

Literature in an Intercultural Perspective

Edited by: Nives Zudič Antonič



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Literature and Culture

In the past, culture used to enter school nearly exclusively through literary instruction that was thus considered as culture bearer and a strong motivational tool for language learning. Such approach can no longer be accepted because it is utterly inappropriate to the continuous and rapid change in the society causing constant change in students' needs as well. Today, it is crucially important to introduce culture instruction in linguistic curriculum, where culture is understood as everyday life. Knowledge on cultures makes language instruction more interesting and motivating.

Students who have reached a high level of knowledge are more aware of the world around us and can use literature as an excellent tool for the intercultural didactics promotion by entering in worlds that are spatially and temporally different and/or distant to be lead by teachers to reflect on difference (of males or females; of the young or the adults; of Slovenes, Italians or foreigners; of someone living North or South etc.) and consequently to reconsider their responsibilities. Literature instruction also enables teachers to establish a dialogue with the text, its author, schoolmates and the teacher giving rise to emotions sharable by everyone. These are the aspects of literature study that make it more than merely a formative process, but rather as a strong motivation particularly important to intercultural discourse.

Kramersch (1993) designed a theoretical approach to literary texts cultural analysis on the basis of the critical dialogue concept, that is, on students' need to interact with a particular language and its context. These are, defined extensively, the following:

- text's culture, including its form: oral or written;
- other students' reactions to the text;
- culture and relations between students and the teacher during instruction.

In such a dialectics language learning does not aim at reading, writing or speaking acquisition in itself, but rather at discovering the various interrelations that occur between the speaker and the listener, between the writer and the reader, and the text or cultural context at the dialectics centre. In this way Kramersch integrates language and culture.

This dialectics is based on the important concept of subjectiveness understood as inter-subjective, inter-textual and intercultural. Inter-subjective relations in classroom, including the teacher, leads to the awareness of multiplicity of voices, experiential diversity, ethnic, racial and gender traits, as well as the rest of identity sources involved in discussion. As a result, numerous levels of meaning that contribute to discussion are created. Particularly in literature instruction readers' voices do not always coincide with the text voice. Inter-textual approach to literature allows readers to interact with the text's author voice. When readers exchange meanings with text, this dialogue allows for a variety of interpretation, perception and experience. As a consequence, student's world opens to a set of attitudes and values that make literature and culture inseparable (Kramersch 1993).

The conception of *intercultural* recognizes the subjective nature of each culture. Individual's experience and perception can easily overcome stereotypes originating in information exchange. In such a context, culture and language are taught and learned through interpersonal processes, examination of differences and interdisciplinary approach to language and culture analysis. In literary discussion, emphasis on the individual, the interrelation of literature and social sciences and the examination of differences between languages and cultures is what Giroux (1992) refers to as "crossing borders" (a very important factor, particularly to the comprehension of our cultural reality). This pedagogical approach "is based on requirement of conditions that allow students to write, speak and listen in a language whose meaning becomes manifold and disperse and resists to permanent rejection" (Giroux 1992). Traditional pedagogy envisages a teacher as head of subject and distributor of knowledge. However, by allowing students to concentrate on perspectives, experiences and products of others these will express their own perspectives willingly. They will thus cross the border between

information passage and personal participation. Once this border is crossed students themselves are seen as authors of their learning.

The result is learning openness to variety and voice multiplicity, as well as meaning negotiation in a variety of texts and contexts in which learning takes place (Kramsch 1993).

In language programs, borderline overcoming connects language and culture inextricably. Furthermore, it represents a basis for personal insight of culture that cannot occur through a mere passage of information.

The peculiarity of our reality requires the use of literary text through which students acquire cultural contents about their home milieu. These texts reawaken empathy essential to view change. The use of literary text is considered essential to intercultural didactics also because it reassures students that are initially hesitant to participation in a topic and decides to follow it from the outside as observer. He himself decides when and how much to get involved into the topic discussed.

Literature discussed from intercultural standpoint allows us to approach cultures different from our own: a novel creates a “long” listening space and time that is particularly privileged and we quite often lack when coming across these cultures in our towns; it carries us across an unknown cultural ground that we might accept to explore fearless only in literature; it gives rise to a feeling inside that each individual, culture and nation has the right to their own stories and that there is infinite variety of stories, none of which is either superior or inferior; it promotes identification (with characters, with events) and change in the point of view; it probably generates new stories that the reader himself may tell to himself and to other people.

Nives Zudič Antonič

DAVID NEWBOLD

Across the Ditch and into the Jungle: New Approaches to Bilingualism for Writers from Wales

To begin with some clarification: the ‘ditch’ in the title refers to Offa’s Dyke, the 8th century earthworks built by the Saxon King of Mercia, Offa, intended to keep Welsh marauders out of England, and which played its part in keeping Welsh alive in the western part of Great Britain. The ditch stretched from the Dee Estuary in the North to the Wye Valley in the South, is still visible in parts, and today provides the course for a popular long distance trail. The ‘jungle’ is the English language, (*Saesneg* or ‘Saxon’, in Welsh), or rather the temptation facing many non native writers to venture into the global lingua franca. And if the title also carries faint echoes of another title, a different landscape, and a further foray across cultures, these are not unintentional.

Much has been written, especially from a postcolonial perspective, about African and Asian writers who choose to write, or in some cases, not to write, in English. Often the motive is to reach a wider audience – whether nationally, in the case of countries such as Nigeria or India, where English has the role of a national lingua franca – or internationally. But much closer to London a similar choice faces an emerging group of bilingual Welsh writers. In this article I will claim that it is not merely the desire for a wider readership (and bigger sales) which is leading an increasing number of Welsh-speaking writers (especially of fiction) to write, or rewrite, in English. Rather - and this might appear paradoxical - the choice reflects the vibrant status and relative good health the Welsh language is

currently enjoying. In this article I shall examine three novels originally written in Welsh, and then rewritten in English by their (young) bilingual authors; and the reasons behind their decisions to do so.

Fifty years ago the picture was very different. Writers in Wales belonged to one of two camps. They were either writing in Welsh because they were native speakers of that language; or they were writing in English, because they did not know Welsh. The latter, Anglo-Welsh writers, are simply defined by Glyn Jones in his seminal 1968 study of the phenomenon, *The Dragon has two tongues*, as 'Welsh men and women who write in English about Wales'; a definition which, with the relevant change of country name, could be applied to many postcolonial contexts of writing in English today. The list of 20th century Anglo-Welsh writers is long, and includes major poets such as Dylan Thomas and R. S. Thomas, who have achieved worldwide celebrity because they wrote in English. Yet, as Jones, points out, the Welsh language is never very far from the consciousness of the Anglo-Welsh writer, and some of them are 'anglo' only 'by the skin of their teeth'. Most of the writers discussed by Jones came from families who had up till recently been Welsh speaking, and many of them had one or even two Welsh speaking parents. Both of Dylan Thomas's parents, for example, were Welsh speaking but chose to use English at home. And they all shared with their Welsh-speaking counterparts a common heritage of radical non-conformism.

By the mid twentieth century the future of the Welsh language was looking bleak. The number of native Welsh speakers had dropped from 54% of the population in 1891 to 29% in 1951, due to a series of factors, the most prominent of which were the imposition of English medium education in secondary schools as a result of the 1889 Education Act, and the steady immigration of an English speaking workforce into the industrial areas of South Wales. Aitchison and Carter (2000) identify the context in which language loss was most rapid: '...it is necessary to observe that all the processes which were inimical to Welsh were at their most virulent where Welsh and English were in daily contact.'

As the numbers of speakers dwindled, organized opposition towards the hegemony of English began to grow. The creation of the Welsh National party (Plaid Cymru) in 1925 by Saunders Lewis, a poet, critic, and lecturer in Welsh at the University of Swansea marked the beginning of a *prise de conscience*. But the heyday of protest only really began in the 1960's, following the plea made by Saunders Lewis in a 1962 lecture on BBC Radio, *Tynged Yr Iaith*, with the creation of the Welsh Language Society (*Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg*), with Plaid Cymru winning its first seat in parliament (1966), and, to a lesser extent, with the Free

Wales Army, which briefly gained publicity in the seventies by torching houses in the Welsh heartland which had been bought by English people as holiday homes.

This is the background against which the two literary camps – Welsh and Anglo-Welsh – emerged; inevitably, with the native language ‘relentlessly menaced’, as Jones puts it, Welsh speaking writers saw themselves as the guardians of a cultural heritage, deeply concerned about the fate of the language, and tended to view Anglo-Welsh writers as not being fully representative of Wales. This was an over-simplification, of course; R. S. Thomas raged against the onslaught of English and the stupidity of the Welsh ‘elbowing our language into the grave we have dug for it’ (Thomas 1968, 34). But, although he knew Welsh (and as an Anglican parson in rural Wales, preached in Welsh too) he wrote his poetry in English. It was as if the two traditions – writing in Welsh and writing in English – shared similar thematic and formal interests, but were following separate, parallel paths, destined never to meet. This state of affairs emerged emblematically in the publication in the post war period of two anthologies bearing similar titles: *The Oxford Book of Welsh Verse* and *Modern Welsh Poetry*. No poem occurs in both volumes for the simple reason that the poems in the first anthology are all in Welsh, while the latter is an anthology of verse in English. Writers using Welsh, it seemed, were entrenched in a doomed language, fighting a losing battle, proclaiming their verse to a disappearing readership.

But in the last two decades Welsh has enjoyed a revival which seems to have few precedents in modern history. From an all-time low of 18.5% of the population speaking Welsh in the 1981 census, a figure which remained stable in the following (1991) census, the number of Welsh speakers began to grow. By 2001 the figure had climbed to 20.5%. However, in the 2011 census this figure had dropped to 19%, but, significantly, it showed an increase in the number of young children speaking Welsh (BBC News 2014), suggesting that the language may be safe for the time being at least. So what is happening west of Offa’s Dyke?

Probably the most significant factor behind the turnaround, and in particular the increase in the number of young bilinguals, has been the steady growth in availability of education though the medium of Welsh everywhere in Wales (and not just the Welsh-speaking heartlands in the north and west). The first Welsh medium state primary school opened in Llanelli in 1947, but the heyday of Welsh medium schools came later, in the 1980s. With the status of Welsh improving from the 1970s (for example, bilingual roadsigns began to appear throughout Wales in 1972), parents began to realize that bilingual education offered their children greater possibilities on the job market, and at the same time that academic standards were marginally higher than in English-only schools. Furthermore,

many parents in industrial Wales came from families in which the language had only recently disappeared, and the choice of a Welsh school thus had the appeal of making a personal investment in a national heritage. Today, more than 25% of Welsh children attend Welsh medium schools; those who don't study it as a second language. Thus in terms of Wurm's (1991) definition of an endangered language ('few or no children learning the language'), Welsh is off the danger list.

In 1982 the first Welsh language television channel, *Sianel Pedwar Cymru*, took to the air. The result of an election promise to Wales by Margaret Thatcher during the 1979 elections, it had a troubled birth. After Mrs Thatcher's conservative party won the elections, it backtracked on its pledge, and it took a threatened hunger strike by Plaid Cymru MP Gwynfor Evans to make the conservatives think again. When finally it did appear, it quickly established a reputation for high quality programmes produced with limited resources.

Thus in the space of a generation, the combined forces of Welsh medium schools and S4C television have created a pool of educated bilinguals, with consequences which in the 1960s would have seemed unimaginable, especially in South Wales, where Welsh had all but disappeared a century earlier. Today you can walk the streets of towns and villages in the most anglicized parts of South Wales, and hear people conversing in Welsh. These young adults are equally at home in Welsh and English, and code-switching between the two languages is common; the gap between two languages and two communities is no longer unbridgeable. This has consequences for writers, many of whom are emerging from this community of 'new bilinguals', and who were born and educated in South Wales. For bilingual writers it is no longer taboo for a Welsh speaker to write in English; or vice-versa. The process of devolution, the establishment of a Welsh assembly in 1999, and the formal recognition of Welsh as the official language in the 2011 'Welsh Language Measure', have all contributed to a sense of confidence in the future of the language and the belief that Welsh can co-exist with English throughout the country. This new-found confidence, I would suggest, is a feature of much of the fiction being written in and about Wales today, and it is emblematically reflected in the choice of a growing number of writers to use both languages.

The literary scene in Wales today is one of the most vibrant in the UK. The Welsh Academy, (*Yr Academi Gymraeg*) currently has just over a thousand writers in English on its database, and 300 writing in Welsh; the percentage of Welsh writers is thus slightly higher than the percentage of Welsh speakers nationwide (19%, as we previously noted). But the two lists are not mutually exclusive; the percentage changes if we take into account the fact that a large number of writers

appear on both lists. They include poets, such as the first national poet laureate of Wales, Gwyneth Lewis, but especially novelists. This, too, marks a new departure. In the heyday of Anglo-Welsh writing recorded by Jones, the prevalent, and most successful genres, were the short story and poetry. These often went together, as in the writings of Dylan Thomas or Alun Lewis, both primarily poets, both also accomplished short story writers.

Today the novel seems to have become the preferred means of representing the reality of 21st century Wales and the complex interconnected themes of nationhood, devolution, language loss, and language retrieval; and it is the bilingual writer, who chooses to rewrite his or her own work in the other language, who has his or her fingers most firmly on the pulse of the situation. In the second part of this paper I intend to analyze three recent novels which have been rewritten by their authors from the original Welsh: Fflur Dadydd's *Twenty Thousand Saints*, *Faith. Hope & Love* by Llwyd Owen, and Jon Gower's *Uncharted*.

On the face of it, they seem very different. They range from the rambling romantic realism and black humour of the first, set mostly on the island of Bardsey in North Wales, through the gritty, tightly structured first person narrative of *Faith Hope & Love*, to the magic (or hysterical?) realism of *Uncharted*, which opens in the estuary of the Rio de la Plata in Estuary, takes on the world, and ends up in rural Wales. But they have much in common. All three engage with a brave new post-devolution Wales, in which Cardiff, Europe's self-acclaimed youngest capital city, figures prominently; previous anglo-Welsh writing focused on the mining valleys and rural Wales, but rarely on Cardiff. All three (most notably Gower) offer reflections on the de-anglicisation of the country. But, perhaps most significantly, they are all first attempts at rewriting. In this sense, they are experimental novels, and the writer's own reflections on what they are doing, and why, sheds an interesting light on the process, and the relationships which each one has individually with the two languages.

In *Twenty Thousand Saints* past crimes and future possibilities jostle together uncomfortably and interact in an unlikely cast of characters. Archeologist Deian heads a troupe of female helpers trying to unearth the bones of past pilgrims on Bardsey island, where, legend has it, in the early centuries of the Celtic church they came to die, and where Deian's mother disappeared more than a decade earlier. On the same island a hermit nun, Vivien, grapples with a TV troupe (also female) from S4C, who have come to film the arrival on the island of her son Iestyn, just released from prison in Cardiff, and suspected of having murdered Deian's mother. Iestyn and Deian were Welsh speaking childhood playmates. When, inevitably, they meet again on the island, they find that they no longer

share the language. Deian has been living since the age of 18 in Preston, but how can someone lose a language as easily as that, thinks Iestyn (who presumably will have himself heard little Welsh in Cardiff gaol):

'Are you sure you've got, you know, dim Cymraeg o gwbl? 'Iestyn stared at him with disbelief. 'Tipyn bach' 'You are joking? How the fuck can you manage to lose your Welsh after a few years over the border and mine stays intact after ten years in Her Majesty's Service?' (Dafydd 2008, 106)

So this is a novel about loss: lost parents, a lost language, and in the metaphor of the dig and the bones which never turn up, a lost history. But it is also about attraction. The title of the Welsh language version, published in 2006, is *Atyniad* – attraction. Close encounters of the sexual kind abound (it is an unusually long hot summer on Bardsey), interwoven with personal voyages of self discovery. Also on the island is Mererid, poet in residence, (Dafydd herself spent a six week period funded by the British Council as writer in residence on Bardsey in 2002), struggling with a poem, presumably in Welsh, but appearing, in *Twenty Thousand Saints*, in English: *A ring of feathers/like unfinished poems/streak the sky's page*. There are faint echoes here of R. S. Thomas, who frequently came to Bardsey birdwatching from his nearby parish in the Llyn Peninsula (and about whom Dafydd wrote her Ph.D).

Mererid is trying to find the words to describe an 'event' which she has witnessed: hundreds of seabirds apparently attracted by the Bardsey lighthouse, and dashed to death on its sides. The fatal attraction stands as a central episode, a symbol, it seems, for self destruction.

