those who are condemned to eternal damnation occupy the lower half.

Unlike Autun, the thematic approach of the central west portal at Chartres is the more luminous and peaceful vision of the Second Coming and not the terrifying scene of the Last Judgement, which moves to the central portal of the south transept. This change shows that, whereas the Romanesque sculpture of the west portal emphasized the liminality of the human existence wavering between eternal bliss and eternal damnation, the Gothic sculpture highlighted the glorified image of God, the divine nature of the Incarnated Son whom we all resemble. Placed above the 'Sunset' portal, the figure of Christ in majesty is far different from the stiff lifeless representation of the Saviour in the Autun tympanum. His hieratic monumental figure has nothing of the unnatural almost 'assembled' body we witnessed in Autun. The earlier effigy-like carving which reduced Christ's body to a mere flattened relief was replaced by the fully-fleshed image of a radiant God whose resurrected body becomes the locus of eternal life and of eternal bliss awaiting all human beings who believe in Him.

Even more relevant to the change in the apocalyptic perception of the Early Gothic is the sculptural composition of the magnificent west façade of Wells Cathedral. The image of Christ enthroned is no longer confined to the limited space of the tympanum. His theophanic appearance at the apex of the west front speaks of the new vision of the House of God as Church Triumphant and Heavenly Jerusalem. Clearly, the iconographic focus shifts dramatically; in contrast to the French system of portal-centred apocalyptic iconography, the unitary sculptural program of Wells transforms the entire façade into a huge screen on which the story of salvation is projected. The representation of Christ in a mandorla at the top of the west front confirms that the theme covering the totality of the façade is Christ's Second Coming. Up and above, He is perhaps sitting in judgement but there are no depictions of suffering or ecstatic souls anywhere on the huge façade. Not only is fear absent, but there is not even a slight suggestion of pain, death or punishment. There is no indication of damnation whatsoever although the presence of Christ enthroned intimates that of the judging Christ which, in turn, triggers the expectation of divine mercy.

As Carolyn Malone observantly points out: "heavenly glory is represented instead of damnation and Christ's suffering." (2004: 124) This explains the large participation of saints, apostles, patriarchs, prophets, bishops, kings, queens, knights, nobles etc., the 'great crowd of witnesses' who gather to testify to the miracle of the Risen God and to the promised descent of the Heavenly Jerusalem onto the land of the Lord. The figures on the west front also signal to the devout pilgrim, who has been striving to reach the gates of the cathedral, that here is the end of the journey and they are only "those who have gone on in front of the pilgrim and have reached the goal and are now standing in welcome as the visitors complete the last stages of their journey." (Matthews, 2005: 12) The presence in the central gable of the Deesis group – now replaced by two 'starfish' angels – who most probably used to flank Christ not only as standardized companions to His Second Coming but as powerful intercessors too, complete the vivid tableaux of the Triumphant Church.

What is remarkable too in the organization of the frontispiece composition is the hierarchical disposition of figures and the double axial development of the theme. At Wells, the theme of heavenly triumph reads both vertically and horizontally. As the viewer looks up along the vertical axis of the façade starting directly from above the main entrance, from the tympanum of the central doorway, he/she will notice the gradual stations of the advancing composition given by three key episodes of profound theological depth: the First Coming of Christ (His Incarnation), the Coronation of the Virgin and the Second Coming of the Saviour (His Triumph). The first episode does not accidentally occupy the space of the

tympanum above the central west entrance. The representation of Virgin and Child in a quatrefoil (badly damaged during the dark period of Puritan iconoclasm of the seventeenth century) signifies that the key to entering the Heavenly Jerusalem is the Incarnated Son of God. The sober almost unemotional poise of the Virgin indicates further that this is not a common motherly scene. So does the gesture of blessing that Infant Jesus makes as if fully aware of his divine nature. To these, one may add the frontal poise of the protagonists who do not make eye contact with each other but look down on the visitor standing outside, partly inviting him to enter and partly warning him that to go into the House of the Lord meant to cross an important threshold, something that cannot be done light-heartedly.

Moreover, the insignia of royalty which Virgin Mary displays, the crown and the sceptre, her enthroned position with Infant Christ on her lap as well as her aloof demeanour all help to make the connection with the second key episode represented right above the archivolts of the main entrance: the Coronation of the Virgin. Unfortunately, this scene has suffered much damage and is literally beyond repair. Any discussion as to the quality of the composition or the organization of the entire scene would be obviously superfluous. What can be tackled, despite the losses, is the significance of such a composition in relation to the overall thematic design of the west front and the function it has as visual station along the allegorical journey to the top of the façade.

The location above the central doorway beneath a gabled-trefoil, sequentially following immediately after the scene of the Virgin and the Child, is not arbitrary. The proximity to the space of the entrance alludes to her intercessory function while her closeness to the Saviour – the Virgin is seated in honour to His right sharing the throne of wisdom with Him – emphasizes the weight of her mediating quality. More than once has been remarked that, when comparing English and French cathedrals, especially their west fronts, one is struck by the different importance given to the portals. Indeed, if we consider the relation between the breadth and height of the façade at Wells on the one hand, and the dimensions of its west portals on the other hand, we cannot help but acknowledge that the doorways are scarcely noticeable in the elevation. I believe that their seemingly smallness and insignificance may be well accounted for if we consider the role played by Jesus as the true door to the Kingdom of Heaven.

The entrance as a space of disquieting liminality, a permeable border between holiness and evil may have been reduced to protect the space of the sacred, the House of the Lord, from malefic transgression. But it may also be that the entrance acquired a deep spiritualized connotation that Continental Gothic was never to reach. Instead of emphasizing material grandeur by cutting vast cavernous openings in stone, English Gothic

scooped its way through the walls warning that redemption and salvation does not come through large doors. The message at Wells is that whoever enters the cathedral must do so through Christ, that is in spirit, in faith. The Virgin was the one to unlock the entrance by giving life to the Child while the Saviour opened the gate to eternal life through His sacrifice.

On returning to the significance of the Coronation scene, one will also notice that

> the Virgin's position on Christ's right corresponds to the imagery of *Sponsus* and *Sponsa* in the Canticle of Canticles that Augustine had related to Christ, as the bridegroom, and to his bride, *Virgo-Ecclesia* in his interpretation of Psalm 44:9: 'the queen stood on thy right hand.' (Malone, 2004: 45)

The association between marital union and coronation imagery conveyed the idea of the intimate connection Christ had with the faithful as well as "the festive joy with which Christ would share His glory with the faithful in the Heavenly Jerusalem." (Malone, 2004: 48) Thus, the more subtle *skopos* of the composition was to underline the triumph of the Church crowned in the image of the Virgin reigning with Christ as His Queen and *Sponsa* in the everlasting Kingdom of the Father.

The third and final station along the processional map of the west front is the image of the enthroned Christ whose representation on the vertical axis above the Coronation of the Virgin has been identified by Carolyn Malone with "the descent of the Heavenly Jerusalem of Revelation 21:2." (Malone, 2004: 50) The figure of Christ in Majesty towering over the whole gigantic ensemble of the façade represents *terminus ad quem* for the journey of confirmation undertaken by any medieval traveller who approached the gates of the cathedral in hope of gaining salvation and eternal life. Likewise, the image of the Saviour enthroned in everlasting glory radiated its Light from high above as if from the portal of the Rising Sun, signalling to the viewer that the true doorway to the Kingdom of God was not on earth but in the space above.

The axial organisation of the tripartite composition recalls the linear format of Matthew Paris's itinerary maps which compelled the abstracted body of the viewer to move through strictly delineated territory toward Jerusalem, the goal of the imaginary journey. In the same way, the viewer who contemplates the stony canvas of the central bay of the façade is compelled to move along the encapsulated space of the portal zone toward the gabled niche of the Coronation, through the tall median lancet window and the stepped gable above it to the wavy shape of the mandorla and the pinnacle which metonymically (*pars pro toto*) stood for the Heavenly Jerusalem. Direction is indicated successively by the pointed arcade of the

entrance, the pointed arch trimming the moulding of the Coronation gable, the lancet arch of the windows and the pointed gables surmounting the central buttresses. The 'road' to the top is flanked in its median area by tall jamb-like statues which indicate to the viewer/traveller the central route upwards by way of their elongated bodies and greeting gestures. Likewise, the enthroned figures decorating the six prominent buttresses indicate to the 'pilgrim' alternative side routes to the top and ensure that he/she does not step out of the vertical strip or fails to conform to the prescribed routes. Moreover, since they are mainly martyrs and "confessors in the guise of bishops and abbots" (Clifton-Taylor, 1967: 82), they act like witnesses to the truth of the Resurrection carved in stone just below the horizontal band which separates the towers and the stepped gable from the structure beneath. They also make the connection between the low tiers which probably represented "the Evangelists, and important persons in the life of Christ (…) prophets, patriarchs, and other Old Testament figures" (Clifton-Taylor, 1967: 82) and the nine orders of angels which prefigure the celestial bliss one would experience on entering the Heavenly Jerusalem.

But at Wells, the theme of heavenly triumph reads also horizontally. As Alec Clifton-Taylor noticed "in English Gothic, the horizontal lines are at least as important as the vertical":

> The great breadth of the front [at Wells] seems to be deliberately emphasized by the two strong horizontal string-courses which girdle it. Thereby it falls into three clearly defined horizontal zones, each with a distinct quality of its own. In the lowest stage, for example, the value of the plain base is at once evident, as is the strong effect of the boldly projecting gables of the lowest tier of arcades. But these horizontal divisions are admirably countered by the verticals of the six salient buttresses, which also serve, by their cast shadows, to add a third dimension and remove the effect of flatness which mars several of other English fronts. The composition has a beautiful logic, and is quite unlike any other. (Clifton-Taylor, 1967: 79)

Indeed, the logic of the composition comes from the well devised combination between horizontal expanse and vertical audacity, an interweavement which helps articulate a coherent and, at the same time, consistent architectural and theological discourse. The horizontal emphasis which constitutes a recurrent characteristic of the English Gothic, as many researchers have noticed, does not imply a lack of verticality. Certainly, the cathedral of Wells would have missed most of its elevation if stripped of its late fourteenth and early fifteenth century Perpendicular towers. However, the Early Gothic design did not overlook entirely the vertical 'pull' at the expense of linear development. The Wells façade has six protruding

buttresses to highlight elevation mirrored by six tiers of statues which emphasize width. Symmetry at the level of the design slightly soothes the broad proportions of the edifice. Probably, if the enormous spires which were planned to surmount the towers had ever been built, the sensation of heavy base and horizontal sprawling would have disappeared entirely.

Nevertheless, what makes Wells particularly interesting in the organization of the façade is the divergent treatment of horizontal space. Unlike Autun and even Chartres which condense the format of the apocalyptic theme to the space of the tympana, Wells opens it up to the extent of a screen-like façade. Hence, the west front at Wells has a panoramic, landscape-like character through its wide distribution of statuary and the overall disseminating quality of the design. A similar scenic composition of figures set in arch and gable housings appears some twenty years later on the west front of Salisbury cathedral.

As Alec Clifton-Taylor has noticed, "the west front [of Salisbury Cathedral] is another example of the screen type of façade (…) clearly deriving from Wells." (1967: 105) Unfortunately, the iconography of the west front has been marred by the obtrusive imprint of Victorian taste which determined the same art historian to label the ensemble as "a sad travesty of its great prototype." (1967: 105) But despite the fact that many of the statues now decorating the west front are Victorian replacements of the originals, the architectural design of the façade is rather similar in conception to the one at Wells. The composition spreads horizontally in five successive tiers culminating with a radiating image of Christ enthroned in a mandorla, presiding over all the ranks of saints and historical figures below Him. His right hand is raised in blessing while His left hand holds an orb symbolizing authority as well as God's dominion and protection over the world.

The whole arrangement has the same strip-like format encountered at Wells which allows the composition to open out horizontally and move centrifugally away from centres of thematic loading: the Virgin and the Child in the tympanum of the main west door, Blessed Virgin Mary with Angels in the arched gables above the entrance and Christ in majesty at the apex of the façade. However, unlike Wells, the vertical development of the composition is less evident despite the obvious hierarchical disposition of the five-story structure. Even though the combination of steeply pointed arched gables and blind arcades, lancet windows and vertical mouldings creates axial surface orientation mainly in the central compartment, the small buttresses – standing out distinctly from the line of the building but less protruding than at Wells – interrupt the vertical elongation of the design at half the way to the top of the elevation. This impression is emphasized by a band of almost lozenge-shaped mouldings enriched with

trefoils and quatrefoils which extends horizontally across the two side divisions of the façade and continues to the towers, seemingly cutting off the vertical course of the composition between the upper third and fourth tier. Besides, the two square towers which flank the west front add very little to the vertical upsurge of the design. Their slender appearance, instead of highlighting elevation, conveys a sense of fragility and architectural vulnerability partly confirmed by the square unpretentious turrets and small octagonal pinnacles which crown them. In fact, the glory and loftiness of Salisbury is in its central fourteenth-century tower and spire which tops it.

The tall and massive crossing tower and spire which Alec Clifton-Taylor describes as "disproportionately lofty" (1967: 105) do not overwhelm the cathedral or spoil the overall impression of the Early Gothic design. On the contrary, the tall silhouetted tower and the majestic almost imperial appearance of the spire – the highest in Great Britain according to the Guinness Book of Records – add to the vertical aspirations of the ensemble a significant plus. This is due – apart from the impressive height, 404 ft. high – to the structural and decorative design which continues the architectural and theological program of the façade. Consequently, the tower is two-storey high pierced by eight two-light windows arranged in two symmetrical tiers replicated exactly at corners by other eight blind windows and double blind arcading. The stories are separated by horizontal bands of lozenge-shaped traceries which allow the structure to develop both vertically and horizontally, the way it does at Wells. The great soaring octagonal spire which seems to collect the sacred energy of the universe above rises aloof from between four diminutive but richly decorated pinnacles replicated at each angle of the tower by other four octagonal turrets each crowned with a small crocketed spire. Horizontally, the lofty spire is carefully trimmed at well-judged intervals with three carved ornamental bands which repeat the lozenge motif displayed both in the central tower and on the west front.

Despite the obvious geometrical and numerical symmetry of the tower-spire ensemble, the structure displays a manifest propensity towards increased verticality. To the familiar repertoire of steeply pointed arches in the gables which surmount the windows, pointed blind arcading, vertical mouldings and slender colonnettes, the Decorated style which was flowering in the fourteenth century added the ball-flower ornament: a partly opened flower with a trefoil or quatrefoil opening which held a slightly visible ball within its cup. The insertion of this ornament within the continuous hollow mouldings that were grooving along the wall surface of the tower contributed to creating a series of longitudinal strips which, in turn, highlighted the axial projection of the tower-spire ensemble. They

created visual 'routes' to the upper parts of the structure where they suddenly diffused into protruding ornamental bands carrying up each of the eight ridges of the small angle turrets, reaching up into the pinnacles and cresting the junctures of the eight sloping planes of the stupendous octagonal spire.

The flying buttress, another fourteenth-century addition designed to support the walls from the outside, to take away the thrust of the vault and to counteract the extra weight of the newly built Tower and Spire, was to confer enhanced organic verticality to the cathedral. These segments of arches rising delicately from exterior abutments not only transferred the pressure of the vault and tower through buttresses to ground level, they also helped harmonize the steeply pitched cathedral roofs with the squat appearance of the side structures. Moreover, they functioned as external ribs caging in the soaring heart of the cathedral as if to protect it from desecration, foul or sacrilegious adulteration and malefic exposure.

Finally, the flying buttresses shoring up the vault of the nave ensured compactness and organicity to the ensemble by conducting the flux of sacred energy circulating from the top of the spire, through the interstices of the central tower (longitudinal ball-flower mouldings, lozenge-shaped bands, small colonnettes) and through the network of vault ribs to the inferior parts of the structure: the outer walls of the aisles and the supporting pier buttresses. Not only the lateral force of the vault and tower travelled down through the arched section of the buttress but so did the divine energy of the world which diffused through the entire body of the building like blood circulating through vessels nurturing the body of the cathedral and, at the same time, filling it with sacredness.

Just like Wells, Salisbury Cathedral with its network of slender colonnettes, pointed arches, tall lancet windows, screen-like façade and flying buttresses was consistent with the new view of the Heavenly Jerusalem and of the celestial heaven; it was geometrically regular, orderly, hierarchical, coherent, enduring, and filled with light. It was the true threshold through which humanity could translate secular space and enter eternity; or this is at least what medieval men truly hoped for.

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ONLINE COLLABORATION IN TRANSLATION INSTRUCTION AMONG STUDENTS AND INSTRUCTORS

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Introduction

Trainers and practitioners have long identified the need for integrating computer-based tools and resources into translation instruction (Kiraly 2000; Lee-Jahnke 1998; Massey 1998; Owens 1996). A survey conducted in 2001 with a web search of 121 institutions of higher learning in Spain, Portugal, France, UK, Ireland, USA, Canada, where training for translators was available and ongoing, showed only a few percentages of online programs (Alcalá 2001).

Examples of the programs where online translation courses are offered are: Centre for Lifelong Learning at Cardiff University offers high level translation (French English) Distance Learning Course. The Center for Interpretation and Translation Studies, University of Hawaii at Manoa offers online translation courses. The School of Continuing and Professional Studies at New York University offers Online Certificates in several Translation Studies, Translation Certificates and Non-Credit translation Courses. The School of Continuing Studies, University of Toronto offers workplace translation courses, distance learning courses; in addition to the Words Language Services (WLS) translation courses in Dublin, the Online Translation Courses of Logos, Open Distance Learning MA Translation Studies, run at the Centre for English Language Studies, University of Birmingham, and a Postgraduate Translation Diploma through Distance or Independent Learning is offered by the Division of Languages at London City University. The Department of Modern Languages at Florida International University offers a fully online course called Practica in Medical Translation using the WebCT platform. The Universitat Rovira i Virgili offers 10-week postgraduate certificate courses in technical translation and localization between English and Spanish (Pym et al 2003).

In Italy, the Vicenza-CETRA Project involved on-site translation

classes integrating email and the Internet; shared translation project via email and the Internet; translation theory classes integrating email, the Internet and videoconferences; a simulator software package for teaching, self-teaching and practicing the simultaneous and consecutive interpreting techniques and sight translation. Students use IT in the translation classroom, and had direct links with their L2 counterparts in other countries, had ongoing links with Salford, Málaga, Marie-Haps and had links with an American university in the past (Pym 2003).

During the 2000 Fall semester Stecconi (2003) taught an introduction to translation studies at the American University in Washington D.C. The coursework was carried out in collaboration with students at the Universitat Rovira i Virgili in Tarragona, Spain, and with Frank Austermühl at Germersheim, Germany. Cooperation ranged from having remote native speakers revise translations and clarify originals for local students, to bibliographical help and other research assistance. The exchange was planned to be a two-way affair. The participants mainly used email messages and attachments. Attempts to use the Blackboard electronic forum turned out to be frustrating. One chat session was also carried out, which ended up as a mere test of the channel.

At Masaryk University in the Czech Republic, Fictumová (2004) reported a case study of courses taught for three years using Moodle. Preparatory translation and interpreting courses, technical translation and an introduction to interpreting were presented. Course content seemed to be the decisive factor in evaluating any of the courses taught. The content could be made more attractive or more accessible through Moodle. However, too much variety or too many resources can ruin the positive impact of e-learning and become a negative feature. Intelligibility of the course materials, particularly the presentation and/or use of TM tools, was a real challenge. All instructions in e-learning courses had to be formulated very carefully. Finding a balance between theory and practice was the key problem in most courses.

Those studies show that information communication technology (ICT) has been used as a teaching tool and has been extensively researched for its pedagogical implications So far, researchers have consistently identified two major benefits of asynchronous communication technology: A deeper thought process manifested in the discussion threads, and the facilitation of collaborative learning. Access to tutors and a strong identification between instructors and students proved to be a powerful motivational factor for e-learning participants (Frankola 2004). The use of ICT permits students and instructors to overcome time and space barriers, to design new methods and instruments of teaching, tutoring and evaluation, and at the same time preserve a personalized approach (Salinas

2007).

To take advantage of the opportunities presented by e-learning, a non-credit asynchronous online translation discussion forum was created as part of the World Arab Translators' Association (WATA) forums. The course was an experiment with volunteer students who were members of the WATA organization and its online forums. The online discussion forum was a distance learning courses where students learned translation skills and practiced translation tasks for a semester**.** The present article aims to describes the online collaborative operative learning environment, the process of teaching translation online, the kinds of texts posted, the kinds of tasks emphasized, how feedback was provided, how web-based collaborative learning was used to facilitate students' learning performance and to enhance their translation competence and performance, areas of improvement, and report students' attitudes towards the online translation discussion forum and their views of the benefits and disadvantages of their online training experience.

I. Participants

5 students from Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Bahrain and Syria majoring in translation at several Arab universities, and 4 free lance translators from Jordan, Palestine, UAE and Canada participated in the online collaborative translation project. All of the students, and free lance translators were native-speakers of Arabic with English as their target language. The course was a non-credit course. The students were of different proficiency levels in English (L2), had varying degrees of translation experience. The free lance translators were all on the onset of their translation career and joined the course to polish their translation skills. The author, who was the main instructor, has 20 years of experience teaching EFL, ESP, translation and interpreting courses to undergraduate students at the College of Languages and Translation, King Saud University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, and has experience teaching EFL courses online using different forms of technology mainly Online Course Management Systems such as Blackboard, WebCT and Moodle, forums, blogs, e-mail and others.

II. Identifying Students' Translation Needs:

Based on my teaching experience with translation students, I anticipated some of the weaknesses that participating students would have: (i) Reading comprehension weaknesses, (ii) Inadequate background information in the topic of the text, (iii) Difficulty with certain grammatical structures such as embedded and complex sentences, (iv) translating a text like a word-processor imitatively rather than discriminately, (v) difficulty making a translation cohesive, (vi) all kinds of mistakes in translating a

text.