But the novel is just as much about new beginnings and new relationships. Vivien, the hermit, lives in self imposed exile on Bardsey, having left mainland Wales disillusioned by the results of the 1979 referendum in which over 80 per cent of the population voted against devolution. The film crew from Cardiff, speaking a new unfamiliar brand of the old language, awaken an interest in what is happening, and in one of the final scenes of the novel she is driven down to Cardiff in production assistant Greta's car. The first thing she notices are the bilingual roadsigns in the English-speaking south: 'a small yet colossal feat'. The car moves on towards the orange glow of promise which is Cardiff by night; and they come to a stop near the water's edge of Cardiff Bay, once one of the most dangerous ports in Britain, but now transformed, the home of the Welsh assembly, the new heart of Wales. Vivien's breath is taken away as she catches sight of the Millenium Centre and its massive inscription in two languages:

In front of them was an enormous building, a slumped, golden creature on its haunches, with light bursting from its body. In these stones horizons sing, it said, gwir fel gwydr o ffwrnais awen. (Dafydd 2008, 242)

The moment of epiphany is a bilingual inscription, a rewriting by the poet Gwyneth Lewis of her own work, not a translation; the Welsh reads, word for word, *Creating truth like glass from the furnace of inspiration*. The lines stand by side as images of a nation proclaiming its vocation to the world.

In an interview, Dafydd describes her own relationship with the two languages; having grown up in a Welsh-speaking family in West Wales, English seemed ‘at once alien and familiar’ to her; which is why she decided to study English as university. As for the choice of writing in English:

Writing in Welsh is completely different to writing in English; because fewer writers are writing in Welsh, there is so much more to be done, and there is real opportunity to be innovative with the way that you use the language. English is different; less vulnerable as a language and therefore more robust and exacting, so that when writing in English I’m less concerned with language innovation and more concerned with finding my own voice and identity within that language. (Dafydd 2014)

The theme of voice and identity is crucial in Llwyd Owen’s 2010 novel *Faith, Hope and Love*. The narrator Alun, brought up in a comfortable home in a middle class Cardiff suburb, finds himself convicted of murder for the mercy killing of his bedridden cancer-stricken grandfather. As a result, he gets caught up with characters from whom, in a different life, he would have kept well away, and the novel ends (as it begins) with a self-imposed car crash, as Alun dispatches his criminal associates to the next world, and, perhaps, at the same time, asserts an identity which he has been pursuing throughout the novel.

Unlike the other two re-writings presented in this paper, *Faith Hope and Love* is a translation (to use the author’s own term) of the original (2007) version, which bears the same title, in Welsh: *Ffydd Gobaith Cariad*. But the switch in language means that the reader’s focus on the language issue comes from a different angle. Typically, Owen’s Welsh language writing (to date he has written five novels in Welsh and one in English) is full of code-switching, particularly in the rollercoaster representation of bilingual dialogue. In *Faith, Hope and Love*, written for English readers, this is not possible; and the dialogue we assume

takes place in Welsh is presented in English, with or without the author telling us this is happening.

The language issue is a strand which runs throughout the novel, linking Alun to his family and, at the same time, alienating him from it:

We were raised in a bilingual home, me and Will, and spoke Welsh to Mam and English to Dad during our childhood. But, as Will grew older, he decided to turn his back on the language. I embraced it like a true patriot. I'm proud of my language, my heritage, my birthright and use it every day as part of my job. When you think about it, it's about the only thing that sets us apart from our neighbours on the other side of Offa's Dyke. Anything that makes us stand apart from our dear oppressors has got to be a good thing. I mean, otherwise aren't we just an irrelevant principality clinging to our bastard brother's underbelly? Without our own language, we're no more of a country than Kent. (Owen 2010, 25)

Significantly, Alun has a Welsh name (or rather, a Welsh spelling for it); his brother has the name of the heir to the English throne. The love-hate relationship with Will is central to the novel: Will is a successful surgeon with a beautiful wife; Alun, when his terminally ill grandfather is moved into the house by his parents, is a 29 year old mummy's boy with no girlfriend and no real job (ironically, he works for a non-profit agency, translating and promoting Wales to the world). The arrival of granddad Paddy (or should I call him *dadcu*, wonders Alun) gives both men an opportunity to find a route to dignity – Alun wants to start to live, Paddy wants to be helped to die.

So this is a coming of age novel, as well as an 'urban thriller' which trawls through the low life of Cardiff, in its drug-dealing and pub brawls. The careful structure, which alternates between flashbacks to the pre-prison period, as Alun contemplates helping Paddy - interspersed with conversations about poetry and Joyce, since Alun is a poet *manqué* and Paddy the proud owner of a first edition of *A portrait of the artist* - and scenes following Alun's release from prison, three years later, when cash-strapped Alun unwillingly gets drawn into being the driver for a gang on an armed robbery spree, allows tension to build up alongside introspection.

Faith, Hope and Love is a first person novel, and given the complex character of Alun, self irony is never far below the surface of the narrative. At one point Paddy, who is a willful and mischievous patient, quotes R. S. Thomas, from a volume which Alun has given to him as a Christmas present, slurring the words:

*It ish too late to shtart
For deshtinationsh not of the heart
I musht shtay here with my hurt.* (Owen 2010, 191)

Paddy has taken the last three lines of *Here* from Thomas's 1961 collection *Tares* to make a bitter reflection on his life. The opening of the poem, however, which is not presented, could be a comment on Alun's own coming of age, and an invitation to the old man to acknowledge his complicity in the plot which is taking shape in Alun's mind to bring an end to Paddy's suffering:

*I am a man now.
Pass your hand over my brow.
You can feel the place where the brains grow.*

Faith Hope and Love, because of the first person narrative, provides a more personal account of present day Wales than the multi-focussed *Twenty Thousand Saints*, or the globally aware *Unchartered*. But this latter novel, by BBC journalist Jon Gower, like Owen part of a new generation of bilingual South Walians, is also about a coming of age – of an entire nation. It starts with an aged but not-quite-dead Tango dancer in Argentina being pushed out to sea on a paper boat by her life-long lover and dance partner. The boat miraculously avoids all manner of storm and sea monster, and a year or so later drifts into a port on the western seaboard of the United States.

The woman is examined by science and pronounced neither dead nor alive, since she appears to be breathing one breath per day. Within weeks the woman-who-sleeps, or Marina (as she has come to be known) is a global phenomenon, hailed as a goddess and the founder of a new religion. She is made to sail in state round the world, in the decommissioned liner *Queen Elizabeth II*, renamed *Marine Star*. After an interlude in Oakland, California, the storyline comes home to Wales, where Marina is greeted with a fervor reminiscent of nineteenth century non-conformism. It is here that Marina claims her first martyr, the victim of a pub brawl. Gower delights in depicting Cardiff low life, as seedy and violent as anything the narrator of *Faith Hope and Love* has to contend with. But Gower is writing in a different dimension, at the interface between magic realism, science fiction, and black comedy.

One of the more engaging characters in the novel, Strimmer, spends his time scouring through Cardiff's sewers to catch rats for his fleet of kebab vans which keep Cardiff football fans fed and happy. On one of his expeditions Strimmer's

headlamp illuminates a fresco which illustrates the life of one Josiah Cardiff, and Gower digresses for eight pages with a spurious etymology for the name of the Welsh Capital. This presumably is an example of how a story, to use Gower's term, can 'whisper itself into myth'. In doing so, it grows in the telling – literally, since the original Welsh language version, *Dala'r Llanw* ('Catching the tide') is rather shorter.

Speaking about the trend for rewriting, Gower relates it to a new mood of 'confident bilingualism'. Both languages offer their own rewards:

Writing in two languages has rewards and challenges. Some words have yet to be invented in Welsh, so you have to make do, or make ones up, giving one a very real sense of adding something new to the literature of my small country. (Gower 2014)

English, with its larger lexis, gives the opportunity for 'two bites at the cherry', 'a chance to revise, winnow or expand'. We see the process at work in the first page of *Uncharted*. The opening of *Dala'r Llanw*:

Gwrandewch! Fel miliynau o gusanau bach ar ei hymylon mwdlyd, tywodlyd a graenog mae'r afon enfawr yb cwrdd a'r tir ac yn ei garu ac yn canu iddo. Symffoni berseinol. Can yr afon. Cancion del Rio. (Gower 2007, 7)

becomes, in the English rewriting:

Listen! Like a million small, slippery wet kisses on muddy shore and hard escarpment, on pebble beach and marshy reaches, the enormous river meets the land and sings to it, a song of life, water to earth. It is a polyphonic symphony with a chorus of aqueous voices – sucking seduction, rippling percussions, and millions of swamp frogs looking for a wet date. This is the river song. Cancion del Rio. (Gower 2010, 7)

as Gower allows himself to be tempted by the sound of the English words, the alliterations, and a lyricism which recalls Dylan Thomas, and the opening of *Under Milk Wood*. The debt to Thomas can be found elsewhere, in the 'Bible-black' water of the ocean home to the sea monster, for example, but there are plenty of other influences, ranging from Coleridge to Updike, too numerous to mention.

Uncharted is also a love story, premised by a quote from the Northern Irish writer Robert McLiam Wilson: 'Every story is a love story'. Apart from

the tenderness with which the ageing Horacio dispatches Flavia (Marina's real name) on her adventure across the high seas, it is difficult to see how this applies to *Uncharted*, with its rollicking scenes of the underworld, its lyrical flights of fancy, and its excursions into the realm of science fiction. But perhaps the final pages, in their litany of Welsh place names, hold the answer. Gower describes how small shrines to Marina start appearing throughout the country of Wales, reflecting a spiritual awakening:

From Moelfre to Cwmrhydyceirw, from Garnswllt to Penmaenmawr, little shrines, mushrooming, in all their frail and fragile architectures. (Gowen 2010, 235)

There is more than a faint echo here of the final scene in *Twenty Thousand Saints*. Deian, the archeologist who had lost his mother tongue, drives home to Preston along the North Wales coastline, and the succession of place names which he repeats aloud as he passes the road signs, seems to hold a new promise:

For large parts of the journey he muttered to himself in Welsh, enjoying the new slick feel of those words on his lips; shouting out the passing place name to himself: Pen y Clip, Penmaenmawr, Abergele, Ruddlan. (Dafydd 2008, 247)

The love lies in the names, and the knowledge that the place names of Wales are the guardians of the *hen iaith*, the old language which they enshrine; and, at the same time, the 'mushrooming' indicates a process in act, while the 'new slick feel' as Deian rediscovers his mother tongue suggests a new lease of life for the language, achieved thanks to the combined forces of devolution, Welsh medium television, and a bilingual education policy; not to mention a generation of talented new writers who are prepared to use English to give the rest of the world an insight into what is happening.

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OLIVERA TERZIĆ

Cultural Diversity in Michel Tournier's *The Golden Droplet*

1 Introduction

L'un des plus importants et des plus appréciés auteurs français contemporains, Michel Tournier, est membre de l'Académie française et lauréat du Grand Prix du roman pour son livre *Vendredi ou les limbes du Pacifique* ainsi que du prix Goncourt pour son roman *Le Roi des Aulnes*. L'œuvre de cet écrivain toujours fécond est très riche et variée, et comprend plusieurs romans, livre d'essais, notes de lecture, pensées, traités, notes de voyage, etc. À défaut d'avoir réussi à l'agrégation de philosophie, ses aspirations philosophiques ont trouvé leur essor dans son œuvre littéraire. L'œuvre de Michel Tournier, par son propre aveu, est faite de la métaphysique et de la philosophie déguisées: "J'ai dit que mes romans étaient autant de tentatives pour transcrire en images et en histoires un certain fonds métaphysique. Et bien, c'est un fait." (Tournier 2001, 265). Ses romans représentent des aventures cérébrales noyées dans un contexte romanesque classique et on se rend compte peu à peu que la complexité, la profondeur et le mystère de sa pensée réflexive n'y sont jamais épuisés par les mots mais pour la plupart ils sont donnés comme des promesses au lecteur qui est invité à devenir le complice de l'écrivain en tâchant de donner son sens au texte et à le comprendre à sa manière à lui. Et l'effort investi est toujours pleinement récompensé.

L'idée principale que nous allons aborder dans ce travail, en nous servant pour l'illustrer d'un des romans de Michel Tournier - *La goutte d'or*, est celle de la

quête du moi dans la vie d'un individu, élaborant au passage, limités par l'espace, plusieurs autres questions relevant de la principale – les motifs et les possibles issues de la quête, les voies de sa réalisation, le rôle des données culturelles et du milieu sur la nature de la quête, la liberté comme la condition sine qua non de la quête, l'importance de l'éducation.

2 Lecteur-complice

Par l'aveu de Tournier "Le véritable sujet de ces romans, c'est la lente métamorphose du destin en destinée, je veux dire d'un mécanisme obscur et coercitif en l'élan unanime et chaleureux d'un être vers son accomplissement." (Tournier 2005, 242). L'approche que Tournier utilise dans ce roman on le trouve présent aussi dans ses autres romans – l'anticipation du sujet de son roman dès son entrée, en se servant de la technique de la mise en abîme, du récit dans le récit. De cette manière, la façon de lire le roman est dès le début définie, prévenant le lecteur qu'il va souvent avoir besoin de recourir à l'interprétation symbolique et non linéaire du texte du roman. Tournier, en tant que photographe réputé, se sert de l'œil et de l'ouïe d'Idriss, le personnage principal du roman, comme d'une caméra mouvante enregistrant tout sur son passage et qui n'a pour tout commentaire que le choix des images qu'elle retient. Car les images elles-mêmes parlent de celui qui les perçoit prouvant qu'elles ne sont pas prises par hasard. C'est la conscience devant laquelle elles passent qui fait son choix parmi la multitude d'images dont elle est à tout moment envahie. C'est pourquoi à certains moments ce roman revêt des aspects proches du procédé du Nouveau roman, comme l'enregistrement impassible des données extérieures vues par une conscience sans son intervention et sans chercher à les faire accompagner d'une causalité ou d'explications fournies par la raison. Retour au texte, ce sera aussi notre devise dans la tentative d'interpréter si ce n'est qu'un seul aspect des nombreux sens de ce roman. Chez Tournier le lecteur doit savoir lire à travers les images en forme de mythe et concevoir sa propre histoire sur la base du matériel brut offert. C'est pourquoi nous nous sommes appliqués ici d'en trouver le fil et en coudre les sous-entendus et les multiples sens de ce roman sans jamais prétendre les épuiser tous, et se concentrer sur la question de la diversité culturelle et son influence sur la vie d'un individu. Car chaque œuvre échappe au déchiffrement total vu qu'elle est aussi, en même temps que créée par l'écrivain, un générateur sui generis de création et de sens en soi, avec chaque nouveau lecteur, indépendamment de son

créateur. Notre méthode dans ce travail est en outre acclamée et, même dans un certain sens, imposée par Tournier lui-même qui décrit une bonne critique philosophique par les mots suivants:

Car la vraie critique doit être créatrice et “voir” dans l’œuvre des richesses qui y sont indiscutablement, mais que l’auteur n’y avait pas mises. Proposition paradoxale si l’on s’en tient à l’idée habituelle d’un auteur “créant” l’œuvre, c’est-à-dire la sortant de lui-même, comme une poupée gigogne en expulse une autre plus petite qui était dans son ventre. Mais elle prend au contraire tout son sens si l’on accepte le principe souvent illustré dans cet essai d’une autogenèse de l’œuvre dont l’auteur ne serait lui-même que le sous-produit. (Tournier 2005, 209)

2.1 UNE HISTOIRE D’AVENTURE

Un jour, lorsqu’il gardait ses moutons et ses chèvres dans le désert entourant son village natal de Tabelbala situé dans une oasis du Sahara, le garçon Idriss a été pris en photo par une femme blonde française sortant de sa Land Rover. Idriss lui réclame sa photo mais elle lui répond que ce n’est qu’à Paris que sa photo sera développée et qu’elle la lui enverra. Après des semaines passées sans que la photo lui soit remise Idriss décide de partir lui-même à sa recherche à Paris. Même si cette raison il la présente comme la véritable raison de son départ, il sait lui-même que cela ne lui sert que comme un prétexte pour entreprendre son voyage. Quels sont les vrais motifs de son départ ? Ces motifs ne sont pas clairs à Idriss lui-même, c’est pourquoi il y a lieu ici de parler plutôt du pressentiment, d’un sentiment vague, d’une sensation intuitive, accompagnée d’un besoin urgent de s’évader. Ce dernier est lié à un rejet presque inconscient à se soumettre aux rites et aux coutumes locales en y endurant la métamorphose cruelle et violente qui transforme d’un trait un adolescent en un homme adulte. Dans sa communauté, le passage de l’enfant à l’adulte se fait par un acte de mariage, le plus souvent accordé entre les familles, pour ensuite fonder sa propre famille. Pourquoi la seule idée de suivre cette tradition conformément aux autres jeunes hommes et jeunes filles de sa tribu est inadmissible et inconcevable pour Idriss? C’est justement là que l’épisode de la photo reçoit sa signification pour lui. Elle l’invite à faire sa recherche personnelle, incite le début de son procès d’initiation dans la vie qui ne lui serait pas imposé par son milieu resserré mais qu’il veut se donner à soi-même. Son voyage à la recherche de sa photo représente donc son

voyage initiatique, le thème d'initiation d'ailleurs très présent chez Tournier. Ce désir de partir est décrit par ces mots dans le roman:

Au spectacle de ce jeune homme qui s'enracinait solennellement à Tabelbala en devenant mari, et sans doute bientôt père, Idriss se sentait des ailes lui pousser aux talons, et il pensait avec un élan affamé à la photographe blonde qui lui avait pris son image et l'avait emportée avec elle dans son véhicule de rêve. En vérité deux scènes contradictoires se disputaient son imagination. Un jour Salah Brahim, sautant de son camion, lui donnait une enveloppe provenant de Paris dans laquelle il trouvait sa photo. Mais il se voyait surtout prenant la route et s'engageant vers le nord dans une longue marche qui s'achèverait à Paris. La vieille Kuka l'avait deviné, il ne songeait plus qu'à partir. (Tournier 2009, 29)

Avec l'intrusion de la photo dans sa vie, Idriss est amené à se demander s'il y existe une alternative à la loi commune, comme il existe des gens venus de loin avec leurs grosses voitures et dont la façon de vivre est si différente de la sienne. Sa curiosité éveillée il est poussé à la satisfaire. Idriss n'était pas prêt pour la vie à laquelle il envisageait devoir être bientôt soumis en restant dans son village natal. Il savait qu'en y restant il n'avait d'autre choix que d'obéir aux usages et aux règles non écrites de la communauté. Il enviait à Ibrahim, son ami qui, en tant que nomade, était libéré de toutes les entraves de la société. Idriss, en tant que oasien et sédentaire, ne disposait pas d'autre choix que celui que la communauté, la tradition, l'héritage culturel et familial lui prescrivaient. Il se sentait impuissant à les combattre en y restant, donc il se sentait obligé de partir pour retrouver sa liberté.

2.2 APPRENTISSAGE DE LA LIBERTÉ

Partir, donc, était pour Idriss une nécessité inévitable, son seul choix. Cela nous amène à l'idée de la liberté, comme à une condition essentielle pour tout individu dans la quête de son épanouissement personnel. Comme appui à cette thèse on trouve chez Tournier l'explication suivante :

Or l'observation de vrais jumeaux sur une assez longue durée impose une conclusion différente. En effet ils ne cessent au fil des ans de se différencier l'un de l'autre, alors même qu'ils restent ensemble et sont soumis au même milieu. Cela prouve, qu'outre le milieu et l'hérédité, un troisième facteur intervient dans

l'édification d'une personnalité, et ce troisième facteur, il faut bien l'appeler la libre décision ou tout simplement la liberté. (Tournier 2001, 94)

La liberté de faire sa quête pour être capable d'avoir des réponses pour soi, se reflète dans la façon unique dont ces réponses sont acquises, même si elles peuvent contenir des vérités universelles. Mais chaque recherche diffère de l'autre et les réponses qu'elle apporte à tout un chacun sont perçues comme étant toujours nouvelles. On ne peut pas les hériter, les apprendre de ses proches plus âgés, chacun doit parvenir à les connaître par soi-même, en faisant sa propre expérience de la vie qui est toujours unique. Le symbole de la liberté dans le roman est un bijou en forme de la goutte d'or. Lorsqu'il assiste au mariage d'un jeune homme de sa tribu, Idriss reste impressionné par la danse rituelle d'une danseuse venue de la tribu voisine sous le nom de Zett Zobeida.

Mais ce qui retient surtout le regard d'Idriss, c'est, tournant autour d'un lacet de cuir, une goutte d'or d'un éclat et d'un profil admirables. On ne peut concevoir un objet d'une plus simple et plus concise perfection. Tout semble contenu dans cet ovale légèrement renflé à sa base. Tout paraît exprimé dans le silence de cette bulle solitaire qui ne vient heurter aucun autre bijou dans ses brefs balancements. A l'opposé des pendeloques qui imitent le ciel, la terre, les animaux du désert et les poissons de la mer, la bulle dorée ne veut rien dire qu'elle-même. C'est le signe pur, la forme absolue. Que Zett Zobeida et sa goutte d'or soient l'émanation d'un monde sans image, l'antithèse et peut-être l'antidote de la femme platinée à l'appareil de photo, Idriss commença peut-être à le soupçonner ce soir-là. (Tournier 2009, 31)

Zett Zobeida finit sa danse dans une extase spirituelle où les mouvements des parties du corps continus mais séparés l'un de l'autre se confondent dans une seule vibration de tout son corps centrée dans le ventre frémissant. Sa goutte d'or Idriss la prend comme une relique, pressentant qu'elle aura pour lui une signification importante qu'il lui reste à découvrir. En effet, au cours du voyage Idriss apprend d'un artisan que la goutte d'or qui lui est attachée au cou est le symbole de l'enfant libre. De cet aspect, on peut identifier ce symbole en forme pure avec la conscience pure, conscience à son réveil, conscience dans son premier état qui est indescriptible et fermée en elle-même parce qu'elle englobe le tout. Mais Idriss est loin d'en deviner le sens, n'étant qu'au début de son voyage. Ce qu'il entrevoit par moments ce sont des pressentiments qui ne recevront leurs explications que plus tard et nous font rapprocher Idriss au jeune Marcel et Tournier à Proust. La

différence est qu'Idriss, un jeune homme analphabète du Sahara, ne finira pas à nous fournir ces explications élaborées par la raison en rétrospective comme chez Proust, mais Tournier le laisse au niveau de la connaissance intuitive, éprouvée, vécue dans un moment présent.

2.3 L'IMAGE DE L'ÂME

L'image en tant que l'idée guide de voyage d'Idriss est porteuse de plusieurs significations, à partir des diverses cultures. Dans l'Islam l'image est interdite comme source de l'idolâtrie, et aussi parce qu'on croit qu'elle arrache l'âme à celui qui, par imprudence, s'offre complaisamment à l'appareil photographique. Donc, c'est à la recherche de son âme volée par image qu'Idriss se décide à partir. Mais pour être capable de la retrouver il lui faut d'abord découvrir son âme, devenir conscient de son existence en lui. Considérant la définition de l'âme proposée par Tournier dans son livre *Miroir des idées* selon laquelle "L'âme est le principe vital, éternel et immuable qui habite le corps. [...] L'âme est une lueur divine prisonnière d'un corps le temps d'une vie. La mort est sa libération." (Tournier 2001, 146) on peut déduire que l'âme dont il s'agit ici est le fond humain commun. C'est ce qu'entrevoit le peintre observant les traits pour rendre à travers les traits d'un visage l'apparition de l'être lui-même. Idriss ne sait pas qui il est et c'est pourquoi peu lui importe comment est la photo qui le représente. Il se sent étranger à lui-même et il ne saurait pas se reconnaître dans la photo. Tournier expose ici l'idée selon laquelle on devrait d'abord se connaître soi-même pour être capable de reconnaître les traits de son caractère sur son visage, pour que son intérieur réponde à son aspect extérieur. Citons deux exemples du roman extraits des deux histoires *Barberousse* et *La reine blonde* qui sont insérées dans le fil du récit du roman et qui illustrent cette idée:

Je suis le peintre de la profondeur, et la profondeur d'un être transparaît sur son visage, dès que cesse l'agitation de la vie triviale, comme le fond rocheux de la mer, avec ses algues vertes et ses poissons d'or, apparaît aux yeux du voyageur quand cesse le médiocre clapotis provoqué à la surface par les rameurs ou une brise capricieuse. [...] Cette âme que tu découvres et que tu dessines sur ta toile, est-elle très différente d'un homme à un autre? Ou bien s'agit-il d'un fonds commun à tous les hommes? Elle est très différente, et en même temps il y a un fonds commun qui tient à la condition humaine elle-même. (Tournier 2009, 39)

Et ensuite:

L'image est douée d'un rayonnement paralysant, telle la tête de Méduse qui changeait en pierre tous ceux qui croisaient son regard. Pourtant cette fascination n'est irrésistible qu'aux yeux des analphabètes. En effet l'image n'est qu'un enchevêtrement de signes, et sa force maléfique vient de l'addition confuse et discordante de leurs significations, comme la chute et l'entrechoc des milliards de gouttes d'eau de la mer font ensemble le mugissement lugubre de la tempête, au lieu du concert cristallin qu'une oreille douée d'un discernement surhumain saurait entendre. Pour le lettré, l'image n'est pas muette. Son rugissement de fauve se dénoue en paroles nombreuses et gracieuses. Il n'est que de savoir lire. (Tournier 2009, 208)

L'âme qui émane du corps lors de la danse, ou de la voix humaine lors du chant, Idriss commence à la deviner en regardant danser Zett Zobeida et en écoutant chanter Oum Kalsoum:

Mais il l'écoutait des heures durant, et peu à peu le souvenir de Zett Zobeida s'imposait à son esprit. C'était la même voix, un peu trop grave pour une femme, la voix de jeune bédouin dont Oum Kalsoum avait pris l'apparence au début de sa carrière, avec des intonations charnelles d'une déchirante tristesse. Idriss revoyait alors le ventre luisant et noir de la danseuse, cette bouche sans lèvres par laquelle s'exprimait tout le corps pudiquement voilé. C'était la même articulation parfaitement distincte, la prononciation martelée, les mots détachés selon les règles de la diction coranique, et aussi cette répétition modulée, ce retour inlassable du même verset repris avec une intonation différente, jusqu'au vertige, jusqu'à l'hypnose. La libellule qui est libelle, et déjoue la ruse de la mort, le criquet qui est écrit, et dévoile le secret de la vie. (Tournier 2009, 197)

Puis, l'image, c'est aussi quelque chose qui vient et qui renvoie à une existence d'un autre monde complètement inconnu. Et c'est justement l'inconnu qui attire, qui suscite la curiosité, provoque l'insatiable désir de la découverte et de la connaissance. C'est l'inconnu et la diversité du monde extérieur qui correspondent au sentiment vague de l'inconnu qui guette de l'intérieur d'un être et qui, comme un gouffre, appelle à se pencher au-dessus et à examiner ses profondeurs. Donc, la quête du monde extérieur correspond ici à la quête intérieure, et non seulement elle la symbolise mais ces deux quêtes dans le cas d'Idriss coïncident et s'entremêlent. Le voyage d'Idriss en tant que son voyage personnel, initiatique,

est destiné à l'amener à se reconnaître en même temps qu'à retrouver sa propre image. La quête de sa photo doit finir par la rejoindre, c'est-à-dire par peupler sa photo imaginée d'un Idriss bien réel. Reconnaître Idriss sur la photo, c'est deviner les traits de son propre visage qui rendent évidents le contenu de son âme. C'est le sens qu'on trouve dans ces mots prononcés par Idriss: "Aller chercher ma photo? Non, pas exactement. C'est autre chose. Il faudrait peut-être dire: aller rejoindre ma photo" (Tournier 2009, 99), et puis: "Pas seulement en France. Cette photo, je l'ai déjà trouvée à Béni Abbès, à Béchar et à Oran. [...] Seulement jusqu'ici les morceaux que j'ai trouvés ne me ressemblaient pas. [...] Et puis tout de même, ce n'est pas à moi à ressembler à ma photo. C'est ma photo qui doit me ressembler, non?" (Tournier 2009, 100)

2.4 LES VOIES DU RÉVEIL

De tout cela Idriss n'a qu'un vague pressentiment, il ne perçoit jamais clairement ce qu'il recherche pas plus qu'il ne réfléchit en s'expliquant sur les raisons de son voyage. Ce dont il est sûr c'est la nécessité de partir et la certitude que l'aventure qui suit détient en elle-même les réponses aux questions qu'il ne s'est jamais posées explicitement. Avec Idriss se trouvant dans un musée du Sahara à Béni Abbès on assiste au phénomène du réveil de la conscience.

Idriss écoutait avec étonnement. Ces règles de vie quotidienne, il les connaissait pour les avoir toujours observées, mais comme spontanément et sans les avoir jamais entendu formuler. De les entendre de la bouche d'un Français, confondu dans un groupe de touristes à cheveux blancs, lui donnait une sorte de vertige. Il avait l'impression qu'on l'arrachait à lui-même, comme si son âme avait soudain quitté son corps, et l'observait de l'extérieur avec stupeur. (Tournier 2009, 78)

Pour la première fois Idriss devient le témoin de soi-même, de sa propre existence, la voyant s'objectiver devant ses yeux, comme si quelqu'un lui avait arraché ses intestins et les examinait. Cette exhibition des choses qui lui sont si familières et avec lesquelles il s'est identifié, le force à les apercevoir séparées de lui-même comme réellement et indépendamment existantes et particulières, ce qui le renvoie à se détacher d'elles, de percevoir soi-même comme un être existant pour soi sur le fond du monde bien connu. Cela provoque la désintégration de sa

conscience et de sa personne identifiées jusque là avec le milieu natal et son corps physique. Ce ne sont que des annonces et la préparation de l'épisode avec laquelle Tournier conclut son roman. La conscience de soi-même émergeante entraîne la coupure de la conscience jusque là intégrale en deux – dans la conscience de son existence comme être conscient et la conscience qui en est consciente. C'est justement la perception de cet autre monde inconnu, différent du sien, qui le pousse à reprendre connaissance de soi-même et ce n'est que dans cet ordre que doit se produire la compréhension et l'acceptation de cet autrui où l'on se trouve. Ces épisodes et le sentiment qu'elles provoquent en lui nous rappellent la nausée de Sartre, advenue au moment où Roquentin se rend compte de l'existence absurde, sans raison, en regardant les racines d'un arbre dans un parc. L'existence dénudée, de ce qui est, qui existe et qui n'est en aucune relation avec lui et avec sa conscience. Ainsi il arrive à identifier l'existence de l'être par lui-même, celui du monde extérieur, du monde des choses, et séparément de lui l'être pour soi (conscience de soi-même) qui cherche toujours à se désintégrer pour s'intégrer dans le premier. Cette aspiration restant vaine et impossible à réaliser, l'être pour soi reste dans cet état de viscosité, de gluant, qui caractérise cette relation "entre", toujours inassouvi dans sa tendance à s'objectiver en matière, en chose solide, en conscience pure et intégrale. La quête d'Idriss est personnifiée par l'espace. Pourtant, chacun a sa façon de parvenir à la connaissance de ses vérités – et ici, dans le cas d'Idriss, le voyage n'est qu'un symbole et qu'un exemple d'une quête individuelle. Il ne faudrait pas en déduire que celui qui ne part pas reste privé de sa recherche. Ici elle n'est qu'extériorisée, à travers le voyage et l'action.