III. Aims of the Online Course

The online translation course aimed to: (i) help students recognize translation problems and their solutions; (ii) practice translation quality control and know where to find help; (iii) identify good/poor translations with specific reasons for the assessment; (iv) work as a team; (v) develop students' awareness of the stylistic, grammatical differences between English and Arabic; (vi) develop students' ability to revise their own translation focusing on one aspect of the target text; *(vii)* help students focus on meaning not exact words of the source text while translating; (viii) develop students awareness of their own translation errors as well as other students translation errors and monitor their own translation process; (ix) develop students' ability to distinguish between good style and accuracy; and (x) respond to students' questions and needs.

IV. Prerequisite Reading Skills

- **Ability to** recognize the main ideas and details such as sequence of events, comparisons, cause-effect relationships, and character traits that are explicitly or implicitly stated in the text to be translated.
- Using **phonic clues** to determine the pronunciation and meaning of unknown words by spelling-pronunciation correspondences.
- **Using word structure clues** to determine the pronunciation and meaning of unknown words by breaking words into their appropriate units; by recognizing derivatives, roots, prefixes, and suffixes; by identifying inflectional endings denoting plurals, comparatives; by identifying compound words, contractions and possessives.
- **Using syntactic clues** to determine the meaning of unknown words and compounds by identifying the part of speech, number, gender, person, tense, mood, and voice of verbs; by noting the inflectional endings of verbs, and the position of a word in a sentence; by recognizing sentence patterns, word order sequences, mandatory subject-verb, noun-adjective and pronoun-antecedent agreement; and by recognizing the function of punctuation and typographic devices such as apostrophes, exclamation points, hyphens, question marks, periods, quotation marks, brackets, colons, commas, dashes, parentheses, capitalization, italicization and bold face.
- **Using semantic** or **contextual clues** to obtain the meaning of unknown words through the examination of the surrounding context by using implicit or explicit clues. Implicit clues are those inherent in the written context such as the topic, words preceding and/or following the

unfamiliar words in the same sentence; and commonly used expressions such as idioms, colloquialisms, figures of speech, proverbs and other familiar sayings. Explicit clues are synonyms, antonyms, definitions, direct explanations, descriptions, examples, parenthesis, comma enclosure, appositives, mood, tone, and pictorial representation available in the written context.

- **Recognizing syntactic relationships such as***:* (i) Perceiving the constituent parts within a sentence as chunk units; (ii) Recognizing the various types of word order (two possible positions for the indirect object after certain verbs, the multiple function of the word 'that' as a determiner, a clause introducer and a pronoun); (iii) Identifying and understanding complex sentences, complementation, modification by adjectives, adverbs, phrases, clauses; coordination of phrases, independent clauses, sentences, verbs, objects of preposition, and objects of verb; (iv) Deriving different meanings from sentences that are exactly the same. e.g.: 'I had three books stolen' may mean: 'I had three books stolen from me'; 'I had three books stolen for me'; 'I had three books stolen when someone interrupted my burglarizing'; (v) Seeing differences in sentences that seem to be the same as in; 'the cow was found by the farmer' and ' the cow was found by the stream; (vi) Seeing similarities in sentences that do not look the same as in: 'the cow was found by the farmer' and 'the farmer found the cow'.
- **Recognizing Organizational clues**, i.e. signaling devices or sentence connectors that indicate a particular pattern of organization such as: (i) Listing*:* the following, in addition, also, another; (ii) Sequence*:* first, second, meanwhile, afterwards, while; (iii) Cause-effect: since, for, because, as a result, therefore, consequently; (iv) Comparison/contrast: however, yet, nevertheless, although; (v) Classification: is divided into, is categorized into; (vi) Exemplification: for example, for instance, such as, like, as; (vii) Chronology: before, after, during, throughout, in the year; and (viii) Analogy: like, same as, similar to.
- **Making Inferences** such as: (i) Making forward inferencing: if a car runs out of gas, the car will stop. (ii) Making backward inference: Jane's brother is coming tomorrow. Robert is making a cake.
- **Recognizing anaphoric relationships,** i.e., recognizing words and phrases that refer back to other words and phrases used earlier in a text.
- **Recognizing Types of Cohesion,** i.e., grammatical and/or lexical features that link the component parts of a text together. It is the relationship between different sentences or different parts of a sentence.
- **Using Background knowledge,** i.e., students' familiarity with the facts, information, and ideas contained in a text. Background knowledge has

4 components: (i) background knowledge in the content area; (ii) prior knowledge that the text is about a particular content area; and (iii) degree to which the lexical items in the text reveal the content area; (iv) Cultural ideas.

V. Online Translation Instruction

An asynchronous online translation discussion forum was created and used to post English texts to be translated by participating English-Arabic student translators. The online discussion forum was designed with professional literary and nonliterary translation in mind. Since the translation task is very complex, instruction focused on helping students recognize the different components of a written text: ideas, how ideas are organized, sentences, cohesion, choice of words, syntactic and morphological aspects, the correct association of spoken sounds with their printed form and meaning, anaphora, making backward and forward inferences, and using background knowledge in comprehending the source text. The online translation course was process-oriented and learner-centered, and it utilized social constructivist methods to translator training. The author served as a facilitator and encouraged student-instructor and student-student interaction and communication. Participants felt free to express their needs, and instruction was geared towards helping students overcome their comprehension and translation problems. The instructor and students shared information regarding sources available in book form and on the Internet.

Materials

The selected materials included children's stories, literary texts and scientific texts. The texts were taken from book and online resources such as encyclopedias. The students could post texts of their choice such as children's stories. The students had access to a variety of general and specialized online Arabic-English and English-Arabic specialized dictionaries, translation literature and forum posts on the art and science of translating available in the WATA website.

Tasks

The instructor posted the texts one by one accompanied by instructions such as: Print the English text, read the whole text, then re-read the text paragraph by paragraph, turn the paper over and write what you have understood in Arabic without looking at the English text. You do not have to remember all of the details. Read the second paragraph as a whole, understand well (do not memorize it), turn the text over, then write what you have understood in Arabic without looking at the English text.

Follow the same steps with the rest of the paragraphs. Post your translation in order for the participants to look at it.

The participants took turns in translating the texts and posting and re-posting their translations of the same text for feedback. Each participant revised her translations and re-posted it for further feedback. Each translation was subjected to several revisions and re-submissions before it reached an acceptable level. The online discussion forum assignments focused on the process and quality of translation. The Students worked on solving stylistic, syntactic, cultural, terminological, and technical problems encountered in the translation process. Types of corrections made were prompted by the instructor.

Feedback

The instructor always gave a general impression of each translation. Focus was always on the positive aspects of a translation. The author would compare a student's performance on the first, second and third drafts and aspects of improvement were noted and reinforced. Communicative feedback on the location and types of errors in a translation were always given. No correct translations were provided. A student would work on her weaknesses and types or error, one by one.

When students submit a good translation, the author would explain why their translation was good as follows: Because the student had some background knowledge about the topic or story, the ideas were clear in her mind and she could express those ides and organize them clearly. She focused on transmitting the idea not the superficial words and sentence structure. She did not try to follow the exact words of the source text, sentences were cohesive. The author would tell them how these characteristics could be applied in the translation of unfamiliar texts.

Marking Errors

The author always read the all of the translations and errors were color-coded. For example, she would mark the students' translations in black and her explanation of the difficult parts in blue, highlight typos and grammatical errors in yellow, use ^ where a punctuation mark is missing, highlight deleted punctuation marks in yellow, mark sentences that were miscomprehended in green, highlight verbs, prepositions, punctuation marks that were not pinpointed by the students, and parts of the source text that were deleted, i.e., not translated in the target text.

Guided Corrections:

The author helped the participants correct their errors as follows:

- Having students highlight the verbs in the target text, and correct tense and form errors.
- Having students highlight their prepositions and check those used in phrasal verbs and so on.
- Highlight the words and phrases that show the organizational structure of the text such as: (1) enumeration: first, second, third, as follows, last; (ii) chronological order: in the year, during, since, for, then, while, throughout; (iii) spatial order: under, above, beside, behind, in front of; (iv) cause-effect: because, so, as, for, consequently, as a result, therefore; (v) compare-contrast: but, however, yet, on the other hand, by contrast, similarly, likewise, whereas, like; (vi) problem-solution: because, as a result, results in, lead to; (vii) classification: divided into, classified into, types, kinds, consists of; (viii) definition: defined, means, referred to, known as.
- The author translated the text sentence by sentence and explained the difficult parts, with which the students had comprehension problems, in parentheses.
- The author would break the text down into thought groups by enclosing noun clauses, verb causes, and prepositional clauses in parentheses.
- Putting translated sentences one after the other and asking the students to read them as a connected discourse and judge clarity of ideas, translation accuracy, cohesiveness, and whether TL has the save effect as the ST in expressing the author's philosophy of winning and losing or success and failure.
- Asking students to imagine an audience, such as high school students, for whom you are translating and trying to give clear, simple information in Arabic, to help them understand.
- Providing some background information about the author to help the students put the topic of the ST in context.
- Asking students to read a paragraph as a whole and write the meaning in Arabic without looking at the English text.
- Giving the students examples of questions that a student might ask herself before starting to translate a text such as: Do I understand the text, is it clear, cohesive, with a language that is appropriate for the receiver/reader. When translating a children's story, what kinds of answers would the students get for those questions? Does the Arabic translation of the story begin in the same way as the traditional Arabic story. What kind of style is used in Arabic stories? Did you choose words that are understood by Arab children?

- Drawing the students' attention to the difference between the Arabic and English typographical conventions and word orders such as Arabic sentence have a VSO word order, i.e., begin with a verb.
- Having students review and check certain Arabic grammatical structures.

Developing Awareness

To develop participants' awareness of their own errors and their own translation process, and other translators' errors, the following strategies were used:

- Having students compare their own performance on 2 translation drafts of the same text.
- Posting sample translations of the same text translated in class by some of my students and asking participants to compare and contrast them, show the strengths and weaknesses of each translation.
- Having students exchange translations and check each others' errors.
- Having students go through their own translation, focus on one type of errors, mark them all and correct them themselves.
- Having students record the amount of time spent in translating a particular text.
- Having students monitor their own translation process and verbalize how they translated the text the first time and the second time.

7 Data Collection

At the end of the semester, participants responded to a questionnaire regarding their online collaborative experience, and the key elements in an online collaborative learning environment, such as effectiveness of team work, interdependence, leadership, and communication. The author also kept a daily log on the difficulties I had with online translation instruction and the differences between online and in-class face-to-face instruction using an overhead projector or a tablet laptop. Results are reported qualitatively below.

VII. Results

Students Views

Analysis of the participants' responses and comments revealed positive attitudes towards online translation instruction. They found it useful and fun. It heightened their motivation and raised their self-esteem. They found the course useful as it provided extra practice, gave instant feedback and provided an opportunity to improve their ability to translate, identify errors and weaknesses and correct them.

Participating students and free-lance translators were pleased with their e-learning experience. They all seemed to have benefited greatly from the online collaborative project because, at school, they were never taught by a currently practicing professional translator and thus found her revisions and commentaries quite different from those their instructors gave them in class.

Participants developed a sense of responsibility that professional translators should possess when accepting a translation assignment. They acquired translation skills, learned to overcome difficulties in translating language structures and syntax from English to Arabic. They learnt a lot from the discussion and feedback they received from other participants. They were allowed to participate at their own convenience and everyone was able to see everyone else's contributions. Reading other students' translations of the same text (several translations) was enlightening. They were able to compare, discern strengths and weaknesses in each, and see for themselves how other people translate. The students benefited from the variety of online resources available. They had a chance to improve computer skills related to document manipulation and formatting, differences between, file uploading, participation in forum discussions, and English and Arabic typographical conventions.

The participants found the online learning environment supporting, encouraging and secure to make mistakes and to continue revising their drafts enthusiastically. The online class created a warm-climate between the students and instructor and among the students themselves. They felt free to communicate their needs, talk about their weaknesses and ask questions. For example, some students found the source text very difficult. Some could understand the overall meaning of the text but could not formulate the ideas in Arabic. Some had difficulty expressing their ideas in Arabic. Some students did not receive enough writing practice in English in class.

All of the participants were appreciative of the time and effort the instructor spent in revising their translations and providing them with written feedback. They found her tips very helpful.

However, some students wished there were more students in the online course, to have more interaction and feedback.

Findings of the present study are consistent with findings of prior studies such as the student evaluations of the "Tools for Translators" module at Zurich University of Applied Sciences. Massey (2005) reported students' strong satisfaction with the learner-centered collaborative assignments, tutor-student interaction and peer interaction. Seán Golden, Director of the Center for International and Intercultural Studies at the Universidad Autònoma de Barcelona, reported research findings that

elearning tends to enhance the communicative ability of students who do not normally participate in class. It tends to motivate students in a new and different way because their audience is not the teacher but their fellow students (Pym et al 2003). Student questionnaire and feedback sessions showed that, overall, the course was felt to be extremely useful. The most positive responses concerned its didactic aspects, structural clarity, quality and frequency of moderation, adequacy of content and comprehensiveness, although the large amount of information and resources presented in the course prompted a number of informants to request continued access for reference purposes (Jekat and Massey 2003). However, some findings of Jekat and Massey's study are inconsistent with finding of the present study in that there were some negative findings in Jekat and Massey's study regarding peer-to-peer collaboration. Most groups tended to divide up tasks among members and work individually or in pairs. Three of the seven groups that completed the course resorted to face-to-face communication and simple e-mail collaboration. Asynchronous discussion-board communication was generally felt to be confusing and unsuitable for the sort of complex interactions required by the large-scale collaborative assignments. Although the original overall estimate of the time needed to complete the course proved accurate, too little time was allowed for the collaborative phase.

Instructor's Views

The author found online instruction to be more challenging for her as an instructor, dealing with students whom she never met face-to-face, had little information about their linguistic and training background. The process of providing detailed feedback on each and every translation and revision by each participant was tedious and time consuming. The fact that students could go online anytime and the sense of competition prevalent in the online environment made it difficult for an instructor to give feedback on a daily basis. It was difficult to keep up with the speed and amount of re-submissions on the part of the students, especially when long or literary texts were posted for translation.

Online discussion of a particular text, especially literary ones, took much more time than in-class discussion of the same text due to the absence of face-to-face interaction and discussion, which made it mandatory to provide all the feedback and discussion in writing.

Some of the problems the author experienced in attempting to discuss the online students' translations were similar to those described by Mossop (Pym et al. 2003). In face-to-face discussion, she can encourage students through tone of voice and gestures to defend their translations and choices. There is no need for several online exchanges extending over a long period

of time. It is much less time-consuming for her to give oral comments than to highlight errors, and insert written comments in the revised version of an electronic text. She found it difficult to write comments on issues like coherence, focus and consistency that require reference to previous parts of the text. In a live in-class discussion, she can simply gestures to point out the relations under discussion or mark parts on a transparency or tablet laptop.

Another challenge was the order of texts presented to the students. The author started by posting a literary text which the students found difficult in terms of comprehension and finding Arabic equivalents to certain expressions. It would be better if beginners begin translating short and easy texts then move on to translating more difficult and longer texts. They can begin with children's stories, scientific then literary themes as they become more proficient and experienced.

When selecting a text, it is better if a student translates a text in her major. If a student is political science major, it is better if she translates texts in political science not literature, as she is familiar with political science information. This will help her understand political science texts in English, and she will be better able to formulate ideas in Arabic as she is familiar with the register, style and technical terms of Arabic political science texts. A translator cannot be efficient in translating all kinds of texts. A translator has to focus on an area of his/her choice.

A third challenge was that participants had many linguistic weaknesses in L2 (English) as well as Arabic (L1). They needed to learn advanced English grammatical structures such as emphasis theme and focus, cleft and pseudo-cleft, embedded sentence, complex sentences, reduced clauses, defining and non-defining clauses, anticipatory it and so on, and needed to review certain Arabic grammar rules. They also needed to develop advanced reading comprehension and writing skills.

Conclusion

The online translation course in the present study was an experiment that the author carried out with some volunteer students and free-lance translators from several countries. The course was asynchronous, distance learning course. It proved to be effective and successful in enhancing the students' translation skills and performance. As Jia has (2005) indicated, collaborative learning in a Web-based environment may give as good results as classroom learning or even better.

In order for online translation instruction to be more effective and less tedious for instructors, Pym (2001) suggested the use of heightened interactivity, controlled asynchrony, variable workloads, rationalization of resources, and the creation of a communication-based learning community.

It is equally important to design e-learning courses that are highly interactive and which permit a maximum degree of tutor-learner and learner-learner collaboration. Studies on learner drop-out rates show community-building through asynchronous and synchronous interactivity.

An online forum can become a very lively forum for debate and exchange of information if more visual resources such as videoconferencing and webcams are included in translation pedagogy, and if synchronous online instruction is used instead through videoconferencing, Skype or video and voice chatting to be able to have live discussions of participants' translations. Pym et al (2003) suggested that a combination of face-to-face teaching and web-based teaching is the best mix.

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"PERFORMANCES" IN THE ENGLISH CLASS

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Our daily life is a continuous series of social interactions taking place in different contexts (informal/formal interpersonal, informal/formal social).[1] Any social interaction can be interpreted as a ritual ceremony (a micro-ritual) in the ordinary everyday atmosphere; individuals, as part of these interactions, observe certain rules and a code of behavior imposed by social and cultural norms of society.

Micro-rituals/interpersonal rituals have become, for years, the subject of communication sciences. Classroom life (an example of interpersonal ritual) can be included among social interactions that take place in everyday ritualistic space. The ritual that takes place in the classroom can be viewed from different perspectives:

a) as performance - "a way of communication aesthetically marked, thought of in a special way and performed in front of the audience."[2]

Performances (Goffman, 1973; 1974) in the classroom, within the limits and under the form of small ceremonies (ritual situations), are those in which teachers and students involved in social interactions manifest their presence through ritualized behaviour closely connected to models and habits offered by members of the same community.[3]

b) as action - "something that people do bodily as well as thoughtfully " [4]

In our opinion, what happens in the English class (as well as in any class) is ritual, in the sense of "social action, characteristic/stylistic aspect of the social action"[5]; it is "closely connected with the concept of order, position and social relationship, structured by social phenomena".[6]

c) as communicative form – the ritual "is always a form of saying ."[7] It is constructed of signs (words, gestures, pictures, etc) that have meanings. This aspect is based on the idea that "…it is not just that rituals may have communicative functions, but that if they do not function communicatively, they do not function at all."[8]

The ritual becomes both communication type and aspect of communication: the ceremonial aspect of the social interaction offers participants to it the possibility of conveying information and communicating their own intentions. It is not only words that communicate; body movements that are "cast in particular forms or patterns…have significance, or meaning,"- considers Rothenbuhler.[9]

The rules governing this type of ritual establish relationships, even beyond individuals; these rules are unconsciously observed by participants, authenticity springing from the fact that individuals observe them in a natural way, without thinking too much about them.

d) as socialization device

Trough classroom rituals students socialize themselves; such rituals are training ways through which participants accomplish their goals through a process of adjustment. They give students certainty and help them to become members of a group/of the classroom community.

In what follows we are going to analyse the English class as a ritual, to identify its elements and characteristics and, at the same time, to show to what extent it becomes a ritual of shaping identities.

In the English class, we can identify the main elements of any micro-ritual: context, participants, audience, roles, script and artifacts.

The context is a mixture of formal interpersonal and informal interpersonal. The formal context has influence upon the content, the form and the duration of the interaction that takes place in the classroom. The ritualistic elements occur within this specific type of context, as a feature of the action, "rather than an event separate from it."[10] They can be noticed in personal style, forms of talk and artifacts.

A relaxed atmosphere characterizes the informal context – those moments in which participants talk freely during the interaction dominated by spontaneity.

Both types of context take place within a larger one, an informal one, that of the ordinary life. The representatives of micro-sociology and interactionism talk about an "apparent" informal frame of such interpersonal ritual. This is determined by the obligation for participants of knowing and adapting themselves to a certain code of attitudes and behaviour determined by social and cultural norms. This is in fact the frame within which the respect and self-disclosure of the individual can be identified.

Participants to the class ritual (the teacher and the students) belong to different social statuses and play different social roles. The roles assumed are both interlocutive and interactional and are performed according to the respective ritual. The roles, together with the manner of interpretation, ensure the symbolic character of the ritual. They guarantee order and

significance and help the development of the interpersonal interaction. Both the status and the role of participants have a great importance, as they determine the interaction rules (in what concerns the beginning, development and ending of the respective interactions).

Participants establish a certain type of relationship between/among them; it has an asymmetrical character given by the participants` different status and roles and the asymmetrical position taxemes: the students` positioning at their desks and the teacher's position behind the teacher's desk.

The teacher controls the whole flux of conversation in the classroom. He is the one who (as a rule) selects the next speaker in a direct way (using addressing terms) or in an indirect way (through a frontal question that gives students the possibility to self-select). Students talk only when they are asked questions/invited to do it. Their talking time is quantitatively reduced, in comparison with that of the teacher`s.

Participants also have the possibility of choosing the style and the way of behaviour according to the ritual they are involved in. At the same time, they have the chance of getting or not getting involved in interactions (the case of the students who do not know and thus do not give an answer to the teacher's questions or, who stubbornly refuse to do this).

The ritualized ceremony is based on a script (an unwritten one). On the one hand, the lesson has certain moments/stages that are observed (greetings, warm-up activities, pre-, while- and post- activities); on the other hand, the teacher and students` roles constrain their behaviour and make them act as actors on a stage, actors who know their parts/moves and their sequencing. Sometimes, through their imagination and energy participants can bring alterations/improvisations, to be noticed at the level of content and conversational chaining.

Participants become, in turns, actors or audience. There are moments when the teacher is the main actor (he offers input, offers feedback, evaluates oral or written tasks, and establishes activities or types of groupings) and students are members of the audience. Roles are then changed; students are main actors in front of the teacher and their fellows (the case of individual answers to questions, of students` role-playing, simulating, solving exercises at the blackboard, reading in front of their fellows, etc).

In the classroom one can notice the types of rituals as established by Goffman[11]: access rituals, confirmation rituals and remedial rituals.

Access rituals mark the participants` "entering" the stage. They are the ritualistic greetings at the beginning or the end of each class and are quite stereotyped due to the status and role of the participants.

Once the "access"ritual is established and the relationship put into

evidence by formal or informal markers, the confirmation rituals find their expression in the confirmation of the individual's image and of his social status.

Confirmation rituals are meant to support and help relationships between teacher and students as well as between students. They also help confirmation of the image each participant wants to impose on the others. Such rituals find support in

- active/dialogic listening- the type of listening based on perception, understanding, reverberation, support, positive evaluation and co-operative interpretation. It represents the key to effective communication and is meant to encourage (*Go on..; Keep talking*), to detect implicit meaning (*You say that…; Shall I understand that…Do you mean…?*), to clarify problems/ideas (*For example…?*), to show agreement or interest, to complete the message that was voluntarily or involuntarily left unfinished, to reinforce ideas (through repetition of key-words, reformulations, paraphrase);

-co-operation – determined by the participants` common goal; participants` contributions are adjusted to each other and depend on each other; there exists a sort of agreement (explicit or implicit) for the development of interaction and its efficient ending;

- politeness moves – based on an entire range of strategies and mechanisms apt to regulate the relationship between participants; their rules apply to both the linguistic and nonlinguistic codes;

- conflict solving strategies;

- avoidance strategies (students avoid to do certain things that are liable of spoiling the relationship with the teacher).

Remedial rituals occur in situations in which participants brought an offence and try to sweeten/neutralize its effects (students are those who generally have to resort to such ritualistic behaviour when they bring offence to the teacher or their fellows). They take the form of apologies.

Greetings, compliments, thanks, excuses are all interpreted as rituals because the participant's activities represent his efforts made in order to control and guide the symbolic implications of his acts, when he is in the presence of an object that has a particular value for him.

As any other ritual, the ritual in the classroom works through signs and meaning systems.It is characterized by certain markers:

a) linguistic

The verbal exchange is made up of three moves: the teacher asks a question; the student answers; the teacher evaluates the answer. The possibility of insertions between the adjacency pairs is reduced. The predominant communication functions are[12]

- informative (participants to the verbal exchange communicate

information: the teacher offers input; the students prove knowledge);

- instrumental (the teacher tries to determine students to act/be active/perform certain tasks/respond in some way or another);

- regulatory (of control over the students);

- interactional (of creating different interactions: teacher –student; student-student; student-students);

- linguistic (strictly connected to the teaching/learning activity);

- managerial (the teacher establishes the activities students have to perform as well as interactional patterns, offers guidance, monitors, assesses, disciplines students, evaluates);

- affective (the use of a language that shows a positive attitude towards the students and is meant to encourage and develop in them such traits as autonomy, creativity, imagination).

Progression of the dialogue is made through questions of diverse types or through requests for actions meant to display the students` ability of

- memorizing things (*Name…/List…./Who…?/Where?*);

- analyzing problems or situations (*Analyse…/Identify…/Compare…*);

- evaluating situations/things/qualities (*Evaluate…/Interpret.../Justify…Classify…*).

The speech acts that the teacher uses characterize such functions as:

- to inform (accomplished through assertives);

- to verify (through questions by means of which the teacher checks possible difficulties of reception: *Is it /everything clear? Have you any problem with…;* the way in which students observe time constraints: *Are you ready? Have you finished;* the students` abilities: *Notice…/Look…Can you…?*);

- to offer instructions (through directives: *Write…/Open your books!*);

- to evaluate (through assertives, disjunctive questions or structures (*OK/ Interesting! Good work/Well done*);

- to comment (through assertives or disjunctive questions meant to exemplify/develop an idea/justify/explain/add supplementary information);

- to draw a conclusion (*So…/So far…/Then…*);

- to agree with (through word: *Very well…/Sure…*, facial expression or nodding);

- to reject (through words or expressions of the type: *No, it's not like that.../No, it's not correct*).

b) gestural – body language plays an important place in the classroom life (atmosphere, teaching techniques, types of interactions, turn-taking system).

The nonverbal system becomes a code of semiotic communication. The teacher's gesture have a double function; they are either grammatical

markers (markers for pronouns or verbs referring especially to activities that students have to perform) or accent markers (strictly connected with intonation). Both the teacher's and students` gestures have also a social function in the sense that they express feelings, show belonging to the social group, give force to the act and help development of relationship. Besides this, they express psychological values (joy, satisfaction) or moral values ("it is good/bad").

The mostly used gestures of the teacher are regulators (movements used to ensure control/co-ordinate interaction: nods, raised eye-brows), illustrators (used together with the linguistic code in order to allow students to understand the verbal message in a better and easier way; they emphasize the verbal message, depict spatial relationships, point to objects/individuals, show the size or shape of things/objects the teacher talks about) or affect displays (meant to encourage students).

c) spatial – certain positions that participants have towards each other/one another

d) paraverbal – a certain pitch of voice, for example, can change relationships, can reduce tension, can indicate appreciation, can evaluate, reject answers, encourage or, on the contrary, discourage students

e) temporal – the choice of a certain moment (checking homework, for example, is a stage of the lesson that always follows warm-up activities and not the other way round).

The markers can be identified not only at the level of one encounter, but at the level of multiple/all encounters. They become part of the different types of behaviour participants display:

a) instructional behaviour

- expressing decisions (advice, threats, orders);
- expressing support/help;
- expressing positive or negative evaluation;

b) non-instructional behaviour (all types of behaviour meant to express understanding and reverberation)

c) "intermediary" behaviour

- investigation-likebehaviour (through questions of all types);
- behaviour of directive and co-operative interpretation (meant to show interpretation of the situation I which communication takes place, of the problem discussed, or of the interlocutor).

Each and every interaction becomes the place where individuals must confirm their roles so that their image could be confirmed, "a complex game of reciprocal expectations, within which individuals develop their identity. "[13] The interaction in the classroom, as any other social interaction transforms the individual into an active agent of his own development. It is the place of reciprocal positioning and of the construction and

development of the Self in a double perspective: as image and actor. The Self corresponds to a part of identity developed through the others` image and attitude.

During the interaction individuals manifest their "behavioral line" (a complex set of verbal and nonverbal acts through which they express their points of view regarding their own person, the situation and the other participants). They develop their identity. The image set into motion becomes the individual's "face" (a set of valuable elements the individual constructs about himself in front of the others he interacts with).

Each participant must define the situation whose component part he becomes, must establish his position in front of the others. At the same time, he tries to get a certain identity that has to be confirmed with respect to the others. Each participant tries to put onto stage the own I, involving himself in a process of co-operation for reciprocal confirmation of "the face". He presents his self to the others, tries to do his best in order to be seen, understood, appreciated, trusted and loved. At the same time, he tries to make a good impression by means of his qualities (physical, intellectual, professional).

Identity, as the distinct personality of an individual and the individual's behavior in response to the surrounding environment is shaped and developed only through individual's social trials in the community in which he lives and performs different activities (in our case, the classroom and the English class) . It thus becomes a sense of personal and group belonging.

According to Wenger[14] identity is "layering of events participation and reification by which our experience and its social interpretation inform each other". Central to any social theory of learning, it is visible at the level of different competences that individuals manifest in a group/community. It implies self-awareness, self-reflection, self-evaluation and positioning of self.

The whole atmosphere in the classroom and everyday activities within the same space create an impact on individual's life and personality. They reflect on their learning and shape their identities as members of a classroom community. Within discourse, teacher and students are positioned in particular ways; discourse allows for the creation of positive identities. It is not only individual identity that develops but also group/and within-group identity.

The process of shaping and developing identities bears the stamp of lots of elements/factors characteristic for school life

- the teacher's activity in the classroom (speech acts performed, body language, style chosen);

- the processes of participation and non-participation to the particular

social setting (the classroom life);

-the social skills participants display;

- the acquired communicative abilities.

The two types of teaching that can take place in the classroom also contribute to the development of identities. We are talking about teacher-centred vs. student-centred teaching.

The first type of teaching is based on the principle that the entire responsibility for learning is on the teacher, as the teacher is the one who knows what is best for his/her students. This is why he/she nominates the topic, initiates exchanges, offers instructions, directs the activities in the class, controls all activities (turn-taking, stages of the lesson, transitions, etc.), evaluates students` responses, establishes methods, techniques and materials. His manner of teaching, his presence in the classroom, the explanations he offers, the abilities to plan the lesson as well as the entire classroom management count a lot. Students have little responsibility.

In the case of the latter type of teaching, things are reversed. Students are those who count a lot, as their needs and goals get priority. Emphasis is on their knowledge, feeling and experience. The teacher gives them opportunities to display their autonomy, inventiveness and creativity (aspects brought into discussion by humanistic approaches to teaching a foreign language). They decide content, interactions, length of activities and type of tasks to be performed. The basic verbs their whole activity is based on are: to experiment, to get involved, to decide, to research, to participate actively. The teacher gains respect if he is punctual, is well prepared for the lesson, returns homework/tests promptly, does what he says is going to do, treats students consistently and fairly.[15]

Different strategies, such as role-play, simulation, conversation, debate (that place students in face-to-face interactions) allow them to experience learning using a wide display of identities. All these strategies help the students develop identities and stances through communicative activities.

Developing and understanding of one's own identity contributes directly to understanding and acceptance of the other's abilities/competences as active members of the same group/community. Students get a sense of who they are, of their goals in the teaching/learning process. At the same time, they learn to understand and accept differences (starting from the idea that each student enters interactions with different abilities, goals, needs, practice and personal history). They become aware of their values, the others` values and of the relationships that develop during the classroom interactions in a specific time and space.

Notes

[1] Lardellier, Pascal, *Teoria legăturii ritualice. Antropologie şi comunicare*, Bucureşti,

Editura Tritonic, 2003, p. 23

[2] Rothenbuhler, E.W, *Ritual Communication. From Everyday Conversation to Mediated Ceremony,* London, Sage Publications, 1998, p.7

[3]. Bonta, Elena, "Conversation Rituals", in *The Fellowship of Cultural Rings*, Editura Didactică şi Pedagogică R.A., Bucureşti, 2006, p. 273

[4]. Rothenbuhler, E.W, *op.cit*, p. 8

[5]. *Ibidem*, p.4

[6] *Ibidem,* p.7

[7]. Leach, E.R. "Ritual ", in *International encyclopedia of the social sciences*, vol.13, pp. 520-526, New York, MacMillan, 1968

[8]. Rothenbuhler, E.W, *op.cit*.,p.54

[9]. *Ibidem*, p. 53

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[11]. Goffman, Erving, *La mise en scène de la vie quotidienne*, Paris, Les Editions de Minuit, 1973

[12]. Bonta, Elena, *Conversația-ipostază a interacțiunii verbale*, Bacău, Alma Mater, 2004, p. 66-74

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THE ROLE OF THE PROTOCOL IN TEACHING TRANSLATION SKILLS

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I. Translation, translating, teaching translation skills – concepts and challenges

An analysis of the main terms used in this paper is mandatory, in order to start from a clear-cut image of our investigative tools. *Translation* is the background term, as well as the approach to *translating*, in our case from English into Romanian by Romanian native speakers. The author is a translator with a certain level of expertise in technical translation who has turned into a teacher facing the requirements of teaching translation skills, with a focus on IT connected texts.

As Even-Zohar and Toury (2001) put it, *translation* as an object of modern studies has become a field where hypotheses are exchanged, tested and reshaped; however, 'clearly no completed and ready-for-use translation theory is available'.

Attempts at defining *translation* are numerous. Larson (1958) sees it as 'process based on the theory that it is possible to abstract the meaning of a text from its forms and reproduce that meaning with the very different forms of a second language'. The author completes this image by analytically listing the main steps in effecting a translation, i.e. 'studying the lexicon, grammatical structure, communication situation, and cultural context of the source language text, analyzing it in order to determine its meaning, and then reconstructing this same meaning using the lexicon and grammatical structure which are appropriate in the receptor language and its cultural context'.

Gutt's (1990) opinion on *translation* is somewhat different, when he maintains that 'most kinds of translation can be analyzed as varieties of interpretive use…', so that we can distinguish between:

a - *direct translation*, corresponding to the idea that translation should convey the same meaning as the original. This would require the receptors to 'familiarize themselves with the context envisaged for the original text …';

b – *indirect translation,* involving looser degrees of resemblance, seen as 'the general case'.

What matters in attaining success in translating is, in his view, 'how well it meets the basic criterion for all human communication, which is consistency with the principle of relevance. Thus, the different varieties of translation can be accounted for without recourse to typologies of texts, translations, functions or the like.'

What should an ideal translation look like? – Larson's (1998) answer lists the following features:

- *accurate*: reproducing as exactly as possible the meaning of the source text;
- *natural*: using natural forms of the receptor language in a way that is appropriate to the kind of text being translated;
- *communicative*: expressing all aspects of the meaning in a way that is readily understandable to the intended audience.

The same author tries to analyze in detail the activity of *translating*, emphasizing the degree of subjectiveness, which is a main characteristic of translating: 'two translators may be translating from the same source text and into the same receptor language and yet the results may be very different. There is not one "correct" translation of a given text'. He explains this by providing the main reasons for these differences as including the purpose of the translation, the translation team (human factor) and the linguistic and knowledge profile of the audience receiving the translated text.

In his conception, there seems to be a continuum from literal to idiomatic translations, with *literal translations* closely following the grammatical and lexical forms of the source text language, whereas *idiomatic translations* are concerned with communicating the meaning of the source text using the natural grammatical and lexical items of the receptor language.

Chesterman (1998) synthetically presents the types of translation according to different scientists and different criteria of classification, and awareness of these broad differences may be useful to both translators and potential clients requiring various texts to be translated for various purposes:

- Jakobson's semiotic classification
  –> intralingual, interlingual, intersemiotic
- Binary classifications:
  – free vs. literal
  – covert vs. overt
  – semantic vs. communicative
  – documentary vs. instrumental

• Classification based on text types
–> informative, expressive, operative; multi-medial
• Classification used in the EU: depends on purpose of the translation
– straight (nothing corrected)
– tidied (errors corrected)
– naturalized (adapted to local or international readership)
– reduced (gist translation).

That the discussion about the typology and characteristics of translations is somehow similar to walking on very thin ice is confirmed by the fact that a major work such as the European Commission Directorate-General for Translation - English Style Guide - *A handbook for authors and translators in the European Commission* (2008), meant to ensure a high level of standardization of the translations carried out within that organization, can only provide the linguistic conventions applicable in all contexts, as well as the way the workings of the European Union are expressed and reflected in English.

However, for matters of style, clarity and so on, the only thing that they can do is to advise translators to resort to the study of specialized reference books, such as Cutts' *Guide* (1999) and Williams' *Style: Towards Clarity and Grace* (1995), both encouraging the use of good plain English'.

Given the situation, the only path that we can take in order to *'teach' translation skills* to our students starts by developing their awareness of the kinds of strategies required for translating. In that we follow Chesterman's (1998) classification, of which we mention here the essential ones:

- *syntactic strategies* (literal translation, loan, calque, transposition, unit change, structural change, cohesion change, rhetorical scheme change),
- *semantic strategies* (using a synonym, an antonym, a hyponym, a hyperonym, condensing, expanding, modulation),
- *pragmatical changes* (addition, omission, explicitation, implicitation, domestication, foreignization, formality change, speech act change, transediting).

We maintain that in addition to the above, when it comes to translating texts from IT science for instance, we should also consider the importance of cognitive factors. We should try to learn what is going on in the mind's 'black box' in order to provide the necessary guidance to the 'apprentice' translators.

Among the various ways of penetrating the human mind that conceives a translation, we can list (acc. to Chesterman1998):

– Vary input and check changes in output;
– Measure involvement;

– Study drafts (*interim solutions analysis*);

– Computer studies of time distribution, keystrokes;

– *Think-aloud protocols* (TAPs).

The latter can be seen as a form of *introspective assessment*, having as key results a better understanding of: attention units, non-linear processing, routine vs. non-routine processes, influence of self-image, influence of emotional state and differences between professionals and amateurs.

It is perhaps a little bit redundant to underline why engineering students should be taught technical translations – in order to enable them to participate in and benefit from the international trade in technology. However, we are tempted to quote a few newly appeared professions that require excellent technical translation skills, as listed in the presentation of a *Technical Translation Certificate Program* in the USA (1996): 'professional technical translators, roving international engineers, cross-cultural sales negotiators, transcultural scientists, international intelligence analysts or agents, worldwide business trouble-shooters, intercultural technology transfer specialists, or multi-national corporate executives' – as many arguments for introducing at least a short module of translation skills in the *English for Professional Communication* and *English for Science and Technology* courses we give our Bucharest Polytechnic Computer Science students!

The other side of the coin is valid, too: together with Calderaro (1998), let us analyze the shadowed aspects of this activity, with the image of the translator buried in dictionaries or captive in front of the endless possibilities of the Internet. If the translator does not develop at least an interest, if not real passion for this activity, there are few chances that the quality of their materials could be high. A mechanical approach to the translation class will keep the learner within the realm of mediocrity.

As the author, himself both a passionate experienced translator and a good teacher, put it: '… right from the start, the future translator should acquire the habit of insatiable research and learn to look for any piece of information necessary for his work. These habits and skills will develop only as a result of the professor's guidance, orientation, instruction, and encouragement …'.

In the context we describe here, Computer Science students already have excellent knowledge of the terminology used in the IT texts they are supposed to translate (although the issue of identifying Romanian equivalent terms for the 'untranslatable' computer terminology in English represents another, rather open to argument, topic!). Actually, technical translators do not face a very broad spectrum of difficulties, as Calderaro (1998) shows. However, what they have to do, in addition to searching for the correct equivalents, is to transpose the scientific information contained

in the original by using the right terms, but also select the appropriate mode of expression according to the target audience, which does not always coincide with the source audience. Therefore, they need to know: the subject matter, both the source and target language style, as well as the marked differences between the *lay* vs *specialist* user. All this should stay under the teacher's focus throughout the translation classes.

II. Protocol revisited – general

A very broad understanding of the think aloud protocol is that of a method utilized in order to collect data about the thoughts and feelings of learners while completing a certain task. If in this type of protocol subjects both describe and explain their deeds, thoughts etc., in talk aloud protocol they only describe their actions, which makes it a more objective method, as participants only report how they go about completing a task rather than interpret or justify their options.

In practice, having instructed the students on the main features of this procedure, the researcher merely observes the user while the latter is completing the task. The learners thus provide a considerable amount of information that can illuminate the researcher/teacher as far as the difficulties students encounter throughout the process are concerned. These data are analyzed, as Aly (1994) explains, to obtain a model of the cognitive processes that take place during a problem solving. Toury (1991) shows that the final part of this procedure consists in transcribing the tape-recorded protocols and analyzing the transcripts.

Bernardini (2000) emphasizes that there has been a shift of interest in the study of translation from prescriptive, rather anecdotal attitudes, towards more descriptive, scientific positions, with the good result that empirical research of the process has increased. This was caused by the idea that 'what goes on in the translator's head while … translating (versus what scholars had claimed might go on) is at least as crucial to the understanding of translation as a comparative analysis of the final product, the translated text, in relation to the source text', hence 'the growing importance and use of the protocol, that has become a major instrument in process-oriented translation studies'.

The *think-aloud protocol* (TAP) - underlines Aly (1994) - can be used as both an instructional tool and as an assessment of students at almost any grade level (Coiro, 2001: 1-4). It has been used in the field of language education, for studying reading processes (Gordon and Heins 1995, McApline 2000, and Vislocky 2000), for spelling (Fresch 2001) and for vocabulary instruction (Soria, 2001:77).

Steinkuehler and Derry (2001) provide some important advice for

using this technique as follows:

1. Don't engage in social interaction while the student is thinking aloud. If the student stops verbalizing, say something to the effect of "keep talking". Don't inject yourself into the process with statements such as "tell me what you are thinking".
2. Don't panic when the verbalizations students provide lack coherence. Concurrent verbalizations do not detail how a solution was generalized per se.
3. Don't use think-aloud methods with tasks that require visual imagery.
4. Provide each participant ample practice thinking aloud.
5. Make sure the task has a clear focus and that the participants stay focused on it and not the verbalization.

The same author, Aly (1994), reviews the main studies that put together the think aloud protocol and the study of translation (Kussmaul et al., 2000; Gerloff, 1989; Al-Besbasi, 1992; Matrat, 1992; Rydning, 2000).

Finally, Kulwindr Kaur (2005) makes an interesting comparison between learning a language and translating, supporting the idea […] that translation is actually a language learning process and the translator is always a learner. She relies on the data coming from protocols: thus, all students 'used the direct (memory, cognitive and compensation) and indirect (metacognitive, affective and social) language learning strategies proposed by Oxford (1990) … while translating. Both learning a second language and translation are iterative, cumulative, dichotomous, integrative, interactive, forward and backward-looking mental operations involving revision …'.

III. The working protocol in an experimental translation seminar

The approach to the translation protocol was quite different in our case. Thus, the students were instructed to write down in a very succinct manner both the difficulties encountered while translating and the solutions adopted. This was due to a range of reasons, which I present below in a non-prioritized order:

- there were no material possibilities to record a 25-student group while they were translating and verbalizing their thoughts (lack of observers, technical equipment and so on);
- what mattered as the main rationale for introducing the protocol was less getting to know the kind of problems and difficulties students may come across than trying to sensitize them as far as their own strategies in solving translation problems were concerned, with a more remote purpose of determining them to

include cognitive, affective etc. strategies in their permanent repertoire of language learning and using strategies;

- I needed to triangulate written evidence of the *diary* type and *protocol* type to study the degree to which implementing these types of strategies can be conducive to enhanced success in language learning and using, which was the main point in that experiment;
- hence, it is obvious that the results obtained might seem to have a 'mediated' character, as they were not the objective recordings of the students' thoughts , but the product of the students' capacity to materialize in writing their thinking and other processes while translating. Therefore, in the case I present here the protocol was not a think aloud one, but rather a *jot-down-your- thoughts* sort of document.