2.5 L'AUTRUI

Idriss a besoin de s'aliéner pour rechercher son identité, de faire l'expérience de l'autrui pour se retrouver et renouer avec son moi. Il a besoin d'un autre, d'une évasion, pour revenir à soi-même, et arriver ainsi au bout de son accomplissement, l'idée élaborée aussi dans un autre roman de Tournier – *Vendredi ou les limbes du Pacifique*. C'est pourquoi on peut dire qu'autant les événements et les personnes cherchaient Idriss autant il les attirait à soi lui aussi. Son cousin à Paris est le premier à s'en apercevoir et à lui conseiller d'en profiter. Idriss est curieux bien que sa curiosité paraisse impassible, indifférente et comme non incitée de sa propre part. Pourtant il ne perd pas l'occasion d'aller à la rencontre des diverses aventures qui se présentent sur sa voie. Idriss cherche intuitivement, en se dirigeant et en suivant les signes sur la route – comme les images, la goutte d'or,

les mannequins, l'abattoir, le chameau... Il ne comprend rien intelligiblement et intellectuellement, il sent et perçoit de son œil intérieur. Le lecteur n'assiste qu'en de rares moments au déroulement de la pensée d'Idriss de manière qu'on se doute que c'est plutôt l'état sans pensée que Tournier veut qu'il incarne. On a déjà dit que Tournier se sert de la présence d'Idriss comme d'une sorte de camera, de témoin neutre des mots et des événements, du comportement d'Idriss envers tous ceux qui l'adressent déjouant l'essai d'une quelconque interprétation du monde qui l'entoure. Il répète maintes fois et à chaque nouvelle aventure qu'il n'y comprend rien. Par exemple quand il dit:

Les Français, faut toujours qu'ils expliquent tout. Mais moi, je comprends rien à leurs explications. Un jour une Française blonde est passée chez moi. Elle m'a photographié. Elle m'a dit: "Je t'enverrai ta photo." J'ai jamais rien reçu. Alors maintenant, je suis pour travailler à Paris. Des photos, j'en vois partout. Des photos d'Afrique aussi, du Sahara, du désert, des oasis. Je reconnais rien. On me dit: "C'est ton pays ça, c'est toi ça." Moi? Ça? Je reconnais rien! (Tournier 2009, 130)

Voici encore un autre exemple:

Encore une histoire que je ne comprends pas. Le désert, tout le monde m'en parle depuis que je l'ai quitté. A Béni Abbès, on l'a mis dans un musée. A Béchar, on l'a peint sur une toile. J'ai vu à Marseille une affiche sur le paradis des oasis. J'ai dîné avec un marquis. Il m'a raconté Antinéa de M. Benoit, et le général Laperrine, le père de Foucauld et la Légion étrangère. Et maintenant vous avec votre petit prince. Je n'y comprends rien, et pourtant ce désert, c'est bien là que je suis né. (Tournier 2009, 142)

2.6 APPRENDRE À VIVRE

Tout ce que disent les autres a une signification d'arrière plan relevant, comme toute la culture française, des bases enracinées adoptées implicitement et qu'Idriss ignore. Et même davantage, il se sent incapable de les apprendre même en y assistant sans cesse et vivant en France. Il se montre irrévocablement déplacé, inadapté, sans espoir d'une possible immersion dans l'autrui. On conclut que c'est dû au fait que l'autrui avant d'être accepté et adopté exige d'abord à être connu

et reconnu. Tournier nous montre ici l'importance de l'éducation et du savoir dont le pouvoir s'avère toujours justifié par la vie. D'après lui

l'éducation au sens le plus large du mot prépare un enfant à entrer dans la société et à y tenir sa place. Il semble qu'elle revêt toujours et partout deux formes, l'une morale, affective, voire magique, l'autre purement intellectuelle et rationnelle. La première est initiation, la seconde information: Education = initiation + information. (Tournier 2005, 57)

Et Idriss est un garçon sans éducation, analphabète. Tout ce qu'il apprend dans la vie et sur la vie il le doit à l'expérience, et c'est souvent la voie la plus difficile pour apprendre les choses de la vie sans en être nullement préparé. On a vu d'après les citations qu'Idriss a souvent l'impression que les autres, les Français notamment, savent plus du Sahara que lui-même. Idriss ne comprend rien dans les propos des Français qu'il rencontre sur son chemin, leur langage lui paraissant comme codé, chiffré, évoquant des faits bien connus appartenant à la mémoire collective des Français. On lui dit :

C'est parce que tu ne sais pas. Il faut apprendre. Après tout, les petits Français apprennent bien la France à l'école. Je vais t'apprendre Idriss-du-Sahara. (Tournier 2009, 130)

Sans apprendre, l'étranger reste toujours un étranger et non seulement dans un milieu différent de celui dont il est issu. Le savoir sur son pays natal qu'Idriss possède est acquis par expérience, comme une vue intériorisée du monde et de la vie qu'il porte en soi et dont il n'est pas conscient. Lorsque ce monde à Idriss vient d'être présenté comme objectivement existant et comme quelque chose de divers et en même temps unique, cela provoque en lui l'étonnement, la stupeur et un malaise. Jusqu'à ce moment son monde à lui n'était qu'une monade et il ne pouvait en imaginer un autre. Lui et son monde faisaient un, et il était loin d'en faire la différence. Le but de certaines expériences mystiques est de regagner cet état d'âme d'enfant qu'on perd en devenant adulte. A ce propos on trouve chez Tournier dans son livre d'essais une explication plutôt théorique :

L'homme adulte et raisonnable peut se fixer comme idéal un état qui est celui de sa petite enfance prolongée et préservée. L'innocence est amour spontané de l'être, oui à la vie, acceptation souriante des nourritures célestes et terrestres, ignorance de l'alternative infernale pureté-impureté. Certains saints, comme

François d'Assise, paraissent vivre dans cet état où la simplicité animale rejoint la transparence divine. (Tournier 2001, 127)

3 Conclusion

Cherchant à être des dignes complices de Tournier dans la lecture de ses romans, nous avons essayé dans ce travail à donner une contribution dans l'édification de leurs sens en y apportant une vue nouvelle et originale. Alors pour conclure, d'après ce que nous avons écrit ci-dessus, il nous reste à nous exprimer sur la question de la nécessité, mais aussi sur la possibilité d'assimilation. Selon Tournier, on dirait que l'assimilation est nécessaire à un certain degré pour savoir (sur)vivre dans un milieu différent, ce qui exige d'apprendre ses règles de fonctionnement inédites, mais que l'assimilation complète n'est ni possible ni nécessaire. Bien que chez Tournier on trouve aussi que "l'être vivant n'est en somme qu'une certaine formule héréditaire livrée durant toute son existence aux caresses et aux agressions des milieux qu'il traverse." (Tournier 2005, 243) l'aventure d'Idriss contribue à nous affirmer dans l'idée que le facteur milieu- hérédité ne doit pas être décisif dans la vie d'un individu, et cela dans la mesure où il se trouve prêt à imposer à ce facteur sa propre liberté. De même que vivre dans un milieu ne comporte pas prétendre à l'adaptation de sa personne à ce milieu qu'il s'agisse du milieu natal ou non. Il existe un fond commun pour tous les hommes et c'est à chacun de le retrouver en soi. La quête en elle-même est universelle, et les façons dont elle se réalise diffèrent d'un individu à l'autre aussi bien que les résultats obtenus. Trouver le fond commun chacun en soi même, comme porteur de l'être en soi, faire la paix avec l'existence et la condition humaine comme telle, se résigner à être simplement dans un moment et un milieu présents, si l'on y parvient tout milieu peut devenir acceptable comme tel. L'aventure d'Idriss nous amène à conclure que la quête, qui n'est pas préméditée et dont on n'attend pas d'avoir des résultats immédiats, pas plus qu'on n'y songe, finit par récompenser celui qui est en quête par des résultats qui sont d'autant plus surprenants et édifiants qu'ils sont plus inattendus et moins recherchés. Chez Tournier, à la différence de Sartre affirmant que l'existence précède l'essence, on dirait plutôt que c'est l'essence elle-même qui ne se trouve que dans l'existence. On voit Idriss, à la fin du roman, se réduire par une évolution apparemment inverse, comme Vendredi et Robinson, à la nature élémentaire, aux particules élémentaires qui ne font rien d'autre qu'exister. Et c'est justement dans l'existence que les personnages de Tournier finissent par retrouver le sens, à travers l'affranchissement progressif

des apports superflus de la civilisation pour atteindre la simplicité sublime dans la beauté d'exister.

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JENAETH MARKAJ

Joseph Brodsky and the Cosmopolitan Ideal

1 Biographical Introduction

As increased mobility and the spread of information technology render national borders less distinct, intercultural competence is becoming increasingly important to the development of global community. At the same time, certain conceptual frameworks underlying traditional lines of academic investigation make the achievement of such an aim extremely difficult. Consequently, it is essential to examine figures that have managed to surmount challenges presented by dominant ideologies and prejudices in true cosmopolitan spirit. Such an individual is Joseph Brodsky, eminent Russian-American writer whose life and oeuvre provide substantive evidence for the success of cultural hybridization in the modern world.

Joseph Brodsky's composite cultural history begins in St. Petersburg, Russia, on May 24, 1940. Much of Brodsky's childhood was spent in poverty, particularly after his father lost a position in the Russian navy because of his Jewish heritage. Such financial difficulties and the political ideology that produced them diminished Brodsky's enthusiasm for government-sponsored institutions, the educational system in particular. At the age of sixteen, he tired of the incessant Communist propaganda and anti-Semitic bias expressed in St. Petersburg classrooms and left school to help support his family (Brodsky 1986, 9). He began a series of jobs that included positions as a milling machine operator, photographer, geologist's

assistant, coroner's assistant, and farm worker (Brodsky 1991, 51). Throughout these projects, Brodsky read a variety of literary classics to teach himself Polish and English. It was also during this period that he began writing.

Brodsky wrote numerous poems and essays in Russian that quickly became popular in underground Soviet literary circles. These endeavours soon invited international attention. In 1969, George L. Kline, professor of philosophy at Bryn Mawr College in the United States, visited the young author to discuss the content of a book of Brodsky's poems that Kline was translating into English. When asked who he would like to write the book's introduction, Brodsky chose renowned poet W.H. Auden (Brodsky 1986, 360). Kline contacted Auden and showed him the manuscript. Auden admired Brodsky's work enough to write the introduction, and this exchange formed the basis of a relationship between the two authors that would profoundly influence Brodsky's understanding of the English language.

Unfortunately, Soviet authorities were less inclined to recognize the merits of Brodsky's writing, disliking the "subversive" ideas expressed in several works. According to Irvin Molotsky, he was charged with "social parasitism" and put on trial in 1964 (Molotsky 1999, 3). Kline reported that charges included the accusation that Brodsky's poetry was, "pornographic, unpatriotic, and expressed a sense of withdrawal and alienation (*otreshennost*) from the world" (Brodsky and Kline 1965, 344). Brodsky was convicted, but largely due to protests from other artists and writers, served only eighteen months of a five-year sentence in an Arctic Circle hard labor camp. His early release did not dispel Communist opposition to his writing, however; his poetry was still banned throughout the Soviet Union. And on June 4, 1972, having decided that he was more of a detriment than an asset to Russian society, the Brezhnev government exiled Brodsky from the country (Brodsky 1986, 374).

This decision, although forcibly isolating Brodsky from his homeland, facilitated his development as an author in a new country with a new language. Upon learning of Brodsky's situation, Carl Proffer, a friend of both Brodsky and Auden, introduced the two men at Auden's summer home in Kirchstetten, Austria. In the succeeding weeks, Auden became Brodsky's model, mentor, and friend. He eventually secured funding for Brodsky's voyage to the United States from the Academy of American Poets (Brodsky 1986, 378).

Upon arrival in America, Brodsky began writing in English, and ultimately became an American citizen. He worked for a number of universities, travelled widely on lecture tours, and joined the American Academy of Arts and Letters. During this period, he continued to publish work in both English and Russian. These literary accomplishments earned him a great deal of recognition and

praise; he received, among other honors, the National Book Award for criticism in 1986 for his book of collected essays, *Less Than One* and the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1987. And in 1992, he became the first foreign-born poet laureate of the United States. These achievements appear even more impressive when viewed in the context of longstanding biases dictating the relationship between the Western and non-Western worlds.

2 Orientalism

One primary challenge of intercultural inquiry lies in a conceptual framework that facilitates Eurocentric understanding. Orientalism, as defined by Edward Said, refers to a school of thought based on imposed or assumed fundamental divisions between Eastern and Western cultures that constitute a, “Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient” (Said 1979, 3). Qualities such as romance, exoticism, mystery, and inscrutability have been attributed to the Orient to establish Eastern culture as not only alien, but less advanced than its European counterpart (Said 1979, 52). The assertion that Asia is inherently inaccessible to European philosophical investigation contains both a value judgment and a subtext of cultural rivalry. In the dominant European philosophical discourse, logical reasoning and rational argumentation remain the pinnacles of enlightened thought. The absence of such techniques in Eastern lifestyles or philosophy, at least from a European standpoint, constitutes a cultural deficiency. Where objective consideration would ground such differences in divergent philosophies of thought and action, Orientalism creates a linear scale of evaluation. Europe sets a standard that Asia simply fails to achieve.

The central question that arises from the Orientalist dilemma is: how can one undertake to know another culture without manipulating or repressing it? And can cultural distinctions be considered useful tools to render the world more comprehensible, or do they foster hostility (Said 1979, 325)? Said does not provide clear-cut answers to these questions but does insist upon, “...methodological self-consciousness” as an effective method with which to avoid the imposition of pre-conceived, fictitious ideologies upon foreign peoples (Said 1979, 326). To achieve this aim, one must pay close attention to the material at hand and engage in continuous self-evaluation. It is also important to acknowledge differences without resorting to divisive, abstract generalities (Said 1979, 328). Any concerted attempt at intercultural understanding must couple continuous procedural reflection with a willingness not only to look outside, but also to

step outside one's own context. Cultural analysts must escape the strictures of the dominant discourse in the examination, comprehension, and presentation of foreign societies; only by interacting with these societies on their own terms can scholars hope to promote true intercultural awareness.

3 Post-Orientalism

Recognizing the need for methods of scholarly investigation that encourage autonomous expression by multiple cultures, post-Orientalist scholars such as Fred Dallmayr move past Orientalism, not into an assimilationist melting pot but to a thorough, genuine investigation of world cultures. Such efforts should foster collective awareness of both difference and shared ideas. In this context, the emerging global community will be one attuned to the principle of unity within diversity.

Dallmayr, like Said, is concerned with developing new means of cultural representation. The simultaneous comprehension of both similarity and difference requires a universal, neutral perspective from which to address a wide variety of traditions (Dallmayr 1996, 122). The problem, of course, is that such universality and objectivity do not exist in academia. Every scholar is to an extent the product of his environment. In addition, the political context of any intercultural conversation must always influence participants.

Nations in the 21st century do not interact on an even plane: "... cross-cultural understanding or dialogue today is complicated by Western hegemony and the ongoing process of Westernization of the globe" (Dallmayr 1996, 130). When certain nations dominate the international political sphere, their cultures occupy similarly authoritative positions in the context of international scholarship. Power and authority legitimize cultural dominance; cultures of less influential nations can be perceived as inferior.

However misguided this idea may seem, it does remain a significant factor in the global community's conception of its constituent societies. But an open-minded interest in world cultures requires appreciation for distinctions, commonalities, strengths, and faults within all societies, whatever their political position or proximity to the investigating scholar may be. According to W.J.T. Mitchell, from the post-Orientalist perspective, "The challenge is to articulate a comprehensive vision... that is sensitive to the innumerable local particularities of the global decolonizing process and yet capable of identifying common interest, opportunities for alliance and collaboration" (Mithcell 1992, 18).

Dallmayr contributes to this pursuit by re-emphasizing Said's warnings against generalization. His construction of an effective scholarly method relies on the continuous critical self-evaluation advocated by Said as well as the assertion that all cultures deserve equal treatment in any line of academic investigation.

The shifting role of cultural imperialism in the world of scholarship significantly complicates current efforts to achieve intercultural awareness. Whether hegemonic political influence or the lack of objectivity in scholarly ventures represents the primary difficulty, the question arises; how does one surmount such obstacles in pursuit of a cosmopolitan ideal? No philosophical or practical program to date has proposed a viable solution. Consequently, we must examine the example of individuals such as Joseph Brodsky who have achieved intercultural competence. From Brodsky's perspective, not only geographic locale but also the generative, transcendent properties of language allow the writer to surpass culture-specific strictures in the creation of autonomous identity.

4 Theories of Language and Literature

Language, for Brodsky, represents not only an instrument of poetic expression but also a means of self-definition. His role as a writer makes him acutely aware of the vast linguistic possibilities available for both written and oral communication, and he believes that the manipulation of language in any form is an inherently self-conscious process (Brodsky 1986, 373). An inordinate number of words and phrases can be selected to convey a single sentiment. In a poetic context, a vast array of structural innovations can be employed in the creation of images. By making use of rhyme, meter, and other such devices, the poet demonstrates a command over his medium. The idiosyncratic manner in which specific terminology is employed to express certain sentiments constitutes autonomous self-assertion. When the writer molds his diction to conform to set stylistic requirements yet maintains the integrity of his ideas, his effort represents an even more masterful act of self-definition.