The use of the protocol in the teaching of translation skills was part of a larger experiment conducive to the author's research on innovative language learning and using strategies in the teaching of English to engineering students. That was conceived as an optimization action meant to enhance the effectiveness of the teaching/learning of the foreign language in the concrete educational context. The main lines of research were intended to:

a) verify the usefulness of the *strategic competence* concept, by correlating it with the *language learning and using strategies*;
b) see whether there are ways and means of enhancing the effectiveness of the language teaching/learning process by introducing a cycle of activities with the following main purposes: enhancing the degree of awareness and acquisition, in a motivated and participative manner, of the language learning and using strategies by the learners;
c) support the students in identifying, maximizing and refining their own *strategic repertoire* of language learning and using after the conclusion of the course in faculty as well;
d) identify within the current stage in the teaching of English certain pedagogically justified means of developing the students' *communicative competence* by explicitly and systematically including language learning and using strategies within the teaching of the main skills;
e) determine the extent to which by the teaching of a coherent systematic set of language learning and using strategies incorporated in the *English for Science and Technology* module we can positively influence the students' *progress* as to their communicative competence in English, by making full use of the connections established among teaching/evaluation/optimization, thus justifying future pedagogical options;

f) show the need for training of the foreign language university teachers with a view to introducing language learning and using strategies in a professional manner.

The experiment was quite a vast one, with a sample of 200 students and unfolding over one semester of the second year of study. Two EST 14-week modules were conceived by the author and used in the two types of groups, an experimental one, comprising implicitly and explicitly included language learning and using strategies, and an already existing one, of the usual communicative type.

The research instruments used comprised: tests, questionnaires, interviews, diaries, case studies and so on. Certainly, it had the unavoidable limitations such a vast program may have, but on the whole the data processed by means of the SPSS software in analyzing the aspects of interest (viz. success in learning, level of communicative competence in English, progress in the reading and writing skills, awareness raising of the strategic repertoire, students' level of motivation and involvement, assuming responsibility by the students for their own learning process, optimization of the teaching process) confirmed the need for such an analysis. There were statistically significant results with the experimental group and the hypotheses were all confirmed. Therefore, we can consider that there are good chances to contribute to the increase of the students' learning autonomy, when the best and most efficient ways and modalities of introducing strategy-oriented activities are identified and applied.

Two seminars were devoted to technical translations (which, out of the total of 13 represents 15.38% of the total class time).

The experimental module translation seminars are described below:

Seminar A

Objectives: writing technical translations from English into Romanian; discussing typical translation errors; sensitizing students as to the kinds of language learning and using strategies they should use while generating the translated texts.

Seminar description: while translating, students fill in a Word document named Working Protocol* (see below); it is pair work on translating two different texts, avoiding the case of having two adjoining pairs translating the same texts, on computer, with permanent filling in of the protocol. Then the various solutions adopted are discussed and commented upon, as well as the strategies used in order to solve the problems encountered; homework assigned: to continue the translation at home, while filling in the protocol, and attaching both documents to the Student's Portfolio.

*** WORKING PROTOCOL**

Difficulties encountered	*Solutions adopted*
... ...	

Seminar B

Objectives: to raise students' awareness on the main lexical, morphological and syntactic problematic areas encountered in translation, translating an IT text type (e.g. help menu), translating back into English a text that had been initially translated from English in Romanian by a peer and comparing the two texts, discussion based on the protocols on the kind of strategies a person should use in translating, as well as about the particular features of technical translations.

Seminar description: a class discussion is organized based on the translated texts and the protocols, debating on the modalities of solving the problems encountered and the kind of solutions adopted (such as dictionary, inference from the context, asking the teacher, failure to translate etc.).

A range of tasks folows in order to sensitize the learners on the following frequent translation problems: semantic confusion, word order in English, IT terminology translation into Romanian – terms that are taken over as such, terms that are partially translated, terms that are fully translatable and so on.

Finally, the texts initially translated by certain students are distributed to other learners who get the task of translating them back into English. A group then conclude the seminar on *translation* and *translating* connected topics.

The most frequent notes in the working protocols referred to: inference from context – 45 %, dictionary work – 26%, asking the peers/teacher – 28%). These results were confirmed by the students' diaries where in some cases students mentioned and even partially repeated their notes from the working protocols.

Diary comments were generally positive, but there were also several cases in which, although students had been explained that the protocol would be used by the teacher in order to learn more about their difficulties in translating, they resented having to *waste time* or *break the logical flow of their activity in order to write down notes in the protocol*.

These remarks come very much in line with those reported by Krings (1986), who lists among the indicators of problem areas: the subjects' explicit statement of problems; the use of reference books; the underlining of source-language text passages; the semantic analysis of source-language

text items; hesitation phenomena in the search for potential equivalents.

When conclusions have to be drawn from this type of analysis, there are a series of educational implications for enhancing the teaching of translation, which also implies using protocols in collecting data which should help teachers to improve such lessons.

According to Aly (1994), translation instruction … should encourage the students to use frequently the dictionaries; it should deal with various topics, in order to help the learner to get more practice in various text types and styles; it should focus on the development of vocabulary; it should tackle sentences and topics of different levels of difficulty according to the students' abilities; translation instruction should give the opportunity to the students to develop their translation skills according to a systematic order and sequence of materials; it should focus more on practice, with very little theoretical guidelines, with much time spent on the students' practice in translation.

Finally, we maintain that by using a working *protocol* as a strategy meant to develop the IT students' awareness of the kind of problems technical translation may place in front of them, learners can be given support in acquiring technical translation skills in a more efficient manner.

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CASE BRIEFING IN LEGAL ENGLISH CLASS

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Introduction

The need for teaching methodology that equip students with the language skills needed to cope with legal English has been growing considerably over recent years. In a globalized world, lawyers from different legal cultures and language backgrounds are increasingly likely to use the medium of English to communicate professionally. However, the intrinsic problem of the mismatch between national legal systems, on the one hand, and common and civil law systems on the other, has meant that many excellent legal English textbooks are successful because they serve as introductions to English or American law, rather than because they give students a working knowledge of legal language.

Teachers involved in teaching legal English know that the problem is a very real one, which is best expressed in two questions: How can we teach legal language without filling in the background about common law systems? And how can we provide the right amount of background information without turning our course into a course on English or US law, rather than language? Learning and exercising case briefing fills this need, by negotiating the delicate balance between legal content knowledge and language skills. Learning the steps to case briefing, law-students discover a new legal system, learn an impressive amount of legal terms through simple reading, exercise writing techniques, and discuss legal institutions, thus trying to provide right translation or to find equivalent legal institution.

I. Legal writing

There are cases in the legal profession where specialized forms of written communication are required. And there are many others, in which writing is the medium a lawyer must express its analysis of an issue and seek to persuade others on the clients' behalf. Any legal document must be

concise, clear, and conform to the objective standards that have evolved in the legal profession. This objective of the legal studying is difficult to reach. When it becomes a goal in a Legal English class it demands both legal and linguistic background.

There are generally two types of legal writing. The first type requires a balanced analysis of a legal problem or issue. Examples of the first type are inter-office memoranda and letters to clients. To be effective in this form of writing, the lawyer must be sensitive to the needs, level of interest and background of the parties to whom it is addressed.

The second type of legal writing is persuasive. Examples of this type are appellate briefs and negotiation letters written on a client's behalf. The lawyer must persuade his or her audience without provoking a hostile response through disrespect or by wasting the recipient's time with unnecessary information. In presenting documents to a court or administrative agency he or she must conform to the required document style.

The drafting of legal documents, such as contracts and wills, is yet another type of legal writing. Guides are available to aid a lawyer in preparing the documents but a unique application of the "form" to the facts of the situation is often required. Poor drafting can lead to unnecessary litigation and otherwise injure the interests of a client.

The legal profession has its own unique system of citation. While it serves to provide the experienced reader with enough information to evaluate and retrieve the cited authorities, it may, at first, seem daunting to the lay reader. Court rules generally specify the citation format required of all memoranda or briefs filed with the court. These rules have not kept up with the changing technology of legal research. Within recent years, online and disk-based law collections have become primary research tools for many lawyers and judges. Because of these changes, there has been growing pressure on those ultimately responsible for citation norms, namely the courts.

II. Case briefing

A "case" starts out as a lawsuit between two or more people. The parties to the lawsuit have a trial and one party wins while the other loses. Next, the party who lost the case decides to file an appeal. An appeal is a request that a "higher court" examine what was done in the trial court to make sure that no legal errors were committed. The appeals courts usually make their decisions in writing. The written decision is called an opinion. It is called an opinion because it reflects the opinion of the justices as to what the law is for that particular factual situation. Since the decision is in writing, it is saved. Opinions have been saved and catalogued for hundreds

of years. It is the fundamental theory of the entire Anglo-Saxon legal system that once a case is decided, if there should ever be another case in the future that is the same as the decided case, that future case should be decided exactly the same way as the first case was decided. This is called *stare decisis.* In other words, the opinion effectively establishes a rule that is to be followed in the future for all similar cases. Moreover, since all of the opinions over the past hundreds of years have been saved, they can always be located and used as a basis to resolve a current legal dispute.

The Common Law is the result of the collection of hundreds of years of written decisions by appellate courts in England before the United States was formed. The United States adopted the Common Law and it is the basis of our legal system. Thus, a case, for purposes of this definition, is a written appellate court opinion which reviews the decision of a lower court and is, accordingly, now the "Law of the Land" according to the doctrine of *stare decisis*. In Anglo-Saxon law school, a student will study the aforementioned collection of appellate court opinions because they are "the law."

A "brief" is nothing more than a summary of an appellate court opinion. A brief is a written synopsis or digest. It is just a concise rendering or explanation of the opinion. The primary job of a law student is to brief (i.e., summarize) cases.

III. Title and Citation

The **title** of the case shows who is opposing whom. The name of the person who initiated legal action in that particular court will always appear first.

IV. Facts of the Case

A good student brief will include a summary of the pertinent facts and legal points raised in the case. It will show the nature of the litigation, who sued whom, based on what occurrences, and what happened in the lower courts. Thus the student combines the juridical information with writing techniques, going through the new vocabulary. Pre-reading is the first step to take, it consists of *reading the case name; read the first paragraph or two to understand who the parties are and the issue that brought them to court;* (most cases will give the procedural history, parties and issues in the first two paragraphs.)*; reading the first sentence of each paragraph;* (by reading every topic sentence of every paragraph the student should get an idea of the structure and general direction that the case is going towards.)*; reading the last paragraph or two so that the student could understand the holding and disposition of the case.*

The fact section of a good student brief will include the following elements:

1. A one-sentence description of the nature of the case, to serve as an introduction.
2. A statement of the relevant law, with quotation marks or underlining to draw attention to the key words or phrases that are in dispute.
3. A summary of the complaint (in a civil case) or the indictment (in a criminal case) plus relevant evidence and arguments presented in court to explain who did what to whom and why the case was thought to involve illegal conduct.
4. A summary of actions taken by the lower courts, for example: defendantconvicted; conviction upheld by appellate court; Supreme Court granted certiorari.

Following all the steps, the law-school student learn specific terms of Common law with their content, the implied parties in a common-law trial, enriches his or her vocabulary in context, makes analogy with his or her legal system, and, eventually learn to synthesize and put in one's own word a piece of information.

A well-written opinion starts out by telling us the legal issue up-front. Language that the court uses might include such phrases as:

"*The question before us is whether....*"

"*This case was brought before us to decide whether...*"

Appellate courts hear a case on appeal when there has been a problem with the case in the court below. The problem could be an error that the court made or the appellate court may want to take the case because the lower courts in its jurisdiction are not consistent in their decisions. By taking this case, it gives the higher court a chance to give guidance and establish precedent for the lower courts to follow. If students are having trouble spotting the issue, then they shall be recommended to try to key into the word "whether", it often signals what the turning point for a case.

V. Decisions

The decision, or holding, is the court's answer to a question presented to it for answer by the parties involved or raised by the court itself in its own reading of the case. There are narrow procedural holdings, for example, "case reversed and remanded," broader substantive holdings which deal with the interpretation of the Constitution, statutes, or judicial doctrines.

VI. Reasoning

The reasoning, or rationale, is the chain of argument which led the judges in either a majority or a dissenting opinion to rule as they did. This should be outlined point by point in numbered sentences or paragraphs.

VII. Analysis

Here the student should evaluate the significance of the case, its relationship to other cases, its place in history, and what is shows about the Court, its members, its decision-making processes, or the impact it has on litigants, government, or society. It is here that the implicit assumptions and values of the Justices should be probed, the "rightness" of the decision debated, and the logic of the reasoning considered.

Briefing is the first step in learning how to outline. The brief should distill a case down to its elements, which allows the student to immediately understand the principal legal issues at a glance.

Case briefs are an important tool, but it's also important to keep briefs in perspective. Students shall labor intensively over case briefs by creating forms and making sure that the wording is perfect.

A brief, in our opinion, is the perfect tool that helps the student accomplish three things – build comprehension, answer questions in class and complete an outline – combining and balancing both legal and linguistic knowledge. Rewriting the material leads to better *comprehension*, creates a cheat sheet for *questions in class*, and serves as a starting point for *outlining*. First, it helps tremendously in getting the student to *think like a lawyer*. Afterwards, he or she *remembers the rules* better by restating it in his or her own words. It is very helpful for acquiring new vocabulary and memorizing the material by rewriting and reorganizing it.

It also helps in managing to budget time and length of the brief. When it is done in legal studies purposes there is no use spending time on stylistic niceties that don't accomplish of the three goals mentioned above, but, when used in Legal English class, spending double time, due to language use, becomes an aim. There are plenty of web resources of briefings; we start with simple ones in class, working in pairs – one make the research the other organize the main stages of the briefing – than the same techniques is applied on indigene jurisprudence, thus the lawyer to be learn to speak about his or her legal system in English. Guiding questions that a teacher may ask in a class when analyzing a case are:

Who are the parties?
What are the facts of the case?
Which court is this?
How did this case get to this court?
How did the lower court rule?

Who is the appellant (or respondent)?
What is in dispute?
What question does the court have to answer?
What is the common law rule? What is the policy behind the rule?
Does the court fashion a new rule of law?
What is the holding of the case?

This activity used in class helps the student to develop his or her legal writing skills. A student shall use short sentences; remember that the first sentence in each paragraph should be the topic sentence. The passive voice should be avoided like the plague. It should be avoided not because it is boring, but because in the passive voice verbs are used without a subject. *"A crime had been committed"* lacks the punch of *"The butler did it."* Worse, the temptation to use the passive voice often means in court of law that the lawyer is not sure who did it. Giving in to the temptation to obfuscate that you don't know this important fact is bad. Pronouns have a special role, there is always a danger that that reader may not be clear about what *"it"* refers to or who *"he"* was.

Conclusions

The case briefing is important for first year law students regarding the way in which law students learn in the context of case analysis. As new students approach case analysis for the first time, the case brief is an effective "schema" to provide students with a framework within which to analyze a legal opinion. Case briefing does more than simply allow students to pull out the holding of a case; it helps beginning law students organize a legal opinion's analytical framework accurately and efficiently.

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UNE APPROCHE DIDACTIQUE SUR LE REGISTRE FAMILIER – TYPES D'ACTIVITES EN CLASSE DE FLE

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Les utilisateurs d'une même langue ne communiquent pas de la même façon et cela dépend de son niveau d'étude ou du cadre dans lequel a lieu la communication. Le français connaît quatre registres de langue[1] :

- le registre vulgaire : Ex. : « Hé ! radine ! »
- le registre familier : Ex. : « Allez ! amène-toi ! »
- le registre courant : Ex. : « Viens, s'il te plaît ! »
- le registre soutenu : Ex. : « Approchez, s'il vous plaît ! »

La même personne peut utiliser plusieurs registres selon ses interlocuteurs. Un jeune s'exprimera différemment devant un adulte qu'il ne connaît pas, devant un ami intime ou devant un public. L'utilisation d'un certain registre de langue dépend du contexte socioculturel, de l'âge des interlocuteurs et des liens d'entre eux ou du but que l'on fixe à la communication. Ainsi, avec une personne inconnue il utilise le registre courant qui est le registre le plus utilisé et qui correspond aux situations les plus fréquentes. Le vocabulaire de ce registre contient des mots courants, compris par tous et les phrases respectent les règles de la grammaire. Avec un ami intime il peut utiliser le registre familier (ou même vulgaire) qui est employé surtout à l'oral. Le vocabulaire est réduit, comporte des déformations, des abréviations, des mots populaires, une prononciation rapide, moins soignée, des tournures grammaticales incorrectes. Devant un public, dans une conférence, le registre parlé est celui soutenu, qui est employé dans un milieu social cultivé. Le vocabulaire contient des mots rares et des figures de style recherchées, la construction grammaticale est impeccable.

Les différences entre les quatre registres de langue sont observable dans :

- la phonétique : la façon dont est prononcé l'énoncé et dont il est

[1] Eterstein C., Lesot A. – *Pratique du français*, Ed. Hatier, Paris, 1986, p. 91

transcrit à l'écrit :

familier	**courant**	**soutenu**
T'as pt'ê'ben raison	*Tu as pt'être bien raison*	*Tu as peut-être bien raison*

- le lexique :

familier	**courant**	**soutenu**
J'en ai marre de ce mioche	*J'en ai assez de cet enfant*	*Cet enfant a le don de m'énerver*

- la syntaxe : les constructions es phrases et l'ordre des mots

familier	**courant**	**soutenu**
Et Paul, il est pas venu ?	*Est-ce que Paul n'est pas venu ?*	*Paul n'est-il pas encore venu ?*

- la morphologie : l'imparfait du subjonctif est réservé au registre soutenu tandis que les autres registres utilisent le subjonctif présent ou même le présent de l'indicatif (le registre familier) ou l'utilisation du passé composé ou du plus-que-parfait au lieu du passé simple:

familier	**courant**	**soutenu**
Mais les cris approchaient comme s'ils étaient venus de la banlieue vers le centre. (André Malraux, *La condition humaine,* 2e partie, Gallimard 1933)	*Mais les cris approchaient comme s'ils étaient venus de la banlieue vers le centre.* (André Malraux, *La condition humaine,* 2e partie, Gallimard 1933)	*Mais les cris approchaient comme s'ils fussent venus de la banlieue vers le centre.* (André Malraux, *La condition humaine,* 2e partie, Gallimard 1933)

- la stylistique : apparaît dans les œuvres littéraires et l'utilisation des différents registres est déterminée par le style de l'écrivain ou par le genre littéraire.

Ex. : « *Pardine ! je n'ai pas peur. Cet été, j'aurai faim, cet hiver, j'aurai froid. Sont-ils farces, ces bêtes d'hommes, de croire qu'ils font peur à une fille ! De quoi ? Peur ?Ah ! ouiche, joliment.* » (Victor Hugo, *Les misérables*, Partie VII, ch. 4)

Il y a quelques marques grammaticales qui font le registre familier spécial comme, par exemple, l'omission du *ne* dans la phrase négative :

Ex. : *On est pas plus avancés. Je peux quand même pas te laisser tout seul. J'en ai pas d'autre. Je fume pas.*

L'omission du pronom *il* en début des propositions : Ex. : *Y a personne. Y a quelqu'un à la porte.*

La contraction du pronom devant un verbe à initiale vocalique : Ex. : *T'as vu ce gars ?, T'es une canaille !*

La régularisation du verbe ALLER à la 1ère personne du singulier selon le modèle de la 2e et de la 3e personne : Ex. : *Je vas te le dire.*

La prononciation est plus rapide et, de plus, marquée par l'élision de nombreux *e* muets : Ex. : C*hérie, qu'est-ce tu f'ras ç't aprém ?*

Les manuels de la nouvelle didactique traitent ce sujet dans une leçon pour chaque année. Les élèves sont très réceptifs aux activités centrées sur les exercices qui ont comme sujet le registre familier. Ils s'intéressent à la manière de parler des jeunes français et ils veulent apprendre un grand nombre de mots. Comme se travail traite le sujet du registre familier du point de vue didactique, je vais mentionner quelques types d'exercices réalisés dans la classe de FLE.

Lisez le texte et relevez les mots qui appartiennent au registre familier :

« T'as vu ton look ?

La liberté de s'habiller comme on veut s'obtient parfois au prix d'un affrontement coriace : « T'as vu_comment t'es habillé, tu ne trouveras jamais ta copine ! », a lancé, un jour, sa mère à Jean. Mais il résiste consciencieusement : « Si j'écoutais ma mère, je serais toujours en polo bleu et pantalon à pinces. Bref, je serais toujours un bébé »… Il va même repêcher dans la poubelle le jean « bien crade, avec plein d'inscriptions », que sa mère a jeté en douce. Il y tient trop. Parce que, pour lui, les fringues, ça vit, c'est plein de souvenirs. Jean a tout testé dans l'éventail de la mode masculine ; il a tout essayé… Il vient de trouver son style à soi. C'est-à-dire d'avoir le courage de dire « je suis moi » et trouver sa place petit à petit, dans le monde des adultes : « J'ai compris qu'il y a des limites, qu'il y a des choses que les autres n'acceptent pas. Je suis plus posé. »[2]

C'est une conversation assez banale, entre un adolescent et sa mère, mais intéressante pour ceux qui apprennent le français, du point de vue du vocabulaire : *les fringues, crade, copine.* Un exercice utile serait de réécrire le texte dans le registre courant.

Un autre exercice serait d'observer dans un texte qui appartient au registre familier, les éléments de vocabulaire ou de syntaxe qui le caractérisent :

« Je te dis tout ça, reprend l'homme, parce que c'est la vraie vérité. S'il y a un mot de trop, que je ne bouge pas d'ici. Des fois, comme ça, dans la vie, ça vous empêche d 'être blousé. Parce que, avec des êtres comme ça, plus on est bon, plus on est vite ratiboisé, alors, pas vrai, il vaut mieux qu'on sache. Parce que, une fois qu'on est prévenu, il faut qu'on soit

[2] Groza, D., belabed, G.- *Limba franceza L2*, Ed. Corint, 2006

andouille pour qu'on se laisse faire. Pas vrai ? » (Jean Giono, *Regain*, Grasset, 1930).[3]

Du point de vue du vocabulaire il y a quelques mots qui font partie du registre familier : *blousé, ratiboisé, andouille*. Blousé est un adjectif qui vient du verbe *blouser* qui signifie *tromper quelqu'un*. L'expression *être dans la blouse* signifie *être trompé*. *Ratiboisé*, adjectif qui vient du verbe *ratiboiser* - ruiner quelqu'un au jeu de cartes. *Andouille*, dans la langue populaire, signifie *sot, stupide*. Le pronom démonstratif *ça* est utilisé fréquemment dans la langue parlée au lieu de *cela*. En ce qui concerne les phrases elles sont incomplètes, dans le registre courant ou soutenu on donnerait plus d'information. Par exemple, la phrase « D*es fois, comme ça, dans la vie, ça vous empêche d'être blousé* » pourrait prendre une autre forme dans le registre courant : « Dans la vie, c*ela pourrait, par hasard, vous empêcher d'être trompé* ».

Un autre exercice serait d'associer les mots :

L'ami	Le pote
L'enfant	Le bouffe
Le travail	Le fric
Les vêtements	La clope
Le policier	Le toubib
Les aliments	Le flic
L'argent	Le gosse
Le médecin	Le boulot
La cigarette	Les fringues

Réécrire les phrases familières dans un registre courant : Quand c'est qu'il arrive ? J 'avais la trouille de monter dans cette bagnole. J'ai pas dit que t'étais mioche. T'as trop bossé ! Qu'est-ce t'en dis ? Ça boume ?

De chacune des quatre colonnes suivantes choisissez le mot convenable pour faire des phrases qui appartiennent à chaque registre :

L'enfant	hurlait	comme un fou
Le gosse	criait	comme un sot
Le gamin	gueulait	comme un piqué

Complétez le texte suivant avec les mots du registre familier : *mordu, esquinter, paumer, la frousse, le tuyau :*

[3] Eterstein C., Lesot A. – *Pratique du français*, Ed. Hatier, Paris, 1986, p. 92

Tu as reçu …….. ? il aime bien c'tte fille, il est ……d'elle. Il parle trop, il m'…… V'la le flic, j'ai une ……. La bete de lui, il a …….la figure à son frère.

Utilisez les mots suivants dans des phrases selon les registres courant, familier et soutenu : livre, bouquin ; fortune, veine, chance ; type, mec, homme.

Groupez les mots suivants selon les trois registres de langue : apathique, paresseux, cossard ; fringué, élégant, chic, B.C.B.G. (bon chic bon genre) ; ennuyeux, barbant, embêtant, assommant.

Groupez les mots des deux colonnes :

Tuer	Chouraver
Détester	Spolier
Exclure	Clamser
Priver	Occire
Mourir	Abhorrer
voler	obstraciser

Remplacez les mots du registre familier par des mots du registre courant : « *Hier, avec mes potes, on s'est bien marré. Luc avait proposé d'aller bouffer au restaurant, alors nous avons pris sa bagnole. Elle est vachement vieille, sa caisse, mais il dit toujours qu'il s'en fout.* »[4]

De nos jours il est intéressant de décoder les paroles des internautes. Dans les deux colonnes groupez les mots selon le sens :

@2m1	C'est ça
HT	C'était
AprM	Cadeau
B1	D'accord
Kdo	C'est pas grave
C Ca	À demain
C pa grave	Bien
7	Fête
CT	Cet, cette
6né	Cinéma
Dak	Après-midi
fet	acheter

[4] http://www.generation5.fr/produits/pdf/fiche_n_12.pdf

Réalisez un dialogue entre deux adolescents qui parlent sur l'internet, en utilisant le langage des ados : Gnial, bjr, auj, mek, 1posibl, 1viT, koi29, stp.

Les exercices ci-dessus peuvent très bien être utilisés dans les classes des français pour enrichir le vocabulaire des élèves. Ils n'apprendront seulement des mots qui appartiennent au registre familier mais aussi des mots courants qu'ils ne connaissaient pas. De plus, le sujet est attractif pour les jeunes. L'enseignement du registre familier peut constituer le sujet d'un cours optionnel de français. Les adolescents s'intéressent beaucoup à la façon de parler des ados français.

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EXPLORING THE MATRIX OF THE ENGLISH TENSES IN CLASSROOM

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The human brain is a marvelous and extremely complex 'creation'. It is due to this key organ that human beings have the great capacity of understanding and assimilating numerous and extremely diverse information during their whole life and, to a large extent, in their childhood when the factors of inhibition are virtually non-existent.

In my case the best illustration of what has been stated above was my son's ability to speak Chinese, Taiwanese and English and to easily switch from one language to another without being specifically asked to do so when he was only three and a half years old. How was that possible? There is one explanation: none of the three languages he was using had printed its patterns onto his brain. He was acting in speaking like newly born babies born in water, i.e. using his instincts. This is not the case with most adults who have their brains formatted and molded to the specific patterns of their native language and who consider the learning a foreign language "mission impossible".

In what concerns English as a foreign language, many students, whether children or adults, consider that the most difficult task they have to cope with is firstly understanding, and then correctly using tenses, both in their indefinite and continuous aspects. Such a task may be greatly facilitated if teachers find appropriate ways of highlighting the obvious symmetry existing in the tense system in English and of making their students aware of this symmetry. In order to accomplish their mission, i.e. to demonstrate the existence of a matrix of tenses in English, teachers should compile accessible tables and schemes illustrating the ways in which main verbs symmetrically combine with auxiliary verbs to form tenses in English. Moreover, after having proved and extensively practiced the formal tense symmetry, teachers should also focus on the symmetry existing in the grammatical and semantic uses of tenses. Such an approach may prove extremely useful as it may ensure longer term results both in young and adult learners of English.

At this point, mention should be made that the term *matrix* does not characterize the English language exclusively. There is a *matrix* in any language and this is due to the fact that human beings tend to set their brains so as to identify and memorize useful linguistic patterns in order to make minimum efforts in communication. Once speakers identify patterns, they can go to the next level of abstraction, that which implies establishing points of symmetry between the various assimilated patterns. The result of this complex process will be a *linguistic matrix* easily accessible and ready to be used when necessary. Speakers using the matrix of a language will understand the way that language functions considerably faster and better than those ignoring it. However, I can firmly state that identification and productive use of the linguistic matrix is always more accessible in the native language than in a foreign language.

Before becoming a teacher I had been constantly trying to find ways of learning English more easily. I found a solution to my problem only years later, after becoming a teacher of English and while trying to explain the English tenses to my Taiwanese students. I realized then that I had to identify the common core of these tenses, i.e. their matrix, in order to help my students understand and appropriately use them. Once identified this *matrix*, I realized how useful it could prove in my teaching English to both children and adults. However, this idea that there is a *matrix* of the English tenses which may prove extremely useful in teaching this language to non-native speakers is not new.

Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1991: 111) use the term *matrix* in explaining English tenses and suggesting solutions meant to facilitate their learning by non-native speakers. In their opinion, future tenses may be compared to a "wild card" in the matrix of the English tenses due to the fact that *there is no future tense that appears as a marking on the verb in English*. The (modal) auxiliary verb *will* is a mark of future tenses which cannot be isolated from the elements which mark the categories of *tense* and *aspect* in the present and in the past:

> For the future line in our matrix, we use the modal *will*, since there is no future tense that appears as a marking on the verb in English. […] The future adheres to the same patterns as the present and the past in terms of its combination of aspect markers. […]
>
> Thus, one of the reasons for displaying the tense-aspect combinations in this manner is to demonstrate that the 12 "tenses" are simply combinations of tense and aspect. […] This is why we say that by viewing the tenses and aspect system, the learning burden is lessened. (Murcia and Freeman, 1999: 111)

Considering the same two verb categories, i.e. *tense* and *aspect*, Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (Murcia and Freeman, 1999: 111) compare the matrix of the English tenses with the map of a territory which is unequally covered by the various tense-aspect combinations:

> If we think of this *matrix* as a map of a territory that the tense-aspect system of English covers, we can make some further observations that have pedagogical import. For example, the traffic on our map is focused more in the northwest (including the present progressive) than in other areas. […] The southeast […] receives very little traffic. (Murcia and Freeman, 1999: 111)

This comparison reminds me of my "building of the tenses", which I once drew for my nine year-old students in Taiwan:

Present Simple S + V1	*Past Simple* S + V2	*Future Simple* S + will + V1
Present Continuous S + to be1 + V-ing	*Past Continuous* S + to be2 + V-ing	*Future Continuous* S + will + be + V-ing
Present Perfect Simple S + to have1+ V3	*Past Perfect Simple* S + to have2 + V3	*Future Perfect Simple* S + will + have + V3
Present Perfect Continuous S + to have1 + to be3 + V-ing	*Past Perfect Continuous* S + to have2 + to be3 + V-ing	*Future Perfect Continuous* S + will + have + been + V-ing

Table 1. Tenses as a building

I explained to them that the last floor had been reserved to simple tenses which needed to see further because they "covered" very wide areas of meaning. Then I guided them to notice that the tenses living on the same floor shared the same characteristics: *S + V* for the simple tenses (*will* was used to make the distinction between Present and Future), *S + to be + V-ing* for the Continuous tenses (*will* for Future), *S +to have + V3* for the Simple Perfect tenses and *S + to have + to be + V-ing* for the Perfect Continuous ones. Last, but not least, I asked them to notice that Present tenses are always accompanied by the 1st form of the verb whereas Past tenses share their rooms with the 2nd form of the verb (the main verb for the indefinite aspect, and the corresponding auxiliary verbs for the continuous and perfective aspect, respectively).

The map suggested by Murcia and Freeman is not different from my "building of the tenses". In their view, the northwest of the map is intensely visited while the southeast receives *little traffic* or, as I have personally noticed, is not even known. As far as my building is concerned, I explain to my students that it is a special building with its entrance door on the fourth floor, where Present Simple has its flat. After entering the building, visitors may continue their journey moving from one room to another, but, as expected, the most visited rooms will be those which are closer to the entrance door. The rooms placed farther from the entrance and closer to the ground will obviously receive less of the visitors' attention. Transferring this image to my "building of tenses", it becomes obvious that the tenses on the ground floor and those more distant from the entrance door will be less attractive to speakers, the perfect continuous aspect of the future tense being almost inexistent to them. This is the reality traceable in the native speakers of English who choose to ignore the less accessible tenses of this building in favour of the most accessible ones, but also in the non – native speakers of this language.

Present Simple S + V1	*Past Simple* S + V2	*Future Simple* S + will + V1
Present Continuous S + to be1 + V-ing	*Past Continuous* S + to be2 + V-ing	*Future Continuous* S + will + be + V-ing
Present Perfect Simple S + to have1 + V3	*Past Perfect Simple* S + to have2 + V3	*Future Perfect Simple* S + will + have + V3
Present Perfect Continuous S + to have1+to be3	*Past Perfect Continuous* S + to have2+to be3 + V-ing	*Future Perfect Continuous* S + will+have+been + V-

Table 2. Tenses as a building. The most visited rooms

If students are told that the darker the room, the less visited it is, they will understand immediately that the brightest rooms, i.e. those of Present Simple Tense, Present Continuous Tense, Past Simple Tense and Past Continuous Tense are the most visited ones. If we were to transfer this creative description of tenses in the linguistic reality, the conclusion would be that the more visited a room, the more frequently used the tense living in it. Hence the necessity and usefulness that present and past tenses should be shown special attention in classroom.

Although the similarities existing between the English tenses are obvious in the previously suggested "building of tenses", it is necessary

and useful that these tenses should be discussed, analyzed and practiced separately. Many similarities may be identified by comparing the formal and semantic aspects of present and past tenses:

Present Simple I **eat**. I don't **eat**. Do you **eat**? **S + V1**	*Past Simple* I **ate**. I **did**n't eat. **Did** you eat? **S + V2**
Present Continuous **S + to be1 + V-ing** I **am** eating. I **am** not eating. **Are** you eating?	*Past Continuous* **S + to be2 + V-ing** I **was** eating. I **was** not eating. **Were** you eating?

Table 3. Vertical and horizontal similarities between the English tenses

Analyzing the above table horizontally, students should be able to notice that Present and Past tenses use the same "ingredients", i.e. *S + V* for the simple aspect and *S + to be + V-ing* for the continuous aspect. Moreover, being reminded of the three forms that English verbs have, students will easily notice that the tenses placed on the same column (vertical analysis) share the same form of the main verb and of the auxiliary verb, respectively. To be more specific, Present Tenses will require the 1st form of the verb (main or auxiliary), whereas Past Tenses will make use of the 2nd form of the verb (main or auxiliary).

As far as the teaching of the English tenses is concerned, the fact should be added that this task implies explaining and raising the students' awareness with respect to two "golden rules" in English: 1) the verb categories of *tense* and *aspect* will be marked only once in the form of the verb, giving the name of the tense used, and 2) the first verb to come in the sentence will always be first served. In our case, students should know that the auxiliary verbs will be used only once and will combine with a specific form of the main verb in order to make up the predicate and that auxiliary verbs which come first in the form of the verb, will take over all the information regarding the verb categories, the main verb making reference only to the action or state of affairs described. At this point, I find it useful to mention that this approach to the English tenses from the perspective of the vertical and horizontal similarities has proved incredibly useful and fruitful with students of all ages, none of them failing to understand how tenses are formed and used in English.

Furthermore, mention should be made that once students are made aware of the symmetry characterizing the English Tense System, the teacher can provide them the matrix of the English tenses (see Figure 4 below) and demonstrate them that knowing how to form Present Perfect

Continuous, for example, means knowing how to form Past Perfect Continuous and Future Perfect Continuous as well:

Figure 4

The matrix of the English tenses suggested above will highlight that, besides sharing names, English tenses share symmetrical formulae. This means that once students learn the Present Tenses, they may easily assimilate the Past and Future tenses as well. At that point their only task will be to adapt the grammatical formulae in keeping with the tense chosen (see Figure 5):

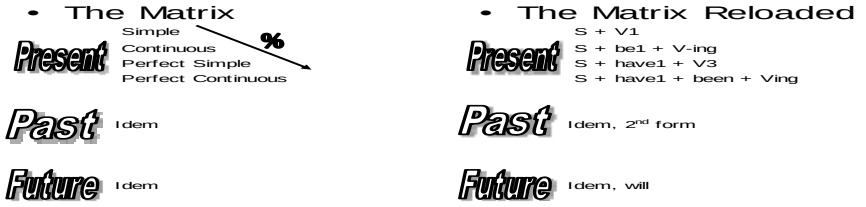

Figure 5

The arrows going down the *aspect* scale from the Simple, through the Continuous and Perfect Simple, up to the Perfect Continuous illustrate which forms of the three tenses, i.e. Present, Past and Future, are more frequently used.

Although the symmetry of the English Tense-Aspect System has been clearly demonstrated, things could be pushed a little further by including all the "ingredients" used to build tenses in a table, along with the name of the tenses and by attributing each tense a number from 1 to 4 according to its aspect (simple, continuous, perfect simple and perfect continuous respectively). The result may be seen in Table 6 below:

The verbs / The tenses		Main verb				Auxiliary verbs									
						TO DO			TO BE			TO HAVE			WILL
		V1	V2	V3	V ing	do	did	done	be	was/were	been	have	had	had	
PRESENT	SIMPLE 1	1				1									
	CONTINUOUS 2				2				2						
	PERFECT SIMPLE 3			3								3			
	PERFECT CONTINUOUS 4				4						4	4			
PAST	SIMPLE 1		1				1								
	CONTINUOUS 2				2					2					
	PERFECT SIMPLE 3			3									3		
	PERFECT CONTINUOUS 4				4						4		4		
FUTURE	SIMPLE 1	1													1
	CONTINUOUS 2				2				2						2
	PERFECT SIMPLE 3			3								3			3
	PERFECT CONTINUOUS 4				4						4	4			4

Table 6. Tense Matrix – The Beginnings

If the numbers with the same value are connected by using straight lines, symmetrical triangles and parallelograms will be obtained, depending on the elements connected (the main verbs with the same number or the main and auxiliary verbs with the same number). This symmetry is not a surprise and the fact that future tenses seem to be isolated in the "southeastern" corner of the table is by no means abnormal, given the shared view that future tenses don't have a specific form in English, their only mark being the auxiliary verb *will*. Should students be asked to form, for example, the Present Perfect Continuous of a certain verb, all they would have to do, would be to use all the fours placed on the same line with the already mentioned tense, from right to left. Such a procedure is valid for every tense in the table and connecting the numbers as suggested above will convince even the least self-confident learners of English that learning the tenses is a piece of cake.

In an attempt to imitate the binary code used by computers, I changed the twos into zeros, the threes into tens and the fours into elevens. Afterwards, I colored the numbers differently and I connected them by using straight lines of the same colour. The fact that certain linguists consider the future not to be a real tense, encouraged me to connect the marker of this tense, i.e. the auxiliary verb **will** to the rest of the shapes by

interrupted lines so as to suggest that its place would have been there. Moreover, I considered it useful to add representative adverbs for each tense and the result was Table 7 below which has already proved its usefulness in the case of my adult students of English.

The verbs / The tenses		Main verb				Auxiliaries		When?
		V1	V2	V3	V-ing		WILL will	
PRESENT	SIMPLE 1	1						usually, every day, twice a week, etc.
	CONTINUOUS 0				0			now, right now, at this moment, etc.
	PERFECT SIMPLE 11			11				just, yet, already, for, since, recently, this week, etc.
	PERFECT CONTINUOUS 10				10			just, yet, already, for, since, recently, this week, etc.
PAST	SIMPLE 1		1					yesterday, last week, three weeks ago etc.
	CONTINUOUS 0				0			this time yesterday, yesterday at five, etc.
	PERFECT SIMPLE 11			11				just, already, for, since, etc.
	PERFECT CONTINUOUS 10				10			just, already, for, since, etc.
FUTURE	SIMPLE 1	1						1 tomorrow, next week etc.
	CONTINUOUS 0				0			0 this time tomorrow, tomorrow at five, etc.
	PERFECT SIMPLE 11			11				11 tomorrow by 5 pm, by the time…, etc.
	PERFECT CONTINUOUS 10				10			10 tomorrow by 5 pm, by the time…, etc.

Table 7

Although the tables and figures above are likely to facilitate the teachers' task in classroom, they will solve the students' problem only partially, i.e. they will clarify the formal aspects of the English tenses, without providing any information about their grammatical use and semantic features. As a consequence, the teaching of the English tenses will be considered effective and efficient only if the teaching of the tense formulae is doubled by the teaching their uses and meanings.

However, since there is an obvious symmetry in the uses and meanings of the different tenses as well, teachers may use this symmetry to their benefit. Once grammatical and semantic parallels between the English tenses are made explicit, students may create a new *matrix* and use it in order to explain the uses and meanings of any tense, the only variable in this situation remaining the time reference.

The symmetry in the uses and meanings of the English tenses springs from the fact that each of the three aspects in English, i.e. the simple/indefinite, the continuous/ progressive and the perfect/perfective respectively, marks specific types of actions. For instance, the simple/indefinite aspect is used when making reference to *repeated actions*, *to permanent situations* or to *state of affairs*, the continuous/progressive aspect is favoured if special interest is shown in the *development of the action* or in its durative nature, whereas the perfect/ perfective aspect will combine with the other two, making reference to a past situation or event. Since the *continuous* and the *perfective* aspects have specific markers i.e. the auxiliary verbs *to be* and *to have*, respectively, this means that whenever these markers are present in the form of the verb, reference will be made to one of the types of actions expressed by means of the respective aspect.

ASPECT / **TENSE**	**SIMPLE/ INDEFINITE**	**CONTINUOUS/ PROGRESSIVE**	**PERFECT/ PERFECTIVE**
		progress + duration	***reference to a past event/situation***
	-	**aux. verb TO BE**	**aux. verb TO HAVE**
PRESENT	repeated actions, permanent situations, state of affairs in the present	actions in progress at present, temporary situations in the present, modality	actions started in the **past** and continuing up to the present
PAST	repeated actions, permanent situations , state of affairs in the past	actions in progress in the past, temporary situations in the past, modality	actions started in the **past** and continuing up to another past moment
FUTURE	repeated actions, permanent situations , state of affairs in the future	actions in progress in the future, temporary situations in the future, modality	actions which will be completed before another future moment or future action

Table 8. Aspectual markers in English

In addition to this, mention should be made that there are adverbs which migrate from one tense to another, preserving their semantic content and making reference to the same type of actions. For example, the use of *adverbs of frequency and indefinite time* will point to the *repeated nature* of the action and to the neutral attitude on the part of the speaker if the simple aspect of a tense is used and to *modality* combined with repeatedness, if priority is given to the progressive aspect of the same tense.