The capacity of language, specifically writing, to foster the creation of independent identity remains a consistent theme of Brodsky's oeuvre. Russian scholar Andre Solnitsev recalls, "He [Brodsky] regarded language as his instrument.... the instrument of achieving this autonomous state." In his 1987 Nobel lecture entitled "Uncommon Visage," Brodsky discusses the relationship between man, writing, and society, claiming that writing differentiates man from his culture by cultivating within his consciousness a sense of his own individuality. Writing,

in other words, does not encourage social cohesion but instead initiates the formation of autonomous identity through self-conscious interaction with the text (Brodsky 1991). Such a claim holds interesting implications relative to the problems presented by Western cultural hegemony in Orientalist thought. From Said's perspective, conceptions of "Other" imposed on certain societies by a tradition of Eurocentric scholarship represent authoritative attempts at intellectual dominance circumventing the possibility of intercultural understanding. Scholarly investigation that occurs within the Orientalist context assumes the vocabulary of the discourse and, in doing so, accepts certain biases that the terminology implies. Brodsky's attitude toward writing represents a significant departure from this line of thought, as he believes that, "Language and, presumably, literature are things that are more ancient and inevitable, more durable than any form of social organization" (Brodsky 1991, 53).

Rather than understanding language as merely a tool of communication within various societies, Brodsky views it as the foundation of all world cultures. He explains, "Because civilizations are finite, in the life of each of them comes a moment when centers cease to hold. What keeps them at such times from disintegration is not legions but language" (Brodsky 1986, 164). More elementary than political, social, or economic structure, language forms the basis of all personal and institutional interactions. Civilization is to a large extent dependent upon language, which enjoys a singularly autonomous existence.

The primacy of language in this broad social context negates certain basic assumptions of Said's arguments about Orientalism. He assumes that Orientalist scholars employ language in a manner designed to present cultural biases as fact. But author Jim Forest explains that language can also be used to topple these hierarchical relationships "... by allowing cultures that have been spoken for by more powerful civilizations or dominant civilizations to speak for themselves." Orientalist scholars cannot monopolize the primary means of human communication; constituted areas may appropriate the tools of their own disenfranchisement in defiance of externally imposed definitions. Said's view also fails to account for the autonomous nature of words themselves that can undermine just as effectively as they support intellectual or scholarly objectives.

While he certainly values its social potency, Brodsky also praises writing as a vehicle of personal liberation. Writing represents an essential bastion of individual freedom because it involves aesthetic choice. The exercise of aesthetic judgment, in turn, refines man's autonomous nature, as it renders the individual better able to identify and articulate his own beliefs. Through writing, man is able to recognize the defining characteristics of the reigning culture, negotiating his

position with respect to its ideological framework. The examination of prominent texts within a particular society and the creation of one's own documents within that society's language constitute activities capable of breaking the hegemonic influence of Orientalism on the world of scholarship.

There is a sense, however, in which writing, even from Brodsky's elevated perspective, could exacerbate certain problems associated with Orientalist scholarship. The subjective nature of perception dictates that the mind will inevitably impose certain arbitrary definitions upon its surroundings. Although writing allows the author to escape such classifications constructed from a cultural standpoint, it nevertheless must occur within the framework of a particular language. And that language contains an implicit value system, a way of understanding the world that evaluates all behavior according to an inherent descriptive or constitutive logic. Such subjectivity is inextricably tied to the nature of language and would seem to undermine Said's plea for an accurate, impartial representation of world cultures. And Brodsky does not contest the dominance of language over the experience of tangible reality.

So the strictures of language do, without a doubt, dictate the nature of one's experience. This presents a dilemma; how to transcend the localized perspectives inherent in language itself? The answer, quite simply, is translation. Brodsky articulates the significance of this activity, claiming, "Civilization is the sum total of different cultures animated by a common spiritual numerator, and its main vehicle- speaking both metaphorically and literally -is translation" (Brodsky 1986, 139). This idea addresses one of Dallmayr's central concerns: the need for a widespread recognition of unity in diversity. Brodsky does, in fact, perceive a certain animus at the base of all world cultures, the essence of which is represented by poetry (Brodsky 1986, 169). This collective spirit is articulated in different ways according to the specific requirements of poetic construction and the broad range of extant languages. Translation provides a means of accessing and communicating those various interpretations of universal shared reality.

In fact, this view of translation, and in Brodsky's case, bilingualism, as a means of accessing multiple worldviews answers one of Said's primary questions concerning the correct methodology for accurate cultural representation. From the standpoint of the bilingual author, "The resulting intellectual emancipation can be a daunting freedom when one loses at first the security of a single language's fixed semantics or worldview, but it can offer speakers an alternative to monolingual monotheism" (MacFadyen 1998, 192). Bilingualism serves a complementary function to poetry in its capacity to foster true intercultural representation and understanding. While poetry serves as a means of autonomous

self-expression, allowing individuals and cultures to forge and present their own identities, bilingualism and translation allow the individual to experience such definitive efforts on the speaker's terms. Hearing someone's self-conception in his own voice, distinct from that of one's own cultural background provides the opportunity for both self-reflection and comparative cultural analysis.

Translation opens windows of communication and brings to light similarities between diverse cultural practices and attitudes. In this fashion, it supports a primary post-Orientalist aim by discouraging destructive over-simplification. By the loss of "monolithic" perspective afforded the bilingual author, subjects are evaluated on an individual basis rather than classified according to a set of pre-determined ethnic or culturally based generalizations. Despite the ideological appeal of translation as a means of resolving both Orientalist and post-Orientalist theoretical dilemmas, it does possess certain methodological difficulties.

One obstacle to the pursuit of accurate translation involves the incommunicability of certain ideas. Languages articulate images and attitudes in various ways, and certain languages possess vocabulary with no foreign equivalents. This notion of inherent linguistic difference emerges in, "... the mass of fundamentally monosyllabic English versus the inflectional contortions of Russian. English, for example, does not permit the irrational outpourings of emotion that are possible in Russian, says Brodsky" (MacFadyen 1998, 191). Whereas technically impeccable Russian-English translation could offer a concise content summary, it falls in danger of losing the nuances and subtle gradations of emotion characterizing the original inflected language. The widely divergent structures of language render some communication barriers inevitable.

However, scholar Kees Verheul explains that the subjectivity of perception need not obstruct the process of translation. He admits that certain concepts are untranslatable in a literal sense. Fortunately, Verheul asserts, "Any form of human expression consists of combinations of words, of thoughts –not concepts. You can always, formulate another way of creating equivalents." While one language may not contain a particular phrase existing in another, it will always possess the components necessary to construct a corresponding sentiment, mood, or idea. Verheul proposes a specific technique for successful translation, claiming that one should attempt to "create an appearance [or] suggestion of the original instead of mimicking its precise structure in a "formal scholastic exercise." Rather than restricting himself to the formal constraints of the original language, the translator should explore the possibilities of equivalent expression provided by the other. Translation is not a barrier to intercultural understanding from this

perspective but a means of forcing the author to consider the nature of two distinct frameworks and represents, in this sense, a catalyst of cosmopolitanism.

The question that then emerges is how specifically does language in poetic form function so effectively as an instrument of autonomous growth? Brodsky's response to such a query would be multi-faceted and complex but rests in part on the relationship between language and time (Brodsky 1986, 38). According to Adam Weiner, "The assumption of the primacy of language over time and of time over space and things is perhaps the cornerstone of Brodsky's poetry..." (Weiner 1994, 39). He inherits his conception of the interaction between these forces to a certain degree from English Metaphysical poets such as John Donne, who sees the permanence of language inscribed in poetic form as a means of outsmarting death. In this respect, Brodsky's view of language acquires quasi-religious dimensions: "Metaphysical verse serves... to drive the poet towards an absolute encounter with the object of his faith, language" (MacFadyen 1998, 60). The manipulation of language represents a type of spiritual salvation.

Brodsky aptly summarizes this sentiment in a poem dedicated to the memory of his mentor, W.H. Auden: "Subtracting the greater from the lesser –time from man –you get words/the remainder standing out against their white background more clearly than the body" (Brodsky 2000, 139). Both the author and his subject can surmount the transience of physical existence through their respective participation and representation in the writing process. Brodsky supports the idea of, "... the poet's immortalization through the memory of his future readers..." (Weiner 1994, 39). He explains, "... the nature of language puts one's achievements invariably into the present" (Brodsky 1986, 382). So just as writing allows man to escape the dictates of a defining cultural logic, it provides him with a respite from the ceaseless pressure of time; writing liberates man both from socially constructed belief systems and the laws of the natural world. Writing, in effect makes time the slave of language. Unable to defeat written works as it does mankind, time stands immobilized in poetry, ensuring its eternal preservation.

5 Stylistic Program and the Construction of Truth

Brodsky's poetry has often been construed as difficult, largely because it draws upon a complex array of historical influences. Brodsky affirms the referential nature of his work, stating, "Poetry is, first of all, an art of references, allusions, linguistic and figurative parallels" (Brodsky 1986, 124). Brodsky pays a symbolic tribute to his predecessors through the art of allusion but also tacitly

reaffirms the immortalizing power of language. The memory and voice of both writers and subjects lives on not only through their own work, but also in the writing of their successors, and in the collective awareness of the reading public. In addition, Brodsky's referential style seeks to highlight the continuity between seemingly disparate or distant cultural value systems.

Such stylistic affirmation of Brodsky's convictions concerning poetry's transcendence over the divisive and destructive influence of time simultaneously emphasizes the significance of words in their cultural context. When Brodsky explores a particular theme, he often grounds his analysis in identifiable, localized frameworks. This technique plays the role of broadening the individual's understanding of the world. It is unrealistic to assume that a reader will be acquainted with every bridge, every river, every cathedral mentioned in Brodsky's poetry. But possessing knowledge of the general appearance of such structures, he will gain greater insight into the specific nature of certain unfamiliar locales through the poet's descriptive abilities. Diverse milieus, both textual and geographic, enter the public consciousness through artistic representation.

Brodsky contends that poetry expresses and defines universal themes of existence as well as the basic nature of the tangible world. Language constitutes poetry and thus serves as the dwelling place of essential meaning. Brodsky clarifies the singular importance of human engagement with such instruments, stating, "When you write and try to do it as well as you can... that's when you submit to the demands of the Muse, the language, the demands of literature. It is a greater truth than the truth of experience" (Volkov 1998, 227). From this perspective, any credible effort to comprehend the nature of existence should proceed according to the dictates of a linguistic rather than physical consciousness. If Brodsky believes, as he clearly does, that truth resides in language to a greater extent than external reality, then writing represents an ideal medium for the exploration of such abstraction. In fact, an understanding of Brodsky's poetry requires an analysis of the extent to which his stylistic program reflects an underlying desire to grasp and articulate the complexities of truth, alternately referred to as meaning.

It would seem that a poetic rendition of such a definitive concept as truth would assume a somewhat biased stance, presenting concrete statements and images anchoring the idea of truth to the poet's preconceived notions of such a value. Brodsky's notion of meaning, however, is somewhat more conditional. He explains the importance of relativity to truth, stating, "... for all its beauty, a distinct concept always means a shrinkage of meaning, cutting off loose ends, while the loose ends are what matter most in the phenomenal world, for they

interweave" (Brodsky 1986, 31). Brodsky avoids making authoritative pronouncements about the nature of reality, at least without the addition of modifying clauses or alternate perspectives. Certainly man cannot avoid formulating certain conclusions to render his existence more comprehensible. And such concepts do factor into Brodsky's notions of universal meaning. The crux of his belief system lies in the assumption that no single viewpoint can encompass the complexity of intangible truth, which "...becomes an ongoing juxtaposition of opinions, not the strict codification of a law" (MacFadyen 1998, 76). Only by synthesizing analytical reasoning with intuitive observation and receptivity to alternate perspectives can the individual hope to grasp the essence of meaning.

Paradoxically, Brodsky's dramatization of incessant uncertainty and difference in itself constitutes a unifying logic reflecting both the nature of human life and the tumultuous experience of writing. Brodsky manipulates language to emphasize the inconsistency of his subjects, his medium, and the writing process. This emphasis on fragmentation is a consistent feature of Brodsky's poetry, serving as a kind of unifying force that links his diverse linguistic creations. His unshaken conviction of truth's residence in allusion and multiple viewpoints similarly provides a static axis from which to divine Brodsky's concept of essential meaning. And this emergence of an identifiable value system amidst a broad range of stylistic and theoretical influences answers in a sense Dallmayr's call for unity within diversity. Not satisfied with perpetuating a single, coordinated artistic vision or imposing an ideology upon the world at the expense of alternative conceptual frameworks, Brodsky maintains a commitment to the pedagogic function of difference in the quest for truth. His multi-faceted lens of perception sanctions conflicting, even contradictory viewpoints as bastions of a dialogic approach to truth. So difference and contention characterize Brodsky's poetic program, just as they define his concept of the interaction between language and reality.

Brodsky inherits a conceptual framework that places a premium on paradox and constant analytical self-reflection. Wisdom lies not in the maintenance of an established viewpoint, but rather in the continuous displacement of personal perspective by alternative systems of understanding. Like the intertextuality of his writing, the richly layered nature of human life thrives on difference to create a coherent whole. This is not to suggest that relationships obliterate difference, but rather that society, a poetic work, or an individual may appropriate and mold various influences in the construction of identity. This identity, born of conflict, retains the disparities stimulating its development but nevertheless represents a distinct, even unified creation. In this sense, Brodsky's personal life and oeuvre as

contentious, intercultural dialogues corroborate his literary theories and present him as the epitome of a global citizen.

6 Cosmopolitanism

Brodsky consistently maintains that the force of cultural expansion proves impervious to the nationally constructed boundaries erected to contain such movements. He formulates this assertion in terms of a geographic metaphor, exclaiming, “Ah, all these natural frontiers, these straits and urala of ours! How little they have ever meant to armies or cultures...” (Brodsky 1986, 407). The divisive features of the natural landscape Brodsky describes in this passage hint at a political subtext that preaches the inevitability of transnational interaction. Both military conquest and art as a vehicle of universal communication subvert state-directed efforts at isolationism.

In fact, such increasingly consistent and dramatic displacements of nationally erected boundaries can at times seem a threatening phenomenon. Underlying fears of the declining significance of national identity derive from the assumption that cosmopolitanism signals the destruction of all difference. Increased mobility and the widespread availability of information will create an indistinguishable mass of humanity, according to this somewhat reactionary perspective. One can easily understand, however, how such sentiments might arise. For centuries, identity has been constructed around the traditions and value systems associated with a particular political state. Citizens have maintained a strong affinity with their mother country partially because this nation represents the concrete embodiment of their ethnic, social, and cultural heritage. In the modern era, the gradual disappearance of such straightforward relationships between citizen and state generates an atmosphere of profound disorientation. If nationality no longer constitutes identity, how can such a quality be discovered and expressed?

This aversion to prospective equality in the face of declining nationalism is rivaled by a fear of perpetual estrangement. As much as a comprehensive universalizing process holds threatening potential as a source of externally imposed uniformity, it could just as easily facilitate widespread alienation. Brodsky considers this possibility, “...pondering whether failures of memory are not just a mute voice of one’s suspicion that we are all but strangers to one another, that our sense of autonomy is far stronger than that of unity” (Brodsky 1986, 493). An essential feature of identity consists in its ability to link the individual to others sharing similar values, lifestyles, or beliefs. The absence of such connection would

signify not only the disintegration of natural boundaries but also the breakdown of identity as an adhesive instrument of social collectivity. The promise of isolation inherent to such a process of exaggerated differentiation represents an entirely unfavourable alternative to the melting pot populism previously discredited by Brodsky. Paradoxically, the inevitable onslaught of interculturalism generates negative response to the possibility of both increased difference and comprehensive uniformity.

Subversion of these obstacles to the widespread acceptance of a cosmopolitan ideal requires a refined definition of difference. Dallmayr makes such a provision, quoting Iris Marion Young, who conceives such a value in the following manner: "Difference now comes to mean not otherness, exclusive opposition, but specificity, variation, heterogeneity" (Dallmayr 1996, 210). Young's textured vision of reality and the individual proves considerably more applicable to the modern context than the rigid conceptual framework represented by the either-or mentality of past generations.

From this perspective, identity emerges as a composite product of diverse influences capable of both change and static existence. This reformed concept of identity, formed through a more complex, nuanced notion of difference can assuage some of the fears associated with interculturalism. Brodsky's analytical reflections on his own existence suggest that he harbors, to an extent, this expansive ideology. For this reason, Brodsky's comprehension of the world remains unaffected by changes in cultural context. He claims, "Understanding has nothing to do with territorial displacement" (Volkov 1998, 54). His intransient self-awareness and stable conception of reality allow him to recognize similarities between multiple cultures. These abilities stem from his realization that "... collective systems of meaning, culture belong primarily to social relationships, and to networks of such relationships. Only indirectly, and without logical necessity do they belong to places" (Van Elteren 1995, 242). Brodsky contends that cultural understanding resides in interpersonal connection, not geographic locale. In this way, he grasps the idea of unity in diversity advocated by Dallmayr's post-Orientalist critique.