TENSE / **ASPECT**	**SIMPLE/ INDEFINITE** **neutral**	**CONTINUOUS/ PROGRESSIVE** **modality** (irritation, annoyance, admiration, surprise, etc.)
PRESENT present repeated action	*He always **buys** expensive books.*	*He **is** always **buying** expensive books.*
PAST action repeated in the past	*He always **bought** expensive books when he was a student.*	*He **was** always **buying** expensive books when he was a student.*
FUTURE action which will be repeated in the future	*He **will** always **buy** expensive books when he has the chance to.*	*He **will** always **be buying** expensive books when he has the chance to.*
PRESENT PERFECT action repeated from a given moment in the past up to the present	*He **has** always **bought** expensive books.*	*He **has** always **been buying** expensive books.*
PAST PERFECT action repeated from a given moment in the past up to another past moment	*He **had** always **bought** expensive books.*	*He **had** always **been buying** expensive books before getting his salary.*
FUTURE PERFECT a future repeated action completed before another future action/moment	*He **will** always **have bought** the newspaper by the time I got home*	*He **will** always **have been buying** the newspaper by the time I got home.*

Table 9. Tense and aspect: neutrality vs. modality

To conclude, I should say that the tables and figures above will hardly make students speak English over night, but they definitely will help them to fully understand the characteristics and specific behaviour of the English tenses. The extensive practice will ensure the transfer of all this information from the students' short-term to their long-term memory.

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ENGLISH IN SCHOOL VERSUS ENGLISH IN MASS-MEDIA

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As a language, English became one of the most important tools in communication worldwide. Wherever you turn your head, everyone knows a little bit of English – simple sentences that help them in different situations. Even if you find yourself in China, India or Egypt you can use it in order to be understood by the local natives.

Romanian educational circles decided to introduce this tool of communication in kindergartens, schools and universities. After almost 20 years of teaching English, a problem has occurred: English in media or slang English became very popular among Romanian students who started mispronouncing words and skipping letters.

Besides some famous TV channels like BBC and CNN where 'announcers read the news in 'cut-glass accents' like that of the Queen today'(Russel, 2001:168), other channels – especially those for teens use all sort of abbreviations and four – letter words that are put together in a sentence without any meaning.

So, creative writers, TV and radio script-writers are allowed to break the rules whenever they want to on the grounds that it is sometimes necessary to do something wrong in order to get it right.

'Copy-writers can happily use incomplete sentences in advertisements, serious novelists can use unconventional sentence structure, punctuation, and spelling to get the effect they want' (Russel, 2001:170) In the TV world, the English used is accurate and academic except the one used in some talk-shows where the main focus is on stories of human interest: sex and violence, suffering and deviancy told in simple words and uncomplicated sentence structures.

Probably, all languages own distinct registers from formal and informal occasions. Speech and writing can be more or less formal depending on the context, however, formal registers are more often associated with writing, while informal ones with speech. In nowadays, this rule does not apply to tabloids or magazines that use a new, high-tech, abbreviated English.

Language mistakes can be made either by English learners or by native speakers who can lose their way in complicated structures like: 'Teenage drivers are twice as likely to have accidents than the average' (Swan, 2005:62). In order to identify an incorrect use of English language, there are several indexes like:

1. The use of vernacular or slang forms (for example: Ann's dumped her bloke')
2. Native speakers' mistakes (for example, 'Seasons Greeting's')
3. The use of dialect forms (for example, 'I don't know nothing')
4. Foreign learners' mistakes (for example, 'I not understand')
5. Alternative usage: forms used by some standards speakers and avoided by others (for example, 'different to'; 'less people')

Texts from newspapers headlines or small ads are known for their lack of ordinary grammatical signaling devices such as articles or auxiliaries.

This new English language is a challenge for us the teachers because we should explain its rules to our students. For example, if we were to speak of the language that newspapers use, we can say that an English or American article can confuse students due to their 'short, concrete, mainly Anglo-Saxon words' which are used for three main reasons:

'i. they take up less space, having fewer syllables;

ii. they have a forceful quality that makes an immediate impact'. (Russel, 2001:170)

Nicholas Bagnall calls words like: probe –used for in-depth investigation, slash for making sweeping or random cuts or slam for criticizing severely, buzzwords because they convey the impression of urgent and exciting activity.

In red-top tabloids we often see colloquial English language and sometimes even slang put together when reporting serious social and political problems. Here is an example of such an uncommon mixture:

'**BOOZE IS RUIN OF BRITAIN**

Heavy boozing is taking a whopping 3.3 pounds billion toll on Britain.

Sizzled employees unable to work properly- or who go sick- cost INDUSTRY 2.8 billion pounds. Treating alcohol-related illnesses leaves the NHS with a 200 million pounds hangover. Meanwhile the bill for CRIME and ROAD ACCIDENTS fuelled by drink is 257 million pounds, Alcohol Concern revealed yesterday.'(11 May 2000)

The text above shows the difficultness of English used in every day life by American or English writers. That is why, Romanian teachers should focus our attention on introducing these type of texts during our English classes – recommended not only for the advanced students but also for the intermediate ones. If we take together the buzzwords as well as the slang, we will develop a misguided impression of poor writing in tabloids and magazines, yet their editorials often offer clearer expressions of complex issues than writers in broadsheets can achieve.

Another problem, which a foreign learner of English can encounter when he reads mass- media, is represented by the headlines. Rhetorical devices and alliteration are often used in order to catch our attention; here are some examples:

'Time Bafta Time' (this is how a Sun journalist reports Bafta awards)

'Time to Roam while The Fiddle Burns' (an article written on the visit of a famous violinist in Italy)

'The Joys of Fourplay' (about new recordings by a famous chamber quartet) (Russel, 2001:171)

Therefore, the examples shown here can become a problem in translating and understanding them both for students and people that work like interpreters. They must be studied, especially, by those who want to work daily with English.

It is a fact that English language users are continually innovating in the interest of greater expressiveness. As the battle with time is our worst enemy, we the speakers and readers try to read between the lines, to find the main idea in few lines – meaning we are in a permanent pursuit for economy of effort.

The result is that language forms are gradually eroded; "but this is counterbalanced by hearers'need for explicitness, so that losses in one area are compensated for in another"

A Small Introduction in the Grammar of Newspaper Writing

Except tabloids that make some concessions, all newspaper reports are written in good grammatical English. Some British newspapers and journals have made a habit in writing public letters or articles in which they complain about the falling standards, the pernicious influence of American usage or the drastic decline in literacy.

Tabloids break these rules by: using shorter sentences with fewer dependent clauses, using simple concrete nouns instead of abstract ones and they prefer to write one-sentence paragraph; a concrete example of this type of writing comes from one of the most important English tabloid – "The Daily Mirror":

'Drive'em down

Buying a new car in Britain is the biggest rip-off of all.

Motorists pay thousands over the price charged in other European countries. Now the Government is to force the cost down. This is not just a victory for buyers of new cars but for all consumers'. (2000)

As you can notice from this small excerpt, we are dealing with a new type of English where words are put in a different order or they are missing, in order to make the article concise, to save space, to make it easy to read but also to add pace. Introducing such texts in classes where English is taught becomes an essential thing that teachers should keep in mind.

Getting students to become familiar to such texts, helps them improve their stylistic analyze and vocabulary. If we take another look at the title – "Drive'em down' we notice an abbreviation – the correct form of this sentence would have been 'Drive them down'.

In 1935, Strauman called this method of shorting words – block language and in 1967, Halliday called it economic language- the kind of abbreviated writing we find in advertisements, diaries, lyrics from songs or poems and even in recipes.

" Block or economy language concentrates on words that carry the heaviest charge of meaning, leaving out the function words that carry little information-such as definite and indefinite articles (the and a) and finite forms of the verb to be, like is and are. The result is a kind of 'telegraphese' that can be understood only by reading the article beneath it" (Russel, 2001:175)

Besides tabloids, another category of written mass-media is represented by magazines. British and American magazines address themselves, mostly to women and young teenager. "Cosmo Girls' or "YM" employ in their articles a different vocabulary – "The editorial combination we've established here at Cosmo- a mix of knowledge, inspiration and encouragement – is a powerful one." (Russel, 2001:178)

In order to get closer to the reader's needs, editorialists form these magazines started using Black-American Street-talk in their articles. I read in many of these magazines, current teen slang like the famous replacements: 'I wanted this for u' or 'I will call u2'. In these cases, a simple letter and one digit replaces two words in order to make the sentence shorter and easy to recognize by teens.

As the 21st century is dedicated to rapid communication, it is known that most of us use the internet or any kind of electronic media to speak with others.

Romanian and English teens have already formed a coded language in which – abbreviations like: **np, tnx, UR A** stand for: **no problem, thank**

you or **you are wonderful!** Such abbreviations are seen as cooler, pacier and more fun the writing the entire word. Such text messages that are written either on e-mails, Yahoo messenger or SMS, have been the main topic in an article by Richard Benson in 'The Guardian'. His question was: 'Will text messages have any lasting effect on the language?'

"Cd vwls dspr frm th lng'ge altgthr? Or could we end up with a two-tier language system, in which everyday English wd b abbreviated,+cd include members +l8rs 2thr?...It's impossible to know what effect e-mails will have on us, but it is clear that they have instigated the biggest boom in 'letter' writing for 200 years….Mike Short, the chairman of the GSM Association's Mobile Data Taskforce, belives that text-messanging is part of an epoch-making shift in they ay we communicate with one another, a move from a verbal to a visual culture". (2000)

So, the answer is clear: English as any other language is in a continuing process of changing: it introduces new words; it omits others to facilitate communication and to spare time. The fact that English mass-media has spread in Romania through movies, famous talk-shows or magazines has become a reality. Most of Romanian magazines are concepts borrowed from America and England – having the same attitude and sometimes the same articles that are translated in Romanian.

It has happened to me, on several occasions, to pass near a cinema and read a bad Romanian translation made on the title of a certain American or English movie; not to mention the fact that TV-shows have a bad translation sometimes they do not even reproduce the main idea. After presenting all these extern factors that can damage our English – even if we are teachers or simply students, I think it is necessary to introduce materials from mass-media in our classes; to help and guide the English learner to acquire the right terms and to use them properly.

The theme that I tried to develop in my article is very complex and vast, and as I have said before it does not affect only British: "Many Japanese are disturbed at the way younger people speak, dropping syllables or adding redundant politeness markers in seeming defiance of the rules of grammar, and filling the language with distorted English loanwords". (Swan, 2005:60)

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FROM REFLECTION-BASED L T E TO COMPETENCE-BASED L T E

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I. The interrelationship of language and education

We start our approach form the following statement: language and education have been and will remain interrelated. Here language will be understood as an instrument, or taking into account its communicative function and leaving aside its possible linguistic introspective means of analysis.

Through this perspective, language is first a means of education and, secondly, language can become a goal of education.

Language teacher education studies have been mostly concerned with language teacher knowledge and learning. There are, nevertheless, two sorts of contextual factors that may highlight the domain and , on the other hand, may contain what *language teacher education* (LTE) can achieve. These factors are social, political and cultural ones, and provision factors. They can have implications for the persons or the institutions whose responsibility is the provision of language teacher education and the ideology undergoing such an approach.

Nobody can deny the diversity of the contexts in which L T E is produced. Throughout Europe or in USA, from Spain and Portugal to Hungary, Romania or Greece, we can conclude that the "situation in teacher training reflects the historical development of an education system, the socioeconomic system and the political character of a country"[1]. Such a multiple reality may go from a policy of descentralization (Spain, mid 1980s), to a strictly legal framework (Portugal and the law for continuing education within normal working hours) to the emphasis in initial teacher (ITE) on the teacher as a teacher, rather than as a subject specialist.

In the "developed world", L T E is overtaken by a new political and managerial ideology. Educational policy-making has become more political and the state intervention leads to the standardized delivery of the teaching product and to a prioritization of measurable evidence-based outcomes

over processes. The main idea worth retaining is that L T E has to confront conditions which are peculiar to the context in which it is located.As a result of globalization or Europeanization, L T E is ”engaged” in diverse directions: the promotion of international English and other major languages, the maintenance and revitalization of lesser used heritage or community education. This brings together first language and additional language development within a framework of international mobility and citizenship.

II. The framework of L T E

The framework of L T E provision can include stages, sectors, types and modes of provision. The stages display pre-service education (as part of the first degree or as a post-graduate certificate), on-the-job education or in-service education (also called continuing professional development). The sectors highlight the following levels: pre-school, primary, secondary, higher education, vocational or informal education.

The status of L T E provision can also vary. It can be an accredited professional award for a particular country (teaching Spanish/Romanian in England/France etc), a general qualification for TESOL or a non-award-bearing. The length of a provision or its format can be different: from 1-day seminars, conferences, short courses, undergraduate programmes higher degrees, to post-graduate and PhD programmes. The modes of provision can send to direct contact, open learning, blended learning (including web-based components). The providers belong to all the levels implided in the education system: higher education – language departments or language centres, teachers as mentors or tutors and trainers, national or local authorities, accredited agencies, private consultants, international organizers – British Council or the American Cultural Centre, professional associations (like RoMeAs - The Romanian Association of Mentors), etc. Last but not least, the receivers belong to several categories: students preparing to become teachers, teachers themselves, teacher educators, members of the schoolmanagement. teams, regional and national decision-makers.

III. The range of L T E

The range of L T E provision is also varied. It can support language teachers in respect of:

- new curricula and examinations;
- proficiency in language;
- pedagogy, assessment and evolution;

- additional language development, cognitive, emotional and personal development;
- language structure;
- intercultural development;
- ICT;
- special needs, differentiation, early language learning;
- teachers as researchers or as users of research;

Teacher knowledge and teacher learning has followed different phases. We can describe them diachronically and labelling them at the same time: a first phase, pre-1980, when the notion of "mental activity" was absent and the content and methodology of a teacher's task existed in two separate domains (university course and broad methodologies of language teaching). In the years 1980-90, teachers came to be seen as decision-makers on a behavioral process-product basis. The last ten years developed a change as language teachers were understood as seeking to bring content and methodology together.

Teaching is no longer viewed as art [2]. Principles, processes, skills, behaviours, techniques, strategies, beliefs and attitudes represent a huge impact on teaching and learning.

A wider and deeper knowledge base, drawing on interdisciplinary connections is looked for. If we are trying to identify, models, we can accept the specialists' conclusion about three models in language teaching: the craft model, the theory-practice model, and the reflective model. What different authors admit [3] is the shift from *product-oriented* theories to *process-oriented* theories of learning, teaching and teacher learning. There is also a change of focus from *methods* to *methodology*. When turning towards the construction of teaching, there are two levels:a micro-level where the key question is the *class time* and how decisions are made there and a macro-level where the *object* is multilayered: trends in textbooks, notions of change and innovation.

VI. On functional objectives

Specified competences, relating to the practice of teaching, represent a checklist of specific functional objectives.

Competences can reflect an open and de-mytifying process of negotiating and sharing what teachers should know and be able to do. Nevertheless, good language teaching is a highly complex activity which cannot be reduced to a checklist of observable components.

Before deciding when a student teacher teaches competently, we believe that decision-making factors (in Romania as well) should work on,

at least, three aspects:

- what can be provided or absorbed in one course or programme;
- many L T E programmes are not self-contained but form only a part of a broader programme leading to an initial qualification;
- there is a multiple ownership of L T E which may pose problems for L T E specialists;

Among provision factors, the international and national agencies can help internationalizing L T E by bringing together networks of language teacher educators from different member states.A good examplecould be what the European Commission for Education and Culture and The Council Of Europe initiated and obtained through exchange of new ideas, joint projects, a healthy degree of critical detachment from policies and pressures.

The European Language Inspectors Network (ELIN) – organized in 2005 – has been a very active body and contributed to the debate on the European documents launched at the European level – the *European Profile for Language Teacher Education* – and the *European Portofolio for Student Teachers of Languages*.

The British Council had and still has a very important role in language teacher education. In Romania, the project started in 1991 and ended in 1999, covered three directions: the coming into being of a certified body of inspectors as assessors and evaluators, textbook writers and regional trainers/mentors.

Besides official bodies and institutions (in Romania, the Ministry of Education together with the National Centre for Training in Preuniversity Education, assumes the coordination of LTE through accredited courses either at a national level or at a regional one in the Teachers' Houses), teachers can benefit from academic or professional journals or the expertise of the professional associations that are key agents in ensuring reflection and practice (RATE, RoAsMe).

V. The language teacher's role

Teachers should be viewed as reflective professionals, framing and re-framing problems and testing their interpretations and solutions.

Reflection-on-action (before and after a teaching episode) and *reflection-in-action* (teachers drawing spontaneously on the implicit craft) should be taken into account when delivering ITC courses on classroom pedagogy.

Even if there are voices against reflection in I T E, there are some other ones that plead for a type of curriculum in which *concrete teaching*

experiences and *time for reflection* are closely integrated. L T E can bring teachers into action research and from there into critical and participatory investigations. From novice to expert teacher, to be effective means to get technical competence of proven principles and shape the classroom practice to fit certain theories. Teachers can also construct their own theories and progress matching their teaching to the demands of their learners and the particular classroom situations they can face.

From such a perspective, teacher development is as evolutionary process of self-discovery and self-renewal. L T E should help teachers to explore and refine their belief systems.What really influences them is a number of factors like:

- their own experience;
- established practice;
- personality factors;
- principles derived from an approach or method;

The promotion of *teacher as learner* and the improvement of the professional practice can be achieved through 3 sorts of implications:

- connecting personal knowledge to empirical knowledge;
- practising reflection in response to the classroom practice;
- encouraging supportive community(peer assessment, implying parents in school projects connected to language programmes);

VI. The role of language teacher education

L T E has a mediating role between applied linguistics research and the professional practice of language teaching and language policy development. Five L T E roles are suggested:

- a critical attitude to different theories;
- a tolerant attitude towards new ideas;
- the evaluator's attitude through peer assistance and trained leadership;
- an exploratory attitude;
- a continuity attitude;

Asking teachers to reflect on specific instances on their teaching can be an excellent stimulus for interpreting situations multidimensionally, for thinking flexibly and acting with purpose.

Notes

[1] quoted from Byram, M., 1994, p.7
[2] for details, see Schulz, R.A., 2000
[3] for details, see Crandall, J., 2000

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ICT SKILLS FOR TRANSLATORS

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Introduction – The impact of information and communication technologies (ICTSs)

The introduction and large scale diffusion of information and communication technologies have generated huge economic and social transformations. ICTs, due to their ability to codify information, enable knowledge to be processed and transmitted instantly all over the world.

They are used to meet a multitude of needs; they sustain economic growth and offer great potential for the world economy and society. The ongoing development of information and communication technologies is driving radical changes in our lives, with the permanent creation of new products and services, new ways of managing business, new markets and investment opportunities, new social and cultural expressions, and new channels for people to interact on a global scale. The advent of new technologies has had a particularly significant impact in the area of translation.

I. ICTs applied in the translator's work

The fast development of information and communication technologies has changed the nature of almost all professions. One of the professions where ICTs have brought about important innovations and changes is that of translator. Nowadays, computer literacy and the use of information and communication technologies have also become essential for translators as well. "*The changed, technology-driven workflow has affected several aspects of the translation process: communication with clients and colleagues, the speed and amount of information that can be retrieved, and the way texts are created and handled*." (Fišer, 2008)

The use of the new technologies improves the professional standard of the translator, through the acquisition of skills like the use of translation memories, databases, word processors and the internet. Good knowledge and an extensive use of ICT are considered increasingly important for the translator's work. Király, for example, states that "*more generalized specializations such as research skills, terminology management and familiarity with electronic information sources will be of greater use*" (Király, 1995). Reaserchers in the field have drawn attention to the need for skills such as terminography and terminology management, domain-specific translation of truly specialised documents, and professional work practises in academic translation courses.

The tools which can be used in the translation process are various: word processor, dictionaries on electronic support, translation memories, terminological databases etc. Translators have to learn how to take advantage of these modern tools and advanced software and thus to improve their ICT skills, in the everyday professional competition. In what follows a few details will be given on some of these helpful tools for translators.

II. Word processing

The term word processing was coined by IBM in the late 1960s. Word processing was one of the earliest applications for the personal computer. A word processor, known also as document preparation system, is a computer application used for the production (composition, editing, formatting) of any kind of printable material.

The various and advanced functions offered by state-of-the-art word processors have become indispensable in the translator's work, when composing, editing, and formatting a text. Functions such as grammar and spell check, auto text and autocorrect, track changes, set language, translation screen tip, font, style, editing, paragraph choices, page layout, and many others, are of real help when creating and formatting a text. It is true, many of the tasks a translator has to solve concern more page formats or graphics, visual aspects rather than conceptual aspects, thus leaving aside the quality of the translation as a final product. Some of the basic skills required for a translator involve opening and saving documents, setting margins, page size, line spacing, indenting, header, page numbering, footnote, page break, styles, spell and grammar checking, and word count. Moreover, it is a truism that a professional of the 21st century could no longer work without common tools such as the personal computer and word processor with its many available features.

III. Spreadsheets

Spreadsheets are generally used to organize data, memory banks, and organizational tasks. They are easy to update, sort and retrieve information. In the case of a large database, when only parts of it are needed to be shared, these parts can be exported into spreadsheets and passed along. There is no limit to the cell size, which can be useful when there is a large amount of information to be entered.

IV. Translation memory

Translation memory (TM) is a type of database used in software programs which are designed to help translators in their task. Some of these programs, using translation memories, are known as translation memory managers (TMM). Translation memories are usually used in connection with a computer assisted translation tool, word processing program, terminology management systems, and electronic dictionaries.

A translation memory is made up of text segments in the source language and their translations into one or more target languages. These segments can be blocks, paragraphs, sentences, or phrases. Individual words are handled by terminology bases and are not included in the translation memory system.

V. Terminological databases

When translating technical texts, a lot of problems concerning terminology may appear. Therefore, tools such as terminological databases or termbanks have been developed, in the effort to support the translator in finding the most suitable translation.

Termbanks can be described as a type of machine-readable dictionary, containing extensive information on technical terms. The advantages of a terminological database lie in the possibilities offered to the user, to create, maintain, and retrieve specialized vocabulary. It also allows the user to look up for definitions, foreign language equivalents, and background information. Databases are easy to manipulate, accessible to different users, and they can store enormous amounts of information.