Nevertheless, in the midst of these observations, Brodsky retains the conviction that such perceived unity is conditional, constituted by a linguistic frame of reference and its corresponding lens of perception. Although he may at one time perceive the world in terms of organic connection, his awareness of language's constitutive role in such engagement affords him both the knowledge that alternative perspectives can develop and the tools to effect such a transformation: "In an age of mass culture and the collapse of spiritual values, Brodsky defends the unique individuality of each person, his right to his own vision of the world.."

(Polukhina 1989, 7). The individual has a right to formulate autonomous identity based upon a distinct worldview. And Brodsky's conception of subjective reality dictates that language engenders such empowerment and personal self-definition. Thus, he recognizes the possibility of change, of shifting viewpoint that would reflect divergence. Poetic manipulation of language should, can, and does profoundly shift the individual's impressions of the world, rendering an extended experience of universal mono-culturalism extremely unlikely.

Notions of extinguished difference aside, the other principal prospect dampening public enthusiasm for an increasing tide of interculturalism is that of alienation, a social complication with far-reaching consequences. Brodsky frequently addresses alienation through a direct thematic treatment of traveling, aging, internal reflection, and many other individual endeavors invoking the notion of solitude. Through such reflections on the personal journey, Brodsky demonstrates the manner in which the idiosyncratic nature of one's own experience divorces him from a communal context. It is important to recognize that Brodsky's treatment of this theme, while it does reveal his belief in the existence of alienation in the modern world, cannot be conceived as an indirect attack on interculturalism. In fact, "By illuminating the depths of alienation, the poet activates our consciousness toward seeking the means of overcoming this negative fact of our time" (Polukhina 1989, 243). Brodsky addresses isolation as a quality inherent to human life with a number of practical remedies rather than a problem arising from the shifting cultural climate of a cosmopolitan age. First, by contending that autonomous identity and even alienation to an extent are facts of existence, Brodsky destroys one major premise of opposition to the intercultural endeavor.

Brodsky's other major defense against attacks on interculturalism as a divisive agent consists in the observation that man has repeatedly exhibited the ability to forge connections with his peers. Man's incessant quests for unity are largely successful, particularly when they generate a discourse to authenticate the existence of a shared worldview. A jargon might initially represent a superficial attempt at collective self-definition, but with perpetual usage and the subsequent widespread acceptance, it begins to define the reality it previously sought to reflect. So whatever source may stimulate man's solitary experience, his grasp of language provides him with the instruments necessary to combat the unpleasant features of isolation through culturally constructed connections with others.

Thus, Brodsky's engagement with interculturalism extends beyond defense to advocacy through articulation. He transforms cosmopolitan identity into an appealing lifestyle choice by exposing the manner in which it preserves the individual's cultural heritage while broadening his understanding of other

traditions. He accomplishes this task by explaining the significance of bilingualism to his experiences with literature, claiming, "When I read an English-language text, I can still remember how it looked in Russian. On the whole, though, my view is now from *inside* English-language poetry" (Volkov 1998, 88). Brodsky's contention that he retains a conception of a poem's Russian equivalent despite his mastery of the English original affirms the pivotal importance of cultural origins even in a context of absolute linguistic displacement. Brodsky's acquisition of a new vocabulary and grammatical system does not signify a rejection of his native language. Rather, his fluency in English allows him to experience a new culture through the voices defining and constituting that culture. This activity, in turn, allows him to re-evaluate Russian society from a comparative perspective. Bilingualism, as a vehicle of cultural examination, fosters the kind of individual or collective introspection that in turn stimulates grass-roots change. This process of multi-dimensional exploration of extant social, political, and linguistic systems provides new insights into the distinct but inter-related contexts of the modern world and thus represents one laudable function of cosmopolitan development.

Brodsky contends that observation, analysis, acceptance, and rejection function as tools of identity formation for both social cliques and single authors. These activities collectively comprise a process of selective appropriation. One question remains; what is the specific nature of this transformative procedure? Brodsky attempts to shed light on this issue through an examination of his mentor, Auden, who, he remembers, "...picked things up... right and left: from the archaisms, from the dictionary, from professional jargon, from the jokes of assimilated ethnic minorities, from pop songs, and other things like that" (Volkov 1998, 146). Brodsky elucidates the manner in which Auden molded traditional linguistic requirements to answer the dictates of a composite popular culture. Selective appropriation is a process that incorporates tradition with innovation to accommodate a shifting cultural climate. Individuals combat the prospect of uniformity with pronounced departures from tradition and simultaneously avoid isolation through the development of a shared group ethic, binding members of each new generation. Man possesses several methods of successful self-definition and identification with peers, weakening attacks on interculturalism as an agent of isolation or imposed conformity.

Brodsky proves himself an enthusiastic participant in the process of selective appropriation he terms a widespread social phenomenon: "... he has laid his hands upon the entire Russian cultural heritage, appropriated whatever interested him, and assimilated it into his style" (Polukhina 1989, 58). Brodsky demonstrates on an individual scale the kind of autonomous self-definition that, when implemented

on a broad social level, so profoundly affects Russian cultural identity. In fact, the continual cosmopolitan synthesis evident in Brodsky's work determines, to a large extent, the nature of his interaction with and significance to his native Russian community.

7 Russia

The significance of Joseph Brodsky's connection with Russia cannot be underestimated. As the definitive cultural climate of his formative years, his motherland provides inspiration for much of his poetic work. But Brodsky's involvement with Russian culture is not limited to this one-sided acquisition of creative raw material. On the contrary, the relationship between Brodsky and Russia is characterized by mutuality; just as Russia shapes the author's public image and communicative style, so does Brodsky influence his former homeland's self-image and presence in the modern world.

Throughout Brodsky's collected works, Russia plays an important role, surfacing as a recurring image that dramatizes both engagement and estrangement. The frequency with which such references appear highlights the crucial position the country inhabits in Brodsky's mind: "The theme of Russia nurtures his poetry no less than world culture does. This outcast and exile is as much immersed in the fate of his people as he is in the fate of civilization as a whole" (Polukhina 1989, 11). Although much of his writing career is spent outside of Russia, Brodsky retains a commitment to his cultural origins. In the public discussion hosted by the John Adams Institute in 1991, Brodsky clarifies the role of the exiled author to his homeland, claiming that he seeks to construct a "map of a vanishing world." Writing facilitates the retention of memories that would otherwise be lost. At the same time, life outside Russia brings multi-dimensional perspective to the poet's past experiences. Distance affords Brodsky the possibility of analytical reflection upon his cultural background, which in turn, fosters new insight and understanding.

While the loss of native cultural context does inspire Brodsky's deep regret, it simultaneously initiates an unmediated encounter between the poet and language that proves exceedingly valuable to his linguistic development. Brodsky inevitably loses a certain connection from his peers when he leaves Russia, but he is also freed from the constraints that govern language as a culture-specific form of communication. The liberation afforded Brodsky by his abrupt displacement allows him to dictate the terms of his own involvement with the Russian language.

No longer manipulating phrases to communicate ideas or accomplish concrete goals within a collective setting, the poet operates as the solitary instrument of words that organize themselves. He submits to the demands of his medium rather than the strictures of society. To Brodsky, this shift in allegiance signifies artistic freedom, which revolutionizes the creative endeavor; poems materialize unbound by the dictates of a cultural logic restricting language to a role of functionality.

Brodsky's identification of linguistic autonomy as a positive consequence of exile does not signify desertion of his Russian heritage. Rather, his residence in America allows him to forge artistic connections with his homeland without the threat of persecution or political backlash. Svetlana Boym explains the important role played by literary figures in the formation of a contemporary Russian consciousness, stating, "The bond of affection and the collective identification with the nation is established not only through common ways of life but also through cultural myths that constitute the phantasmic space of the national imagination" (Boym 1995, 134). The "myths" Boym speaks of refer to stories, legends, visions of Russian culture represented through shared imagery. Brodsky makes an essential contribution to the mythology of his home country through prose and poetry that directly address Russia from a number of different angles. Works such as "Spoils of War," which appeared in his 1995 publication, *On Grief and Reason*, takes a nostalgic look back at life in the post-World War II Russia of Brodsky's childhood. In this essay, his fond memories of canned meat containers and short wave radio sets are tempered by the ironic skepticism of adult retrospection. Nevertheless, Brodsky's tone suggests community identification, group loyalty, and a shared iconographic repertoire that constitutes collective memory. By rehashing old stories replete with familiar images and articulating their meaning, Brodsky affirms their significance within Russian society.

The fact that Brodsky so deliberately identifies certain essays and poems with the Russian context offers the country a locus of cultural unity and simultaneously opens doors of international understanding by exporting images of Russia abroad. When Brodsky provides details concerning particular features of the Russian landscape within his poetry, he renders the nation more attainable to foreign readers. Jim Forest provides a concrete example of this effect, explaining, "Let's imagine that in one of the Brodsky poems, there's a reference to a certain bridge in St. Petersburg. My guess is that even though you haven't the faintest idea where that bridge is located, it makes St. Petersburg more real to you." He proceeds to emphasize the fact that specificity is the primary determinant of reality in the human mind. By presenting concrete images of Russia to the public eye, Brodsky helps destroy any tenacious remnants of Orientalism that seek to

define Russia according to biased classifications. In this sense, his writing helps form a link between Russia and the Western world.

At the same time, evidence of Brodsky's belief that writing transcends the context of its inception is provided by his transformation of the legacy of Russian poetics according to a cosmopolitan sensibility. Particularly after his exile, Brodsky recognizes the value of incorporating traditional Russian cultural features with new images, expressive styles, and ways of thinking. In this sense, his writing defends traditional Russian culture through the perpetuation of its standard modes of expression while simultaneously revolutionizing these conventions through the appropriation and synthesis of alternate linguistic patterns acquired from other nations. Poetry as transnational dialogue is not part of Brodsky's inheritance as a Russian author; it represents the culmination of autonomous engagement with language.

This cosmopolitan synthesis holds significant practical consequences for Russian culture. Specifically, Brodsky's "...enormous erudition and sensitivity towards language as well as his talent help him to transfer the Russian language, by means of its own resources, to the centre of world culture" (Polukhina 1989, 38). Brodsky's frequent use of Russian names and terminology ensures the presence of the language within a body of literary works circulating throughout the international community. Furthermore, the intermingling of Russian and Western influence characterizing Brodsky's poetry makes it impossible for the languages of either region to exist in isolation. The pursuit of even the most basic understanding of Brodsky's work requires the reader's mastery of his cross-cultural referentiality. So through writing, Brodsky elevates Russian culture in an international context by creating poems that demand awareness for comprehension; with the response that accompanies such knowledge comes engagement. This involvement signals the breakdown of the isolated status imposed upon a country theoretically categorized and defined by the Western world.

Communication barriers between cultures disappear with the development of authentic literary voices that articulate and explain their nations' respective value systems, stimulating the development of mutual understanding. Brodsky is particularly important as a facilitator of such connections because he speaks for more than one country. Forest calls him an "ambassador of Russia ... in the West;" he can also be termed a spokesman for the United States in the international community. Brodsky's writing provides a unique perspective from which to examine American culture; by what means does an individual of non-Western heritage comprehend the nation's defining traditions and ideology, and how does the nature of this perception guide his reflections on the U.S. as an American?

8 United States

In Brodsky's opinion, the highly successful efforts of the United States to communicate its essential values depend largely upon the nature of the English language. The precise relationship between English words and their tangible equivalents paves the way for the communication of the American ideal of autonomy and also constitutes a structural embodiment of this value. Solnitsev explains: "In English, the American version of it, ...autonomy is expressed on the level of words, on the lexical level." He proceeds to describe how each English word possesses a distinct meaning that signifies direct engagement with external reality. He perceives American English as far less contextual than Russian, in which meaning is determined to a large extent by inflections and sentence structure. English, on the other hand, is a language in which the construction of meaning requires independent contributions from each constituent part of speech. Thus, Russian linguistic expression reflects, in a sense, the collectivity defining the nation's value system, while the structure of American English as an assembly of autonomous parts conveys the nation's characteristic individualism. Brodsky concurs with Solnitsev's evaluation of the two languages, and his assumption of American citizenship can be considered an affirmation of the independence conditioning both the country's reigning ideology and communicative modes. Brodsky repeatedly affirms his attachment to this value both as a consequence of his communal upbringing and as a primary benefit of life in America (JAI).

Although Brodsky highly praises the value American culture places on autonomy, he condemns the nation's negligible relationship with literature. Brodsky perceives a comprehensive disregard for poetry within the American public that only cripples the nation's understanding of itself and other cultures. Because he believes that writing is such an essential instrument of self-definition and intercultural awareness, indifference to its products creates several problems. First, evolving postulates of American identity presented through literary works remain largely unexplored, creating a divergence between the self-image of reading and non-reading segments of the population. Second, freshly developing voices of constituted regions remain unheard, perpetuating ancient stereotypes and hindering true intercultural competence. So the threat of these consequences to literary indifference underlies Brodsky's qualified admiration for American society.

Brodsky balances this criticism by providing a practical remedy for America's predicament. In his speech to the Library of Congress as Poet Laureate of the United States, Brodsky proposes a number of means for incorporating poetry into the public consciousness. Solnitsev recalls that he formulated the idea of

“...poetry in motion... verses printed in the public transport... books of good poetry .. sold in the supermarket for the price of \$2, or next to Bibles in hotels.” Making authentic literature more accessible to the general public will ideally help the nation establish a more balanced, accurate self-conception and at the same time foster more informed and fruitful interaction with other cultures. These ideas elucidate Brodsky’s significance to America as an American citizen. His Russian upbringing allows him to articulate the manner in which images of the United States are presented and interpreted abroad and also facilitates reflection on American society from comparative perspective. On the other hand, American citizenship affords him the opportunity to pinpoint problematic issues in the national psyche and formulate means of surmounting these obstacles. So the balance of such internal and external perspectives makes Brodsky an invaluable resource for the exploration and improvement of American society.

Brodsky is important for America, and in fact, for the international community as a “..cultural hybrid, a man living and sharing intimately in the cultural life and traditions of two distinct peoples..” (Park 1996, 165). Brodsky demonstrates the manner in which the individual can play a significant role in a new society while retaining links to his past heritage. He incorporates the inherited cultural legacy of his upbringing with the lifestyle and value systems of another nation, forging identity that transforms the precepts of both socio-political models according to the dictates of an individual artistic drive.

9 Holland

An understanding of Joseph Brodsky as a cosmopolitan figure naturally requires an exploration of his interaction with Russia and the United States. His longtime residence in each region plays a crucial role in his development as a writer and profoundly influences his perspective on the primacy of language. But Brodsky’s intercultural significance extends beyond the boundaries of the two nations he calls home. Though neither ethnic heritage nor the responsibilities of citizenship bind Brodsky to the Netherlands, he demonstrates an affinity for the work of several prominent Dutch artists affiliated with the magic realist school of painting. This interest can be conceived as an implicit acknowledgment of thematic and stylistic parallels that comprise the poet’s connection with Dutch culture.

In response to a question concerning the origins of Brodsky’s admiration for the Dutch poet, Martinus Nijhoff, Kees Verheul explains that both authors maintain a “stylistic and mental connection to the school of painting [known as]

magic realism.” This school shares the Calvinist predisposition for simplicity in the exploration of themes including alienation, autonomy, and absurdity. Kees Verheul describes the latter value in terms of a Calvinist ethic, which enjoyed widespread popularity in the Netherlands beginning in the 16th century. He explains that the religion rests on the idea of an absolute separation between God and man arising from the idea of divine transcendence. Calvinism dictates that the reality of a pre-determined fate does not absolve man of the responsibility to comply with Christian rules of conduct. He must accept the moral requirements established by an inherently inscrutable God despite the knowledge that his efforts to satisfy such standards cannot change a destiny already fixed at the time of his birth. From this perspective, ethical behavior must occur not in an effort to reap heavenly rewards but for the sake of godliness and spiritual purity with no promise of compensation.

This quality underlies much of Brodsky’s writing, factoring significantly into his conception of man’s ethical responsibilities: “The Christian sacrifice that stands at the center of Brodsky’s poetic worldview and the tradition he inherited does not consist merely of toil... but of risk, of giving of oneself without the guarantee of recompense” (Bethea 1994, 9). His Calvinist affinities, accompanied by convictions of human mortality, render artistic accomplishment and moral behavior fulfilling activities not as means to an end but in terms of their intrinsic value.

The most significant link between Brodsky and Dutch culture, however, is not spiritual but artistic. Dutch magic realist painter, Carel Willink exhibits thematic considerations and stylistic techniques comprising the magic realist aesthetic program that become important in Brodsky’s attraction to his work. Brodsky’s analysis of Carel’s oeuvre rests on several main observations that his wife, Sylvia, corroborates, claiming that the poet interpreted her husband’s vision more accurately than many prominent art critics. Brodsky refers to a number of the artist’s landscape paintings as a collective “post-mortem of culture, post-mortem of civilization” (JAI). He views the landscapes as prefigurations of a world “devoid of human presence,” in which the products of individual creative vision far outlast the artist’s temporal existence (JAI). Carel frequently depicts massive stone sculptures, marble balustrades, and the remnants of large-scale architectural constructions amidst scenes of untamed wilderness. Such renderings suggest the type of artistic permanence posited by Brodsky in terms of the poetic word. Willink’s landscapes provide tangible evidence for Brodsky’s claims concerning art’s transcendence over all forms of social organization.

Brodsky also values Carel’s work for “the sense of isolation, of autonomy, that oozes from those paintings: autonomy of the statues, autonomy of the buildings,

autonomy of the sky..." (JAI). Two primary themes emerge here that determine Brodsky's interest in Willink. First, the discontinuity of the images comprising the landscape suggests the type of isolation characterizing much of Brodsky's poetry. This atmosphere of profound displacement and solitude pervades his writing. In fact, "It would be difficult to name a structural element of Brodsky's poetry not touched by estrangement, the primary function of which is the creation of distance" (Polukhina 1989, 239).

In their respective artistic representations of alienation, Willink and Brodsky display yet another methodological similarity involving the displacement of images from their traditional settings. For Brodsky, "...this device may be seen to consist of removing the object from its customary context, in presenting the familiar as strange, as if seen for the first time..." (Polukhina 1989, 238). Brodsky's "The Hawk's Cry In Autumn" aptly demonstrates this technique, thrusting the bird into outer space, "where the milling stars/play millet served from a plate or a crescent" (Brodsky 2000, 261). The hawk does not belong in such an environment, and in this case, the consequence of such estrangement from normality is death. And as Polukhina describes, when seen from afar, the hawk loses its defining characteristics: shape, form, color are all extinguished signaling the bird's metamorphosis into "a glittering dot, a pearl" (Brodsky 2000, 262). Cut off from its natural habitat, the hawk's physical appearance is inalterably changed. So Brodsky explores the reality of alienation by linking it to the phenomenon of contextual displacement, a process initiating a series of identifiable physical consequences.

In one phase of his landscape painting lasting from 1952-1962, Willink similarly dramatizes estrangement through de-contextualization. During this period, he "... painted seventeen landscapes with exotic animals such as...giraffes, anteaters and marabous, producing an effect of alienation by placing them in unfamiliar landscapes" (<http://www.carelwillink.com>). By divorcing these creatures from their natural environments, Willink creates an effect of isolation mirroring the depictions of absolute solitude established in Brodsky's poem. The autonomy Brodsky mentions with regard to Willink's paintings refers to the independence of its constituent imagery. Brodsky interprets the buildings and statues of the landscapes as "egoists" that serve distinct functions within the surrounding context and wish to exist without interference (Brodsky, JAI).

In addition to these artistic connections, there are other more incidental links between Brodsky and the Netherlands. His upbringing in St. Petersburg led Brodsky to believe that water comprised an essential part of any landscape, and he loved Amsterdam for this reason; the canals and bridges reminded him very much of St. Petersburg, and he returned to the city many times. It was one

of these visits, sponsored in 1991 by the John Adams Institute, which powerfully illustrated his significance as a cosmopolitan figure through its initiation of tri-cultural artistic interaction and discussion.

10 “A Poet in Exile”: Brodsky in Amsterdam

The story behind Joseph Brodsky’s 1991 visit begins considerably before the date of his appearance. Some years earlier, Ada Stroeve, who worked at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, sent Brodsky a series of postcards depicting several of Carel Willink’s paintings on display at the time. Brodsky was so struck by what he saw that he began writing a poem about the exhibit while living in Kees Verheul’s apartment for the summer in Amsterdam. He then took the rough draft with him to New York, revised it, and sent the finished version, entitled, “At Carel Willink’s Exhibit,” back to Verheul for his opinion. Verheul thoroughly enjoyed the poem, recalling that he could hear its internal music and was inspired to begin a Dutch translation. Soon afterward, the piece was published in several languages, appearing in the literary publications of various countries, Holland among them. It was in one such magazine that Sylvia Willink first encountered Brodsky’s work. Though she had no prior knowledge of the poet at that time, Sylvia was amazed at his grasp of her late husband’s artistic vision. Brodsky, despite his lack of technical artistic vocabulary, captured the essence of what the painter was trying to convey far more accurately than critics in the Dutch media. Needless to say, Sylvia was fascinated.

As luck would have it, Sylvia made the acquaintance of Kees Verheul, and the two developed a friendship arising in part out of mutual admiration for Brodsky. This commonality initiated a process of artistic reciprocity culminating in Brodsky’s 1991 appearance. Verheul learned of Sylvia’s facility with sculpture, bust-making in particular, and suggested that she attempt a bust of Brodsky. She agreed, basing her rendition of the poet on a series of photographs provided by Verheul, Brodsky himself, and his American publishing house, Farrar Straus Giroux. Though she had never met her subject in person, Sylvia constructed an amazing likeness. She considered the statue a tribute to Brodsky as well as indirect homage to her husband, whom the poet understood so well. Sylvia explains the motivation behind her gesture, stating, “Ik maakte de kop van Brodsky om de cirkel te sluiten” [I made the bust of Brodsky to close the circle] (Trouw). The artistic circle she speaks of includes Carel’s paintings, Brodsky’s poetry, and her own sculpture, linked by shared thematic considerations and a common aesthetic

sensibility. In Carel, Brodsky recognized a kindred spirit; Sylvia affirmed the validity of that connection by establishing her own affinity for the poet's work on her husband.

The story may have ended there were it not for the intervention of the John Adams Institute, an "independent, non-profit foundation" that hosts lecture forums dealing with American culture. The organization began as a cooperative venture between Dutch and American commercial enterprises, the West India Foundation and the Dutch American West India Company Foundation, respectively, and developed into a program of cultural exchange. Designed to introduce prominent literary figures from America and occasionally other nations to a Dutch audience, the Institute boasts an impressive list of guest speakers, which includes Norman Mailer, Justice Ruth Ginsberg, and of course, Joseph Brodsky.

Brodsky's visit to Amsterdam happened very much by chance. In 1991, Anne Wertheim, the director of the Institute at the time, learned that he would be in Leiden for a poetry reading. She contacted him with an invitation to appear as a guest in the Institute's ongoing lecture series, *American Literature Today*. Brodsky consented to recite several poems and answer questions in the ensuing public discussions. Shortly thereafter, Wertheim learned of Willink's bust. She concocted the idea of a public unveiling, to which both poet and sculptress readily agreed. The appearance was then publicized as an unveiling, poetry recitation, and open forum.

All details seemed to be in order for Brodsky's visit, save one potential obstacle; the poet intended to recite his work in Russian. Wertheim was faced with the question; how could the Institute justify the presentation of Russian literature in an American lecture series? The answer lays both in evolving definitions of national identity and the Institute's notion of its responsibilities in representing the United States to a non-American public.

When asked whether Brodsky's Russian heritage complicated his presentation in a lectures series of American authors, Wertheim declared this fact irrelevant. He was conceived and packaged very simply as an "American poet from a Russian background." Brodsky represented a conglomeration of cultural influences that constituted an essential part of his public image. In this way, he shed new light on American culture by representing it from multiple perspectives. So Brodsky's decision to represent elements of his Russian heritage in the course of a public appearance can in no way be considered a negation of his Americanness. Rather, he embodies a new model of national identity, one that allows for cultural synthesis as a means of self-definition within the context of citizenship.

Brodsky's visit drew an unprecedented number of guests. The originally scheduled afternoon appearance filled up so quickly that an evening session was arranged. During both time slots, the Institute took steps to establish the program as a forum for cultural exchange. To initiate intercultural dialogue and encourage active comparative analysis on the part of the audience, "Each American guest is carefully coupled with a Dutch journalist, professor, author, or specialist who serves as host and as a sparring partner on stage." The opinions of one speaker balance or counter the attitudes of another. This type of presentation highlights cultural continuity or divergence in a literary context.

The actual unveiling of the bust drew positive reactions from all participants. Upon beholding his likeness, Brodsky remarked, "The only way in which this head differs from the one I carry on my shoulders is that it can't speak... and it can't kiss" (JAI). He then kissed the sculptress in a gesture of flirtatious gratitude. The fact that Brodsky could draw such personal fulfillment from her work affords Sylvia much satisfaction. Indeed she was extremely pleased with his enjoyment of the replica and with the sense of closure she experienced with the completion of the artistic circle. Sylvia's work becomes particularly important in light of Verheul's revelation that, "Brodsky has created a new verb in the Russian language, to bust..." (Verheul, JAI). The most significant idea of this passage, however, lies in Brodsky's application of the idea of artistic permanence to a non-linguistic medium and to his own life in a meaningful way. When Brodsky vows to envision the bust as a "definitive version" of himself and emphasizes its longevity, he in essence affirms his contentions concerning the primacy of poetic language in another context. Art, in its various forms, defines and constitutes reality, transcending the ephemeral mortal universe it seeks to reflect.

Verheul asserts that one premise of Brodsky's admiration for the bust could be its similarity to works of the "Roman portrait tradition," with all its implications of permanence. Brodsky liked classical Roman art and architecture, and the style of Sylvia's bust precisely reflects his aesthetic preferences. In addition to these subjective considerations, Brodsky likely appreciated Sylvia's choice of medium for its figurative and tangible connections to immortality. Verheul explains that Brodsky was conscious of the Horatian formula of the poetic word as "more permanent than bronze." While this statement confirms his notions of linguistic primacy, it simultaneously represents bronze as a remarkably long-lasting material. For all Brodsky's concerns about the ephemeral nature of human life, he valued Sylvia's efforts to combat such transience through artistic creation. And Sylvia concurs with his belief in art's defiance of death, referring to sculpture as a "fight against mortality."

In fact, Brodsky specifically comments on the bust's immortalizing function in the context of Carel's landscape painting. He emphasizes the correlation between the Sylvia and Carel's work, explaining, "It's quite logical in a sense, in that posthumous sense of the landscape for me to unveil something of [a] posthumous nature, that is, a bust of my own" (JAI). This statement highlights yet another aspect of Sylvia's circle; the three primary artists involved create images addressing or invoking immortality in some fashion. While Sylvia and Brodsky attempt to defy death through sculpture and writing, respectively, Carel examines the idea of life on earth after the downfall of mankind, depicting scenes in which various artworks provide the only evidence of humanity's former glory. In a sense, Carel depicts the posthumous world that Sylvia and Brodsky seek to populate through artistic creation. So the unveiling constitutes an important element of Brodsky's visit because it dramatizes intercultural connection within the spheres of art and literature.

The next segment of the program was a poetry recitation in which Brodsky read a number of his own works and several pieces by other authors in both Russian and English. His manner of speaking was very expressive, resembling a "liturgical chant," according to Jim Forest. Although Brodsky's chosen form of expression is linguistic, appreciation of his poetry's artistic value does not appear to require even a minimal grasp of the language in which he presents. This unusual contention is supported not only by Forest, but also by Willink, and Anne Wertheim, who arranged Brodsky's 1991 visit to the John Adams Institute in Amsterdam. Wertheim contends that she found Brodsky's Russian recitation far more impressive than the reading given in English, despite the fact that she speaks no Russian at all.

She also recalls that the emotion conveyed through Brodsky's chanting made him an attractive, appealing figure to many listeners. Forest confirms this impression, stating that the body language of people in the room, the way they responded to questions and their general posture during his reading suggested close engagement and approval. He believes that Brodsky's bilingual reading did not alienate but actually attracted the audience. Even if many listeners could not understand Russian, they were highly impressed by the performance primarily because, as Forest asserts, a "love [of] poetry [is] first of all an appreciation of the music of language." And this appreciation transcends the boundaries of dialogue requiring comprehension. Brodsky valued his political exile for its initiation of his relationship with pure language; through recitation, he created a corresponding experience for his listeners.

Although the focus of the visit was primarily artistic, the fact of his banishment from Russia certainly factored into Brodsky's public image. And in the context of the Cold War, Forest asserts that the reading held great political significance. He explains, "All he [Brodsky] ha[d] to do [wa]s to read his poems, and something happen[ed] to you. Your idea of what a Russian [wa]s and what Russia [wa]s, changed, even if he d[id]n't read a poem about Russia." By representing authentic Russian literary voice, Brodsky engendered new understanding of his homeland. He successfully intertwined elements of two opposing societies, managing to forge cultural connections between Russia and the United States in his work, when the governments of these nations generated only incessant conflict. The very fact that Brodsky could represent America through the recitation of Russian poetry signalled the possibility of reconciliation. So his intercultural synthesis provided hope for resolution in a time of political turmoil that continues to be relevant in the current climate of strain and tension defining the relationship between the two nations.

Verheul's translations of Brodsky's poetry provided further means of amelioration by opening up new avenues of reflection upon Russia. By making Russian poetry accessible to a Dutch audience, Verheul molded its development, rendering the culture more comprehensible to listeners possibly unfamiliar with its language or traditions. His translations of Brodsky's poetry gave Dutch listeners a more comprehensive, internal perspective on the meaning of Russian identity. Because the political strife of the Cold War developed out of intolerance and misunderstanding, increased knowledge concerning the countries involved paved the way for the development of a more enlightened relationship, claims Forest, who was involved in building relations between the U.S. and the Soviet Union for nearly twelve years. Even though Holland was not a major participant in the Cold War, its open discussion forums could have impacted relationship between the two nations during its progression. The Institute's lecture series dealt with issues of American culture through an exploration of American literature, and the Russian presence in this context functioned as a building block of new understanding.

Reflecting on Brodsky's visit twelve years later, Wertheim concludes that the event was a great success. The John Adams Institute gained a great deal of publicity through its affiliation with such a prominent author. Due to increased financial support and public involvement, the foundation was able to continue its efforts to foster intercultural understanding through literature and discussion. Wertheim's exhaustive work to promote the Institute contributed significantly to this growth. And Brodsky also played a major role in gaining widespread public

respect for the organization. He was a Russian, exiled to America, speaking in Russian and English, translated into Dutch for an American lecture series in Holland. Brodsky not only fulfilled the aims of the John Adams Institute to stimulate intercultural learning, he promoted the development of cosmopolitan identity so important to an increasingly global world.

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JAGTAR KAUR CHAWLA, NIDHI NEMA

Negotiating Cultures: A Comparative Study of First and Second Generation Indian Immigrants in USA with Reference to Jhumpa Lahiri's Works

*"Breathes there the man, with soul so dead,
Who never to himself hath said,
This is my own, my native land!"*

"The Lay of the Last Minstrel" by Sir Walter Scott

1 Introduction

Over the past two centuries, India has achieved, arguably the world's most diverse and complex migration histories, forming the Modern Indian Diaspora, spread across all 6 continents and 125 countries, the Indian diaspora is estimated to number around 30 million. For the purpose of easy classification it is often divided into 3 subsets:

The Old Diaspora - 1.5 million Indians had been shipped to colonies in the Caribbean, Africa and Asia for cheap labour; today the Old Diaspora consists of 60% of the Indian diaspora: 18 million.

The New Diaspora - consists of migrants who left India in large numbers from the mid 60s onwards – primarily to developed countries like the UK, US,

Canada, Australia and Western Europe. Around 1900, there were less than a thousand Indians in both the UK and the United States. By World War II, the number had grown to around 6,000 in each country. US, UK and Canadian census data from 2010 estimates that the Indian diaspora grew to 3 million in the US, 1.5 million in the UK, and 1 million in Canada, a twentyfold increase in half a century. Today, we are the fourth largest immigrant group in the United States after the Mexicans, Filipinos, and Chinese.

The Gulf Diaspora - The most recent development of the Indian Diaspora is the Gulf Diaspora. The 1970s oil boom in the Middle East ended up triggering significant migration from India to the Persian Gulf - approximately 3.75 million.

In the US, though Indian diaspora is less than 1% of the US population, Indians account for well over 5% of the scientists, engineers, and software specialists, and almost 10% of all the doctors. Their median household income is almost double that of the overall average of the United States.