VI. The internet

One of the most versatile tools for the translator is the Internet. The Internet provides various information resources and services, such as electronic mail, online chat, file transfer and file sharing, inter-linked

documents and other resources of the World Wide Web. The Internet is a "network of networks" that consists of millions of private and public, academic, business, and government networks of local to global scope. The Internet allows computer users to connect to other computers even from remote areas, to share knowledge and information.

The Internet offers to its users many advantages: information can be accessed in seconds, it is available worldwide, the information is usually up-to-date, and it is easy to use. A lot of research can be done with the help of constantly updated websites and encyclopedias in different languages. Online dictionaries, terminological databases, encyclopedias, and new software are accessible on line. There are also forums and specialized pages for translators to look for information or to interact with a wide array of experts. The internet is a dynamic environment, it is constantly growing, changing, improving, and updating.

Conclusions

Translation is a complex and challenging process which aims at grasping the meaning of a text in the source language and reproducing that meaning with the various forms of a second language. Besides knowledge about language use and linguistics, comprehension of cultural contexts and communication situation, and research skills, ICT skills, as word processing, the correct use of the tools for terminology management and computer-assisted translation, are necessary in order to achieve quality and accuracy in the translator's final product. Therefore, translators need to acquire and develop their ICT skills in parallel with their professional translation skills. They are increasingly expected to increase their ICT skills as translation companies and freelancers strove for productivity gain. Consequently, ICT skills are essential for professional translators who want to meet the demands of today's translation market.

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LA DISSERTATION LITTERAIRE COMME OBJET D'ENSEIGNEMENT A L'UNIVERSITE

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Quelques définitions de la dissertation

Dans son livre « Rhétorique et enseignement » (Figures II), Gérard Genette[1] se demandait par quoi a été remplacé, à l'intérieur de l'institution scolaire, un code d'expression si important comme la rhétorique. On dit que c'est l'histoire littéraire qui s'est substituée à la rhétorique mais celle–ci existe encore en ce qui concerne l'apprentissage technique de l'écriture, dans l'exercice de la dissertation littéraire.

Il faut cependant remarquer une évolution dans le sens que si la rhétorique antique mettait l'accent sur *l'inventio (*la recherche des idées par recension des lieux mnémotechniques) et la rhétorique classique sur *l'élocutio* (travail du style par l'étude des figures), la rhétorique actuelle donne la priorité à *la dispositio* ou *compositio* et à un certain effacement du style orné qui devient sobre et élégant.

Le Petit Robert[2], définit la dissertation comme le développement, le plus souvent écrit, portant sur un point de doctrine, sur une question savante ou 2) comme discours, essai, étude, mémoire, traité – exercice écrit que doivent rédiger les élèves des grandes classes des lycées et ceux des facultés de lettres sur des sujets littéraires, philosophiques, historiques.

La dissertation littéraire, malgré les attaques dont elle a fait l'objet, occupe encore une place très importante dans l'enseignement supérieur. La dissertation littéraire est, sans doute, un exercice difficile qui exige des connaissances et des capacités variées et qui correspond bien en termes de formation aux objectifs de l'enseignement du français langue étrangère.

Selon Littré, disserter veut dire « discourir méthodiquement »[3] et Wikipedia[4] précise : « La dissertation est l'étude méthodique et progressive

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[1] Genette, Gérard, *Rhétorique et enseignement*, Figures II, Le Seuil, Points, 1969, p. 23-42
[2] Le Petit Robert, 1991, p.555
[3] http://www.cati.paris4.sorbonne.fr/cours/agregation/conseils/dissertation.php
[4] http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dissertation#La_dissertation_dans_le_secondaire

des diverses dimensions d'une question donnée. À partir d'une première définition de l'intérêt de cette question et de la formulation du ou des problèmes qui s'y trouvent impliqués, l'élève développe une analyse suivie et cohérente correspondant à ces problèmes, analyse nourrie d'exemples et mobilisant avec le discernement nécessaire les connaissances et les instruments conceptuels à sa disposition. »

La dissertation incite donc à s'interroger méthodiquement sur le sens d'un sujet qui, par-delà son apparence « bien connue » pose un problème à la pensée. Une bonne dissertation doit[5] : balayer les sens du sujet afin de faire ressortir la contradiction (dans l'introduction) ; la traiter minutieusement en examinant sa thèse et son antithèse (dans le développement) afin de lui proposer une synthèse et de conclure. Qu'elle soit littéraire, historique, économique ou philosophique, une dissertation a une structure stable. Elle reste composée de trois grands moments : l'introduction (avec exposition du sujet, contextualisation et déroulement d'une problématique), d'un développement (en deux ou trois parties) et d'une conclusion.

I. Spécificité de la dissertation littéraire

La dissertation est en tout premier lieu discussion et argumentation. C'est un exercice contraint, soumis à des règles strictes. Elle est aussi exercice de démonstration : on part d'un point donné et on aboutit à un autre en passant par des affirmations qu'il faut soutenir à l'aide d'exemples et de citations. Passer d'une idée à une autre signifie passer par un processus de réflexion au cours duquel l'étudiant pose une *problématique* et la développe suivant un *plan personnel, repère des termes et des citations essentiels pour la question posée tout en réfléchissant sur le sujet.*

Toute cette démarche exige esprit de synthèse, fidélité au texte, cadrage rigoureux du sujet, originalité de la réflexion. Par l'exercice de la dissertation les enseignants évaluent, premièrement, la capacité de réflexion et d'analyse et la connaissance de l'œuvre étudiée ; deuxièmement, ils évaluent la capacité à exposer clairement et de manière organisée, progressive, sa pensée ; troisièmement, on évalue la culture et la sensibilité personnelles.

Par conséquent, nous pouvons considérer que la dissertation littéraire, à laquelle sont entraînés nos étudiants aux cours de travaux dirigés, correspond pleinement aux trois savoirs fondamentaux : la maîtrise de la langue et de la communication (il s'agit de l'aspect rhétorique de la dissertation et de la prise en compte d'un lecteur qu'il faut convaincre),

[5] http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dissertation#La_dissertation_dans_le_secondaire

l'exercice du jugement critique et la constitution d'une culture commune[6].

La dissertation littéraire, au-delà de sa forme scolaire, offre une situation de communication où son destinateur (auteur) doit convaincre, à l'aide d'un raisonnement rigoureux et clair, son destinataire ; celui-ci est d'ailleurs confondu avec « l'auditoire universel » puisque l'acceptation ou le rejet de la thèse présentée par le devoir ne dépend que de la pertinence et de l'enchaînement des arguments proposés. On retrouve, donc, là, une fonction didactique : exposer un problème esthétique, organiser une réflexion et l'illustrer.

Les praticiens de l'enseignement savent bien que l'évaluation d'une activité accomplie par l'apprenant est en même temps un message adressé à celui-ci, message qui va engager tel ou tel comportement de sa part. Cette dimension relationnelle de l'évaluation est inévitable; mais elle peut être vue en outre comme profitable, comme un moteur dans la dynamique d'apprentissage de l'élève.

La dissertation littéraire telle qu'elle est pratiquée actuellement apparaît comme l'une des épreuves les plus délicates aux examens. Tout d'abord la dissertation est si redoutable pour nos étudiants à cause de la multiplicité des critères d'évaluation et deuxièmement à cause de la subjectivité de l'appréciation du correcteur.

Les critères suivis dans l'activité d'évaluation d'une dissertation portent sur la langue et l'expression, la compréhension, la méthode et la présentation.

1) l'évaluation en langue vérifie l'orthographe, la qualité du vocabulaire et des expressions ;

2) l'évaluation de la compréhension du sujet est directement liée à l'ouverture d'esprit, à la culture littéraire du candidat, qui lui permet de situer le sujet dans un contexte littéraire, de dégager son intérêt pour le travail sur le texte ;

3) la méthode fait appel à la connaissance des règles du jeu : organiser le devoir, construire une argumentation, conduire une démonstration, etc.

Un bon étudiant qui maîtrise l'art de la dissertation est celui qui sait joindre éloquence, culture et méthode.

Nous constatons que les performances de nos étudiants à ce sujet, sont en contradiction avec l'évolution des techniques d'enseignement. L'enseignement des méthodes, plus particulièrement en ce qui concerne l'argumentation, ne cesse de s'affirmer soutenue par de nombreux manuels d'un très haut niveau de scientificité.

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[6] Capel, Fanny, La dissertation, épreuve de réflexion, modèle à réfléchir, contribution au *Colloque du 29-10* – 2000, organisé par l'ACIREPH, adresse Internet http://www.sauv.net/dissertf.htm

II. Types de dissertation littéraire

Il existe deux types de dissertation littéraire : la dissertation explicative et la dissertation critique.

La dissertation explicative vise à vérifier la capacité d'analyse et de compréhension de l'apprenant. Les exercices proposés demandent d'expliquer ou de justifier un énoncé en se basant sue des textes proposés sans exprimer leur opinion personnelle.

La dissertation critique porte sur la capacité des apprenants de discuter la pertinence d'un énoncé. Dans ce type de discours les étudiants doivent prendre position sur un sujet donné et soutenir leur point de vue au moyen d'arguments qui s'appuient sur des textes proposés.

Toute dissertation littéraire a un sujet qui comporte deux éléments : l'énoncé principal et l'orientation à suivre (c'est-à-dire ce que vous devez faire ou, si vous préférez, la consigne à suivre).

Nous présentons en ce qui suit deux exemples de sujet de dissertation explicative et deux exemples de dissertation critique[7] :

- Exemples de sujet de dissertation explicative :

1) **Avec *Le libraire*, de Gérard Bessette, la littérature québécoise passe du roman de la fidélité et de la simple observation au roman de la satire sociale. Expliquez.**

(Source:Boissonnault, Pierre, Roger Fafard et Vital Gadbois, *La dissertation. Outil de pensée, outil de communication,* Sainte-Julie, La Lignée, 1980, p. 19)

2) **Boris Vian a déjà dit d'une de ses oeuvres : « Cette histoire est vraie, puisque je l'ai inventée». Cette boutade condense le thème du rapport au réel en regard de la vérité. Expliquez.**

(Source: Gadbois, Vital, *Écrire avec compétence au collégial : L'analyse littéraire, la dissertation explicative, l'essai critique,* Sainte-Foy, Le Griffon d'argile, 1994, p. 121, coll. « Griffon/La Lignée»)

- Exemples de sujet de dissertation critique :

1) Si l'on se réfère aux extraits de Molière, auteur classique, et de Balzac, auteur réaliste, on constate qu'ils prêtent à leurs personnages la même conception de l'amour et qu'ils le décrivent de façon similaire. Critiquez la véracité de cette affirmation.

(Source: Collectif, *Conseils pratiques pour la rédaction d'une dissertation critique : Pour une préparation efficace à l'Épreuve uniforme de français au collégial,* Montréal, Collège de Maisonneuve, 1997, p. 14)

2) La chevelure engendre des effets qui se traduisent de la même façon chez Baudelaire et chez Maupassant. Discutez.

(Source: Quebec, Ministere de l'Éducation, Direction de l'Enseignement Collégial, *Épreuve de français langue et littérature : Guide de*

[7] ibidem

correction, année scolaire 1997-1998, document de travail, Québec, 1998, p. 111)

Dans les exemples mentionnés, l'énoncé principal de la dissertation est celui à partir duquel le travail doit être fait et est suivi de la consigne qui constitue le travail à faire.

Dans le tableau ci-dessous nous reproduisons[8] les caractéristiques des deux types de dissertation littéraire :

Type de dissertation	**Orientation**
Explicative	Vous ne livrez pas votre opinion personnelle. Vous acceptez l'énoncé principal sans le remettre en question.
Critique	Vous acceptez ou non l'énoncé principal. Vous choisissez la position que vous allez défendre.

III. Fonction de la dissertation littéraire comme objet d'étude à l'université

La pratique de la dissertation enrichit les compétences linguistiques et culturelles de l'étudiant si l'on a en vue que tout dans la dissertation doit servir à la discussion : tout développement doit être « accroché au problème traité par un lien d'ordre démonstratif. Le développement autonome et la digression sont des fautes. L'idée et l'exemple doivent être orientés, c'est-à-dire adaptés à la démonstration. La structure du paragraphe rend compte de la texture. Le paragraphe comporte trois phases : une partie liante, qui rappelle ce qui précède, une partie qui apporte une contribution au développement et une partie qui ouvre sur le paragraphe suivant »[9]

Il faut reconnaître que l'exercice de la dissertation est dépassé dans le contexte actuel de l'enseignement des langues: si les exigences dans la rédaction d'une dissertation se sont maintenues les mêmes au cours des siècles, en termes d'éloquence et de culture littéraires, le contexte actuel ne permet pas l'acquisition des compétences nécessaires.

L'étudiant doit accomplir une tâche très complexe à la fin de laquelle le lecteur de la dissertation (le professeur) évaluera les compétences et les connaissances suivantes :

- maîtrise de la langue et de l'expression ;

[8] Les Éditions de la Chenelière inc., 2006, *Savoir plus : outils et méthodes de travail intellectuel*, 2eéd. (Raymond Robert Tremblay et Yvan Perrier), adresse Internet http://www.cheneliere.info/cfiles/complementaire/complementaire_ch/fichiers/coll_uni/13_dissertation_litt.pdf

[9] http://www.cafe.umontreal.ca/genres/n-disser.html

- aptitude à lire, à analyser et à interpréter des textes ;
- aptitude à tisser des liens entre différents textes pour dégager une problématique ;
- aptitude à mobiliser une culture littéraire fondée sur les travaux conduits en cours de français, sur des lectures et une expérience personnelles;
- aptitude à construire un jugement argumenté et à prendre en compte d'autres points de vue que le sien ;
- exercice raisonné de la faculté d'invention[10].

En guise de conclusion

La dissertation, en tant que texte académique, doit attester la compétence linguistique, la culture, la maîtrise du sujet et la capacité d'inventer de l'étudiant. Celui-ci doit prouver qu'il sait faire progresser sa pensée avec méthode et le soutenir d'exemples parfaitement analysés. De son côté, l'enseignant a sa propre façon de lire un texte, sa propre conception de la littérature, ses propres normes ; dans sa démarche évaluative il devra essayer de proposer ses commentaires, non d'imposer sa manière de voir.

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Abstracts

Online Collaboration in Translation Instruction among Students and Instructors

Reima AL- JARF - King Saudi University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

An asynchronous professional online translation discussion forum was used to post short and long texts to be translated by participating English-Arabic student translators from different countries around the world, who took turns in translating the texts and posting and re-posting them on the discussion board for feedback. The students could post texts of their choice. Volunteer English-Arabic translation instructors (from around the world) would read the translations and give communicative feedback on the location and types of errors. Errors were colour-coded.

No correct translations were provided. Students revised their translations and re-posted them on the discussion board for further feedback. Each translation was subjected to several revisions and re-submissions before it reached an acceptable level. Translation tips were given by the different instructors. The students had access to a variety of general and specialized online Arabic-English and English-Arabic specialized dictionaries, translation literature and forum posts on the art and science of translating. At the end of the semester, participating students and instructors responded to a questionnaire regarding their online collaborative experience. I also kept a daily log on the difficulties I had with online translation instruction and the differences between online and in-class face-to-face instruction using an overhead projector or a tablet laptop.

While the students benefited from the variety of online resources available and variety of feedback given by participating instructors, the process was tedious and time consuming. It was difficult to keep up with the speed and amount of re-submissions on the part of the students, especially when long or literary texts were posted for translation. I found online instruction to be effective in the case of short stretches of discourse. The fact that students could go online anytime and the sense of competition prevalent online made it difficult for an instructor to give feedback on a daily basis. Further reflections and recommendations on online translation instruction will be given.

Dimitrie Bolintineanu's *Conrad* and Its Romantic Model

Simona ANTOFI - "Dunărea de Jos" University of Galați

The first half of the 19th century Romanian literature proposes the present-day reader a series of poems where the authors' lyrical masks associate with the European and particularly with the English romantic heritage. Conrad, the most important Romanian poem of the period through which Bolintineanu wants to create the romantic poem of ideas, develops at all its levels like the Byronic poem. That is why one can find in this poem the problems, the type of hero, historical reconstructions marked by the lyrical tone peculiar to the text, the poetry of the sea and the exotic picturesque.

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"Performances" in the English Class

Elena BONTA - University of Bacău

The paper is an attempt of analyzing the English class as social practice, performed in a semiotic setting and making use of semiotic resources (words, gestures, visual patterns) at the level of which one can easily notice ritual elements and behaviours.

Annotation as Transtextual Translation

Ruxanda BONTILĂ - "Dunărea de Jos" University of Galați

Great writers' writings attract translations, literary criticism, rewritings, and careful annotations. If the translator is more or less in a position of power due to the importance and responsibility s/he has in face of the degree of mutual incomprehension or non-communication only s/he can prevent, what about the role of the annotator? Is s/he a travesty, that is, a translator who poses as critic too, or vice versa? Is s/he a pedagogue or glossator more than a critic who cares in excess for the mental sanity of the readers? Is s/he a researcher who minutely collects and collates data so as to evince the writer's centrifugal and centripetal sense of being? Or is s/he all of the above or, on the contrary, none of the above?

In my contribution I intend to discern the profile of the annotator, taking as starting point the prolificacy of Vladimir Nabokov's oeuvre which has encouraged, among many art talking heads, a number of annotators to embark upon the difficult, very often annoying task of annotating his works. I envisage here the following by now famous names: Alfred Appel Jr., who consensually (i.e. having the writer's approval in terms of meaning) annotated *Lolita* (1970); and Brian Boyd who completed his long journey work of annotating *Ada* only last year (2007).

The Role of the Protocol in Teaching Translation Skills

Yolanda CATELLI – Polytechnic University of Bucharest

The paper is focused on the role of the so-called protocol in the teaching and learning of translation skills. The author maintains that by using a working protocol as a strategy meant to develop the IT students' awareness of the kind of problems technical translation may place in front of them, learners can be given support in acquiring technical translation skills. Technical translators have to transpose the scientific information in the original text by using the most appropriate terms and also to identify and use the correct mode of expression.

The pattern of a translation seminar as well as the rationale for each step make the subject of this paper, together with mentions and suggestions regarding the role of the protocol in teaching translation skills..

Black Identity in Richard Wright's *Black Boy*

Sorina CHIPER – "Al. I. Cuza" University of Iași

This paper focuses on the representation of Black identity in Wright's autobiography. It places Black Boy within the context of African American literature

and traces its roots in the tradition of slave narratives, from which it deviates via its bleak portrayal of Blacks in the South. Black identity is a site of negativity, from which Wright escapes by fashioning himself into a writer.

Imagery of Death in *Hamlet*

Raluca GALIȚA - University of Bacău

The image of death is omnipresent throughout Shakespeare's Hamlet. Death is envisaged as crime, suicide, infection, disease. This article tries to present and comment all these aspects.

Briefing Cases in Legal English Class

Onorina GRECU - Universitatea "Spiru Haret" Constanta

Law students are often required to summarise the facts and outcome of a case in the course of their studies. A brief is a written summary of the case. It involves thorough reading, analysis of the case with a careful eye to detail, describing the case in one's own words and briefing. For all that, it is a very good exercise in Legal English class.

Une approche didactique sur le registre familier. Types d'activités en classe de FLE

Florentina IBANESCU –"Marin Coman" Highschool of Galati

Teaching French to younger learners becomes a very difficult task because of the difficulties created by the lexicon, grammar and orthography. One of the useful solutions would be to familiarize them with the young French of the same age.

A double purpose could be aimed at: making them learn the words which belong to the familiar register and insist upon the most important language problems. With the optimism of any French teacher, I dare say "Focus on what you have to learn!"

The Quest for Fractal Mirrors and Their Literary Relevance

Nicoleta IFRIM - "Dunărea de Jos" University of Galați

Beyond the "sociogonic poem" label, Eminescu's poem makes up an inherent fractal perspective on History complexity, following Mandelbrot's "waterfall" pattern. In a non-linear manner, the poetical ego guides the historical reality to imagine its "temporally marked pilgrimage." The oniric transgression of time, doubled by the regressive descending through the historical ages, converts the chronological, linear discourse into a fascinating travel within History itself. The "ever increasing dimensionality" of the poetic vision, a specific feature of the fractal complex forms, rules discourse structure which shapes itself with each "entering / leaving" historical level of observation.

"Amplification and regression", birth and death, or fractally speaking, "form-ation and de-formation", all these are subjected to recursive symmetry strategies which differently occur at every level in the poematic fractal genesis.

Promoting the "quest for image", another well-known fractal feature, *Memento mori* may be decoded through the mechanism of figural complexity, expressed by the ego status closely following the actualization of History on the virtual – real basis.

Exploring the Matrix of the English Tenses in Classroom

Iulian MARDAR -"Dunărea de Jos" University of Galați

The present paper attempts to reveal the ways in which the symmetry characterizing English tenses may be used in teaching students whose mother tongue is not English.

The English tense system is a very logic one, very precise and transparent, which may be easily compared to a cube made of glass: irrespective of the angle from which one looks at such a cube, he/she will see all its sides and corners provided that the looker is familiar with at least one side of the cube. The various tables and schemata highlighting the matrix of the English tenses will form the background for observations regarding the use of this extremely useful instrument in teaching English tenses to beginner and adult learners, respectively.

Into the Labyrinth of (Meta)Fiction with *The Magus*

Cristina MĂLINOIU (PATRAŞCU) - "Dunărea de Jos" University of Galați

Our paper aims at presenting John Fowles's novel **The Magus** as a self-reflexive work which brings to the fore the reality/fiction borderline and points to its own status as a fictional construct. The recurrent motif of the labyrinth is considered as symbolic of the complexity of the text itself in which multiple layers are juxtaposed.

Modalités discursives et fiction métadiscursive dans la prose roumaine des années '80. Points de départ

Doinița MILEA- "Dunărea de Jos" University of Galați

The selection of the themes and textual strategies characterizes the text of the novels in the 80s. Within its own fabula, the acting narrator makes up various fictional worlds as well as textual ones which converge to a textual reality peculiar to the so-called auto-fiction. The empirical author anticipates his fictional text by means of a theoretical corpus relating him to the '80 generation as well as to postmodernist writers, the latter inserting their theory within their fictional texts.

English in School Versus English in Mass-Media

Andreea Mihaela NEDELCUȚ – Department of Applied Modern Languages, University of Craiova

Throughout the years, English has become a worldwide language used in almost any occasion – official and unofficial. It has become an important tool that units people from different parts of the globe, making communication easier. In the present article I will analyze both the English that is taught in schools and the

English that is promoted in mass media: television, magazines, newspapers and radio. Unlike the English that students learn in schools, the English used in mass media accepts strange abbreviations and grammatical mistakes in constructing a phrase with the single purpose of persuading, provoking or entertaining.

This gulf between the 'two languages' raises an important question: 'What should teachers do – include mass media material during their English class or ignore it?'

Knowledge and Representation in the Contemporary British Novel

Ecaterina PĂTRAŞCU - "Spiru Haret" University of Bucharest

Postmodernism is, par excellence, the term to characterize the majority of the post-1968 writers, particularly when reference is made to the American space. Concepts as reality, history, knowledge, truth are marked by external subjectivity, perspectivism, and even worse, by relativism. None of these can be based on ontology. Nevertheless, despite its mask, one can see at the opposite pole, the attitude of the British writers of the same time interval: Graham Swift, Julian Barnes, Salman Rushdie.

Although all the above mentioned concepts will be found in the narrative discourse of the said authors, they are epistemologically perceived and subsumed to a much larger and more significant discourse, that of power and the right to authority, in a seemingly fragmentary and confused universe.

These authors' question is *whose is the power*? Because it is a fact: he who holds power holds truth. History, from the perspective of British authors, defines and establishes identities; from the American relativistic perspective, history is being built b y itself. It is true, political discourse and shade of meaning are involved in both of the cases, but the accent is different.

From Reflection-Based LTE to Competence-Based LTE

Ecaterina PEGULESCU – Ministry of Education, Research and Youth

Language teacher education (LTE) has been placed between two sorts of contextual factors: *social, political and cultural* factors, on one hand and *provision* factors, on the other hand. Last but not least a discussion on ideology and on the teaching process, including teacher's knowledge, students' learning and the teachers and learners' beliefs, is necessary.

From the general attitude of all the implied actors of the learning process and from the frame of reference offered by the European documents of the European Commission and the Council of Europe, the Romanian institutions responsible of the language teachers' education have to re-think the whole system.

***Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*: (Re)Translating the Medieval Code of Chivalry**

Dan Nicolae POPESCU – "Ştefan cel Mare" University of Suceava

The present paper argues that by the end of the Middle Ages the Code of Chivalry had estranged itself so much from its original meaning that somebody, if

anonymous[ly], had to re-translate it so that the knightly body should return to its position as militia Christi and abandon the morally perilous status of militia saeculi.

The Arthurian romance in question offers this anonymous contemporary of Geoffrey Chaucer a splendid opportunity to satirically but also critically analyse knighthood's fall from grace, and grants us yet one more chance to contemplate how at the turn of the 15th century Western culture switched from a God-centred environment to a man-centred one, ultimately implying that man perpetually re-translates himself/herself, striving to evade the limitations imposed by the afflictive nature of the human condition.

Language in Literature: Communication or Politics?

Michaela PRAISLER and **Alexandru PRAISLER -** "Dunărea de Jos" University of Galați

The literary art exploits word to rewrite reality, to communicate ideologies and to express policies. From this point of view, George Orwell's novel 1984 is a representative case which, beginning the fictitious-real of the narrative network and coming to an end with the metalinguistic peritext in the Appendix, constitutes a deep insight into language and literature, language of literature and its communicative features which have or have not been preserved in its translation into Romanian.

To Be an Author or a Critic or Both? This Is the Question

Steluța STAN, "Dunărea de Jos" University of Galați

Which is more attractive: being a writer or being a critic? Barthes defines theoretical discourse to be a self-reflexive discourse, an export of critical mastery in a novel and not only the manner proper of disseminating theory but also give novels a critical function, an ability to explore the logic and the philosophy of fiction without recourse to metalanguage.

Malcolm Bradbury between Modernism and Postmodernism

Andreia Irina SUCIU - University of Bacău

Our analytical approach tries to demonstrate that Malcom Bradbury was a creator belonging to a double world, his whole literary production being a bridge between two universes: he was a pure English gentleman fascinated by America which he used to visit in inspiring tours in his quest of a new culture and a new time; he was also a person deeply rooted in his present keeping up with trends and tendencies, scientific and cultural developments, but he wpould also turn back with pleasure to the past revealing his respect for its values. He was a thorough and objective analyst of the literary phenomenon, but also a ludic and infatigable spirit who would take an immense pleasure in the use of a jocular voice in the majority of his novels (some of which would focus exclusively on the construction of some linguistic, structural or ideological games) as well as in his critical studies where the sublte voice of the critic was spiced with commentaries exceeding the seriousness of the pipe-smoking author and which would move into the territory

of the satyre who would smile in the corner of his lips. Anchored both in modernism through his critical investigation and in postmodernism through the practice of his novels, Malcom Bradbury used modernist and postmodernist concepts and techniques in a unitary blending with mastery and "well-calculated" spontaneity.

ICT Skills for Translators

Adriana TEODORESCU -"Dimitrie Cantemir" Christian University of Constanta

In the information society, information and communication technologies have become essential to all fields of activity. The permanent and fast development of ICT has also influenced the translators' work. Nowadays translators are also required computer-related skills besides their knowledge of a foreign language. Technology has affected several aspects of the translator's way of handling his work: the communication process, the way of creating and formatting texts.

On the Threshold of Bliss: Translating Sacred Space in Early Gothic Cathedrals

Dana VASILIU - University of Bucharest

This paper discusses the relation between Early Gothic architecture and medieval conceptualizations of sacred space in the twelfth- and thirteenth-century England. Special attention will be given to the analysis of the west front of Wells Cathedral, a huge screen-like canvas of magnificent beauty which translated into stone medieval visions of the Church Triumphant and of Heavenly Jerusalem.

La dissertation littéraire comme objet d'enseignement à l'université

Angelica VÂLCU - "Dunărea de Jos" University of Galați

The literary dissertation is a paper of argumentation which involves the organization of personal reflection based on texts and documents.

As a scholarly exercise, the literary dissertation is intended to develop the student's reflexive abilities together with the analytical process elaborated on the basis a certain topic. Our communication was devised to provide an answer to the following questions: a) why does the literary dissertation seem to be one of the most difficult tasks of our undergraduates? and b) is the dissertation paper adapted to the new socio-economic and cultural contexts of the teaching of foreign languages?

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Résumés

Online Collaboration in Translation Instruction among Students and Instructors

Reima AL- JARF - King Saudi University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Cet article présente les résultats d'une expérience destinée à analyser l'enseignement de l'art de la traduction aux étudiants connaissant l'anglais et l'arabe. Nous y décrivons le processus, les moyens de documentation et les méthodes de travail tout comme les résultats de cette expérience. Pour mener à bien cette analyse nous avons enregistré, jour après jour, les difficultés à résoudre dans l'enseignement on line et les différences entre l'enseignement on-line et face-à-face, en utilisant un projecteur ou un laptop. La communication expose aussi d'autres considérations et recommandations sur le perfectionnement de l'art de la traduction en régime on –line.

Conrad, par Dimitrie Bolintineanu, et son modèle romantique anglais

Simona ANTOFI - "Dunărea de Jos" University of Galați

La littérature roumaine de la première moitié du XIXème siècle propose au lecteur d'aujourd'hui une série de poèmes où les masques lyriques des auteurs s'associent à l'héritage romantique européen et, particulièrement, anglais. Le poème le plus important de cette période, **Conrad**, par lequel Bolintineanu veut créer le poème romantique d'idées, se développe, à tous ses niveaux, comme poème byronien. C'est pourquoi on y retrouve la problématique, le type de héros, les reconstitutions historiques marquées par le lyrisme spécifique du texte, la poésie de la mer et le pittoresque exotique.

"Performances" in the English Class

Elena BONTA - University of Bacău

Notre travail propose une analyse de la classe d'anglais, comme pratique sociale, qui a lieu dans un cadre sémiotique et qui utilise des ressources sémiotiques (mots, gestes, images), au niveau des lesquelles on peut identifier des éléments et des comportements rituels.

Annotation as Transtextual Translation

Ruxanda BONTILĂ - "Dunărea de Jos" University of Galați

Les grands écrivains bénéficient non seulement de traductions, d'études critiques etc., mais aussi d'annotations minutieuses. Si le traducteur est dans une position de supériorité relative, due à sa responsabilité et possibilité d'empêcher l'acte de compréhension erronée ou de non-communication réciproque, on se pose la question comment se passent les choses avec l'auteur d'annotations. Apres avoir établi des questions et des réponses pertinentes au sujet du statut de l'auteur d'annotations, notre communication vise à construire le profile de ce type de spécialiste, en prenant comme point de départ la prolificité de l'œuvre de Vladimir

Nabokov. Celui-ci a encouragé même les auteurs d'annotations qui ont exploré son œuvre. Nous pensons à des noms tels que ceux d'Alfred Appel Jr. qui a annoté le fameux roman *Lolita* et de Brian Boyd dont l'effort continu d'annotation (1993-2008) du roman *Ada ou l'ardeur* est vraiment remarquable.

The Role of the Protocol in Teaching Translation Skills

Yolanda CATELLI – Polytechnic University of Bucharest

Cet article porte sur le rôle du protocole appliqué dans l'enseignement de la traduction. Il est évident que le recours au protocole, en tant que stratégie de développement de l'habileté des apprenants à résoudre les problèmes posés par les traductions des textes techniques, est essentiel. Les traducteurs de ces textes doivent transposer l'information scientifique du texte original en utilisant les meilleurs termes et aussi doivent-ils identifier et utiliser correctement le langage des lecteurs de la culture-cible.

Nous décrivons un séminaire de traduction avec des arguments pour chaque étape de travail, en faisant des commentaires sur les possibles difficultés, concernant la traduction des terminologies spéciales (IT, par exemple), des erreurs fréquentes, concernant aussi le protocole de travail conformément auquel sont mentionnés les problèmes de traduction et leurs solutions au niveau individuel. La dernière partie est une étape pendant laquelle nous discutons, d'une manière comparative, sur les solutions finales adoptées.

Black Identity in Richard Wright's *Black Boy*

Sorina CHIPER – "Al. I. Cuza" University of Iaşi

Notre communication se veut une analyse de l'identité noire dans l'autobiographie de Wright. Cette autobiographie place Black Boy dans le contexte de la littérature Afro-Américaine et retrouve ses racines dans la tradition des contes d'esclaves d'où est inspirée la création du portrait des noirs du Sud des Etats-Unis. L'identité noire est un site de négativité d'où Wright évade par sa transformation ou transposition en auteur de littérature.

Imagery of Death in *Hamlet*

Raluca GALIȚA - University of Bacău

L'image de la mort est omniprésente dans Hamlet de William Shakespeare. La mort est envisagée comme crime, suicide, infection, poison, maladie. Cet article essaie de surprendre et de commenter tous ces aspects.

Briefing Cases in Legal English Class

Onorina GRECU - Universitatea "Spiru Haret" Constanta

Au cours des études de droit à l'université, les étudiants sont fréquemment invités à faire les résumés des faits et des résultats des cas. Ils doivent préparer un dossier d'un certain cas. Le dossier sollicite une lecture minutieuse, une analyse attentive de chaque détail et une description du cas en mots appropriés pour que

l'étudiant puisse le comprendre correctement. C'est pour cela que pour les étudiants en droit, la réalisation d'un tel dossier peut devenir un bon exercice pendant la classe d'anglais.

Une approche didactique sur le registre familier. Types d'activités en classe de FLE

Florentina IBANESCU –"Marin Coman" Highschool of Galati

Enseigner le français aux jeunes apprenants devient une tâche de plus en plus difficile à cause des difficultés posées par le lexique et la grammaire ou par l'orthographe. Une solution utile serait de les familiariser avec le langage utilisé par les jeunes français de même âge. Un double but pourrait être atteint : leur faire apprendre des mots qui appartiennent au registre familier et insister sur les problèmes de langue très importants. Avec l'optimisme du professeur de français j'ose dire : « Ados, soyez branchés ! ».

The Quest for Fractal Mirrors and Their Literary Relevance

Nicoleta IFRIM - "Dunărea de Jos" University of Galați

La theorie des fractales comporte un niveau plus profond du monde structurale qui presente une complexite des formes et des significations. dans des telles circonstances l'ouvrage litteraire se revele comme un *continuum* qui rend une multiplicite du meme theme-sujet aussi stucture a l'aide d'un collage de mises en abyme capable de produire unsoustexte liminal en developpent l'idee textuelle principale dans des variations indefinites et des inversions.

Exploring the Matrix of the English Tenses in Classroom

Iulian MARDAR - "Dunărea de Jos" University of Galați

Le système temporel de l'anglais se caractérise par une symétrie, une logique et une précision difficilement à repérer dans d'autres langues étrangères. Notre article a un caractère méthodologique évident et propose des solutions faciles et utiles à la fois. Les divers tableaux et schémas qui montrent la matrice des temps de l'anglais vont constituer la base des observations concernant les choix corrects des formes temporelles par les connaisseurs, plus ou moins avancés, de l'anglais.

Modalités discursives et fiction métadiscursive dans la prose roumaine des années '80. Points de départ

Doinița MILEA- "Dunărea de Jos" University of Galați

La sélection des thèmes tout comme le choix des stratégies textuelles caractèrisent les textes des romans des années 80. Dans son propre fabula, le narrateur actant crée de divers mondes fictionnels et textuels, qui convèrgent vers une réalité textuelle propre à une soit-dite auto-fiction. L'auteur empirique anticipe son texte fictionnel à l'aide d'un corpus théorique qui le relie à la génération des années 80 et aux postmodernistes.

Into the Labyrinth of (Meta)Fiction with *The Magus*

Cristina MALINOIU (PATRASCU) - "Dunărea de Jos" University of Galați

Cet article se veut une possible interprétation du roman The Magus de John Fowles comme une œuvre autoréflexive qui met en met en évidence la ligne de séparation entre réalité et fiction et montre sa position de structure fictionnelle. Le motif répété du labyrinthe est considéré comme un symbole de la complexité du texte qui juxtapose plusieurs niveaux.

English in School Versus English in Mass-Media

Andreea Mihaela NEDELCUȚ – Department of Applied Languages
University of Craiova

Le long des années, l'anglais est devenu une des plus utilisées langues de la planète, qui est employée en toute occasion et qui facilite la communication. Cet article essaie d'analyser, tant l'anglais enseigné dans les écoles et les universités de Roumanie que l'anglais promu dans le langage des media : la télévision, les magazines, les journaux, etc. Contrairement aux formes correctes et complètes enseignées à l'école, l'anglais des journaux est riche en abréviations et en erreurs grammaticales au niveau de la phrase, pour une seule raison exclusive: convaincre, provoquer et amuser le public. Cette particularité des deux versions de la même langue pose un problème assez important aux professeurs: Comment procéder avec l'anglais des media? Discuter ou ignorer ce langage et ses artifices?

Knowledge and Representation in the Contemporary British Novel

Ecaterina PĂTRAŞCU - "Spiru Haret" University of Bucharest

Le postmodernisme est, par excellence, le nom par lequel on définit la majorité des écrivains d'après 1968, et surtout quand on fait de références à l'espace américain. Des concepts comme réalité, histoire, connaissance, vérité, sont marques par subjectivité. Il y a, a l'autre extrémité, quoique bien masquée, l'attitude des écrivains britanniques de la même période: G. Swift, J. Barnes, et S. Rushdie. Même si les concepts déjà mentionnés peuvent être trouvés aussi dans le discours narratif des auteurs énumères, ils sont perçus épistémologiquement a et souscrits à un discours beaucoup plus large et plus significatif: celui du pouvoir, du droit à l'autorité dans un univers apparemment fragmenté et confus. Le problème que ses auteurs viennent de poser est le problème de l'appartenance du pouvoir car celui qui a le pouvoir a la vérité. L'histoire, par la visée des auteurs britanniques définit et établit des identités ; par la visée relativiste americaine, l'histoire se construit. Le discours et la nuance politiques sont impliquees dans les deux cas, mais l'accent est different.

From Reflection-Based LTE to Competence-Based LTE

Ecaterina PEGULESCU – Ministry of Education, Research and Youth

La formation des professeurs de langues modernes implique la réflexion sur la pratique didactique qui doit s'adresser également aux professeurs débutants

qu'aux professeurs ayant une riche expérience professionnelle. Il y a deux types de facteurs qui déterminent cette formation: les conditions sociopolitiques et culturelles et l'offre de fournisseurs de formation. A partir d'une attitude générale et des débats des documents européens concernant la formation, les institutions impliquées dans ce processus doivent reconsidérer tout ce mécanisme.

***Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*: (Re)Translating the Medieval Code of Chivalry**

Dan Nicolae POPESCU – "Ştefan cel Mare" University of Suceava

On se propose, dans ce papier, d'argumenter l'idée qu'à la fin du Moyen Age, le Code chevaleresque était si loin de ses origines que si quelqu'un devait le re-traduire alors il aurait revenir a sa position comme militia Christi et abandonner le statut moralement dangereux de militia seculi. L'histoire du roi Arthur offre à ce contemporain anonyme de Chaucer une opportunité splendide d'analyser d'une manière satirique et critique la tombée en disgrâce de la chevalerie en nous donnant plus de chance a contempler la manière par laquelle, a la fin du 15e siècle, la culture occidentale remplaçait le monde concentré autour du Dieux par un monde de l'homme suggérant ainsi que l'homme se re-traduit par lui-même, en luttant pour dépasser les limites imposées par la nature difficile de la condition humaine.

Language in Literature: Communication or Politics?

Michaela PRAISLER and **Alexandru PRAISLER -** "Dunărea de Jos" University of Galați

L'art littéraire exploite le mot pour réécrire la réalité, pour communiquer des idéologies et pour formuler des politiques. De ce point de vue, le roman **1984** de George Orwell, est un cas représentatif, qui, en commençant avec le réel/fictif du réseau narratif et en finissant avec le peritexte métalinguistique de l'Appendix, se constitue dans une étude profonde du langage et de la littérature et de ses caractéristiques communicatives protégées ou non protégées par la traduction.

To Be an Author or a Critic or Both? This Is the Question

Steluța STAN, "Dunărea de Jos" University of Galați

Est-il plus attirant d'être écrivain que d'être critique? Barthes définit le discours théorique comme un discours auto-reflexive, l'export de maîtrise critique dans un roman et pas seulement la manière proprement dite de disséminer la théorie mais aussi d'attribuer une fonction critique au roman, une habilité d'explorer la logique et la philosophie de la fiction sans recours au métalangage..

Malcolm Bradbury between Modernism and Postmodernism

Andreia Irina SUCIU - University of Bacău

Notre approche analytique veut démontrer que Malcolm Bradbury a été un créateur appartenant aux deux mondes; son oeuvre a été un pont entre deux

univers car il a été a la fois un parfait gentilhomme anglais, fasciné pourtant de l'Amérique, ou il s'en allait pour des voyages lui inspirant une nouvelle culture et des nouveaux temps. Il avait aussi ses racines au présent en tenant le rythme des tendances, des découvertes scientifiques et des développements culturels qui rentrait avec plaisir au passe en montrant son respect pour les valeurs de ce passe. Créateur vivant dans les deux siècles, Bradbury a été un analyste sérieux et objectif du phénomène littéraire toujours projeté sur le fond du contexte social. Ancre également dans le modernisme par ses que dans investigations critiques et dans le postmodernisme par la pratique de ses romans, Malcolm Bradbury a utilise avec du calme et de la spontanéité „bien calculée" les concepts et les techniques modernes et postmodernes dans une proportion unitaire.

ICT Skills for Translators

Adriana TEODORESCU -"Dimitrie Cantemir" Christian University of Constanta

Dans la société de l'information les technologies d'information et de communication sont essentielles dans tous les domaines d'activité. Le développement rapide et permanent d'ICT a aussi influencé le travail des traducteurs.

Aujourd'hui les traducteurs doivent faire la preuve de leurs habilités d'utiliser l'ordinateur. La technologie informationnelle a aussi influencé quelques aspects de la manière de travailler propre aux traducteurs, parmi ceux-ci le procès de communication, la manière de créer et formater le texte.

On the Threshold of Bliss: Translating Sacred Space in Early Gothic Cathedrals

Dana VASILIU - University of Bucharest

Ce papier discute la relation entre l'architecture gotique du Moyen Age et le mode dans lequel on conceptualisait l'espace du sacre, et surtout dans l'Angleterre des 12 e et 13 e siècles. On analyse aussi les manifestations artistiques propres au gothique anglais de 13 e et 14 e siècles.

La dissertation littéraire comme objet d'enseignement à l'université

Angelica VÂLCU - "Dunărea de Jos" University of Galați

La dissertation littéraire est un travail d'argumentation qui suppose l'organisation d'une réflexion personnelle à partir de textes et de documents.

La dissertation littéraire comme exercice scolaire vise à développer les capacités réflexives d'un étudiant, au long d'un processus analytique élaboré autour d'une problématique.

Notre communication se veut une réponse aux questions : a) pourquoi la dissertation littéraire apparaît-elle comme l'une des épreuves les plus difficiles aux examens de nos étudiants ? et b) la dissertation littéraire reste-t-elle adaptée aux nouveaux contextes socio-économiques et culturels de l'enseignement des langues?