An increasing number of Indian writers of the diaspora have won high recognition for their writings and made a place for themselves on the literary map of the world. Some names that stand out are - V.S. Naipaul, Salman Rushdie, M.G. Vassanji, Shani Mootoo, Bharati Mukherjee, David Dabydeen, Rohinton Mistry, Hanif Kureishi, Amitav Ghosh, Anita Desai, Kiran Desai and Jhumpa Lahiri. Among these are writers who were born and brought up in India and migrated subsequently, those who were born in the US or UK and brought up by their migrant parents as well as those who migrated from other continents to US, Canada and UK but whose parents are / were of Indian origin. All of them make up the rich and complex canvas of Indian diasporic writers.

The Indian born writers carry along with them the huge emotional baggage of strong memories of their native land and experiences of their formative years in India, whereas those born abroad experience the culture of their parents and predecessors through what they inherit and learn from them. Both generations experience the cultural complexities of their situations and are often subjected to the struggle and trauma of negotiating cultures in order to find their equilibrium. The consequent process of conflict and adjustment also plays a pivotal role in defining their relationship with each other.

The deep-seated culture, ideology and value system of Indian diasporic community remain in a state of constant flux once they come in contact with alien socio-cultural forces. Such cross-cultural encounters impact their progeny more powerfully than themselves and inevitably result in multi-level revelations. These experiences, though varying in nature and degree generation wise, are felt invariably by all and are responsible for the emergence of a distinct diasporic

sensibility that differs from generation to generation. The differences in the culture of the native and adopted country consequence in situations of conflict, clashes, complexities and compromise, which provide the background for this analysis and interpretation of Indian diasporic consciousness, specifically in the context of America where presently the Indian diasporic population is close to 2.25 million.

This study attempts to examine the issues and conflicts faced by both first and second generation Indian immigrants to America while negotiating cultures, as depicted in the works of the widely acclaimed and awarded writer of Indian origin, Jhumpa Lahiri. Born in London, Lahiri moved to Rhode Island as a young child with her Bengali parents. Her mother was a potent influence in her growing years. Although her parents have lived in the United States for more than thirty years, Lahiri observes that her parents retain “a sense of emotional exile” and the author admits that she herself grew up with “conflicting expectations...to be Indian by Indians and American by Americans.” Lahiri has the uncanny ability to convey the oldest cultural conflicts in the most immediate fashion. Within the limited canvas of mostly Bengali and sometimes non-Bengali Indian immigrants and a few native American characters, she creates stories and situations of family relationships and tensions, love and intrigue, alienation and assimilation, with a keen cultural sensibility.

Lahiri's fiction is autobiographical and frequently draws upon her own experiences as well as those of her parents, friends, acquaintances and others in the Bengali communities with which she is familiar. Lahiri examines her characters' struggles, anxieties and biases to chronicle the nuances and details of immigrant psychology and behavior.

The diasporic consciousness of the writer emerges forcefully through the several voices of her first generation characters who contend with conflicting emotions of elation at the good fortune of being able to pursue their dreams in America, the land of opportunities, and a deep sense of loss of the warmth and comfort of their effusive, pulsating, native land India. Their children and grandchildren, however, fail to understand the nostalgia and the deep yearning for the homeland experienced by them, more so, because all of them had voluntarily chosen to migrate to the US and yet continue to live emotionally in the land of their birth. The struggle to conserve one's cultural identity in the process of trying to fit in with popular culture and lifestyle forms the background for most of the stories of Jhumpa Lahiri.

2 Identity Crisis

One of the many challenges faced by the first generation Indian diasporic community is that of identity erosion that happens not just due to invasion of external factors but also due to undermining internal agents. This realization entails the vigorous efforts to relocate and re-establish this endangered identity and this often becomes the primary and painful enterprise for many.

Within the field of various branches of studies and discourses, these shifted people acquire newer identities, labels and elaborations – transnational, diaspora, expatriates, hyphenated immigrants and even dislocated. All these terms inherently contain the sense of ‘otherness’ which does not allow them to ever forget their divided and fractured identities, their ‘in-betweenness,’ and displacement. The sense of dislocation manifests in various outward responses like ‘ghettoisation’ i.e. seeking one’s own community for neighborhood, celebrating Indian festivals and other occasions with greater traditional fervor, imposing the native customs and practices on the children or seeking ways to reinforce and reinstate one’s native allegiances more strongly. There is enhanced nationalism and heightened patriotism towards one’s roots along with the awakened consciousness of upholding the self-hood.

For the first generation, past (home land) and present (adopted land) signify the imaginary and the real. The ‘self’ keeps developing while negotiating with the present. According to Professor Jasbir Jain: “The condition of isolation and separation, the state of schizophrenia and frustration provides a background for a sense of ‘self’.”

This self-hood presents itself as a major hindrance for the first generation in the process of assimilation, acculturation or adaptation.

The sense of self-preservation and identity crisis may also be seen in the second generation but in a different manner and degree. For them there is no difference between their past and present, and they have only one home - America. The practices and conventions of their ‘homeland’ come naturally to them and they have lesser problem with the hyphenated identity of American-Indian. Plurality is the reality of second generation and for many of them the primary pursuit is to strike a difficult balance between their inherited and adopted identity. Most of them come up in an Indian environment in their homes where Indian food, festivals and rituals are practiced by their parents. However, once they get exposed to American schooling and peers during their social interactions with them they become excessively conscious of the differences between their own lifestyle,

priorities and preoccupations from that of their peers. In most cases they struggle to cope and sometimes to snap off the familial connect with Indian genes and way of life in which they have been nurtured in their early years. On the whole their relatability with America is much more natural and stronger than with India.

Jhumpa Lahiri's novel *The Namesake* celebrates the cultural hybridity resulting from globalization and the interconnectedness of the modern world and rethinks the conventional immigrant's experience. Lahiri is aware of the existing problem of cultural diversity in the multicultural United States and she argues that the struggle to grasp a transnational identity becomes an urgent issue for immigrants in this environment. While she represents Gogol as someone who is confused about his identity, she also presents Gogol as a prototypical transnational agent who lives between two different worlds with the possibility of creating multiplicity of identities.

The very title of the novel *Namesake* serves as the metaphor of the protagonist's quest for identity. The entire novel is permeated with his struggle to come to terms with his name of affection, his pet name, Gogol. In order to gain general acceptance and have his own name different from the one kept by his family, he legally acquires a good name of his choice - Nikhil. However, he has to perpetually live with his dual identities in America as his family, especially mother refuses to acknowledge his good name. His inability to acquire a separate American identity by shunning the Indian one formulates the dilemma of his life and represents the predicament of the entire second generation in general.

In almost every story of *Interpreter of Maladies*, there is an emotional trade-off when moving to a new land. Each character in this collection wrestles with identity, whether newly displaced or descended from immigrants. There is a longing felt for the place of one's birth, a fear of losing one's culture and anxiety about not being accepted.

3 Alienation and Assimilation

Nostalgia, memories, exile, shared history, sense of loss and uprootedness are few such elements that afflict first generation Indians potently and result in cultural alienation followed by 'living with the wall' tendency. They seek their own Indian or even caste specific fraternity and sharing the past gives them solace. Efforts are made to assimilate and absorb the reality, to be a part of the common order and norm by following the American lifestyle, observing the common code of conduct and, most importantly, shunning the conservative Indian outlook

so as to fit in with the liberal American mainstream life. However, the feeling of being an outcaste and different overpowers all these attempts at assimilation rendering them feeble and insufficient.

Alienation of Ashima in *The Namesake* is complete in the sense that she experiences all the variants of the term – powerlessness, meaninglessness, normlessness, social isolation, cultural estrangement and self-estrangement.

Ashima feels alienated in the suburbs; this alienation of being a foreigner is compared to “a sort of lifelong pregnancy”, because it is “a perpetual wait, a constant burden, a continuous feeling out of sorts[...]something that elicits the same curiosity from strangers, the same combination of pity and respect.” (Lahiri 2003, 49)

In another of Lahiri's short-story 'Only Goodness' in *Unaccustomed Earth*, Lahiri succinctly delineates the picture of parents' alienation and children's outlook on their agony. Sudha says:

Her parents were aware that they faced a sentence of being foreign[...]Sudha regarded her parents' separation from India as an ailment that ebbed and flowed like a cancer. Rahul was impermeable to that aspect of their lives. “No one dragged them here,” he would say, Baba left India to get rich, and Ma married him because she had nothing else to do. (Lahiri 2008, 138)

The immigrant experience takes several forms and shades in *Interpreter of Maladies*. For some characters, like the narrator of 'The Third and Final Continent,' the transition to a new life is challenging but smooth. The narrator looks forward to the opportunity that the new country can afford. In 'When Mr. Pirzada Came to Dine,' Lilia's parents move to America which affords them a wealth of opportunity not open to them in India, but the price is paid by Lilia in terms of connection to her culture. In 'Mrs. Sen,' the protagonist flatly refuses to assimilate. For her, "everything" is in India and there is no reason to attempt to make a life in her new home.

There is a reversal of situation in the case of second generation. The idea of India as homeland, roots and history of first generation is nothing more than a figment of imagination, a childhood narrative or even a myth. America is their reality, their place of activity and the soil that sustains and nourishes them. The natural outcome is hybridity, a blend of Indian origin with western mindset. It's a situation where they show receding inclination towards the unknown – their

parents' culture – and increasing towards the known – American, which envelops them as air. Their attempts to submerge in mainstream are more pronounced, effortless and natural as they are able to relate naturally with America.

The sense of loss, separation and alienation as opposed to their parents is quite negligible in the second generation, that gets caught in the dynamics of the changing world around them. Their set of problems is very different as they have to grapple with racial discrimination, ethnicity, marginalization and cultural plurality that sometimes give serious jolt to their otherwise easy course of subsuming in the mainstream.

First generation adopts an ethnocentric approach, overtly or subtly, which, rather than judging the other culture, manifests more in the form of denial, rejection and minimization of external impacts. They get defensive towards their self-hood sometimes asserting themselves strongly to reinforce their distinct identity. On the other hand, the second generation shows the tendency of ethnorelativism, a kind of ability to appreciate and accept diversity. Hence this approach manifests thorough acceptance, adaptation and integration in the dominant culture, however, mostly at the cost of one's own culture.

4 Acculturation and Deculturation

Acculturation and Deculturation are the frequently used psychological constructs used in association with diasporic or ethnic studies. Acculturation is related to a person's level of adaptability to new situations and environment whereas Deculturation is understood as the phenomena of getting estranged with one's own culture or roots after coming under foreign influence. With the predominant thoughts of self-preservation lurking heavily on their minds, the process of acculturation in the case of first generation happens only up to subsistence level, like following the culture of the work place out of obligation, observing certain social conventions out of felt need to gain acceptability and perhaps a few other western celebrations in order to keep connected with one's children.

The process of Deculturation, seen prominently in second generation, during its initial phase is characterized by rebellion against observed norms and practices at home. It is observed in smaller instances like consciously resorting to English at home, preferring American fast food over homemade food, making one's appearance more like Americans than Indians with a notable disinclination towards Indian outfits. This attitude later on develops into registering major revolt against commonly accepted code of conduct at home, complete adherence

to American lifestyle and practices, noticeable shift in value system and rejection of the mythical homeland called India.

The departure of the new generation Indian Americans to concerns that are different from those of their parents, who are devoted to their community – Bengalis in the case of Lahiri's characters, and then Indians in general, positions them in stark contrast to their migrant parents. The American born Indians play the reverse role of trying to break away from the restrictions and constraints of Indian culture imposed upon them by their parents, in their effort to live like Americans and integrate with the mainstream. In *The Namesake*, it does not take Gogol time and effort to incorporate into his American girlfriend's family and household. He loves every good and bad thing about her family and her lifestyle just because it's different from his family's functioning. Further in the story, Gogol even starts making comparison between Ratliffs and his parents, finding the latter to be sadly boring and lacking in every department.

He cannot imagine his family occupying a house like this, playing board games on rainy afternoons, watching shooting stars at night... it is an impulse his parents would have never felt... they would have felt lonely in this setting, remarking that they were the only Indians... he feels no nostalgia for the vacations that he's spent with his family... Instead they were overwhelming, disorienting expeditions, either going to Calcutta, or sightseeing in the places they did not belong to and intended never to see again... (Lahiri 2003, 155)

The second generation grows up in reaction to their parents. They inadvertently start falling in line with the more liberal and emancipating American culture. They are faced with a dilemma when, after having been exposed to the more open and practical conventions, they are asked to cherish and adhere to their own impracticable and dysfunctional native culture. The process is far from easy as they struggle against what has been imbued in them in their early years by their parents, and what they experience when they set out into the individualistic, emancipated world of their American peers.

As they grow up, they find themselves divided in loyalties which are more towards America, yet they cannot cut themselves off totally from India due to its strong presence in their parents' life. In their attempts to claim America by diminishing their Indianness they sometimes eventually end up being labeled as ABCD an acronym for *America born confused deshi*, which is nothing else but a satirical designation for their fractured status. In *The Namesake*, Gogol's Deculturation is complete when he acknowledges that for his parents and their

friends, India will always be *desh*, a generic word for country, whereas 'he never thinks of India as *desh*. He thinks of it as Americans do, as India.'

The idea of acculturation of the first generation is more of being a part of the 'cultural mosaic' as opposed to the acculturation of second generation whose idea is that of a 'melting pot' where they want to submerge and unify with the common culture.

5 Ironic Situation

The dichotomy in the Indian diasporic experience is not limited to the matter of identity as it extends to cover the entire life of both the generations, as both, at one point or another, find themselves falling back on the track that leads them to the starting point, the initial phase. During their respective journeys in life, both get enmeshed in the push and pull of the two strong opposing forces, which makes their onward movement difficult. They retreat and often take recourse to the reality that they initially rejected.

6 The Paradox of Otherness

The feelings of sense of loss and otherness in the first generation are usually followed by the efforts to reclaim the past and relive those experience related to home. They keep looking back over the shoulder as overpowering feelings of nostalgia prevent them from accepting the adopted land as home. Their interaction with the starkly opposite society coupled with their own inability to let go of their memories creates a sense of marginalization or otherness that is two-dimensional. There is no concrete effort either from the host society or the guest to relate with each other. The idea of being guests is more settling as it keeps the hope of returning back to India alive.

However, there comes a point in these people's life when they realize after coming back to home that India of their minds has moved on and things have changed. The old familiarity of known places and faces is substituted with changed ones of the next generation. Herein emerges the 'paradox of otherness' as the images so long carried in their hearts no longer correspond with the reality at home any more. The feeling of 'otherness' again assails them but this time in their own home. It places them in a very ironic situation of nationlessness or homelessness where they get the vibes and warmth of home from nowhere and

there is nothing left to reclaim at home leaving them unhinged or suspended. Such condition of Ashima and Ashok, the first generation immigrants to US, has been portrayed in a very sensitive manner in Lahiri's *The Namesake*:

More deaths come, more telephone calls startle them in the middle of the night[...] within a decade abroad, they are both orphaned[...] Ashoke and Ashima live the life of extremely aged, those for whom everyone they once knew and loved is lost[...] voices on the phone, occasionally bearing the news of births and weddings, send chills down the spine[...] the sight of them when they visit Calcutta every few years feels stranger still. (Lahiri 2003, 63-64)

7 Breaking the Stereotypes

Jhumpa Lahiri begins her short-story collection *Unaccustomed Earth* by an epitaph taken from *The Custom-House* by Nathaniel Hawthorne, which goes thus:

Human nature will not flourish, anymore than a potato, if it be planted and replanted, for too long a series of generations, in the same worn-out soil. My children have had other birthplaces, and, so far as their fortunes may be within my control, shall strike their roots into unaccustomed earth. (qtd in Lahiri 2008)

Throughout her novels, she attempts to subvert the notion by ironically questioning it and presenting the case of her characters so as to show that this does not hold true in certain situations. She challenges the stereotypical beliefs, images, perceptions and stock expectations of people with the view to subtly ask – Are we like this? Can we remain unaffected and indifferent under changed circumstances?

Carrying preconceived notions about people and situations comes naturally to Indian mindset. Her characters suffer setbacks when they find their fixed perceptions breaking apart under chaffing circumstances. This situation presents itself as the epiphany, the moment of revelation that the world around them has moved on while they remained stuck to the delusion of *status quo*.

In *The Namesake*, Ashima is elated on Gogol's finally taking interest in a girl of Indian origin Moushmi. She presumes that her son has made the best decision by getting married to Moushmi and they will definitely bond culturally. Ashima's complacency and deep-rooted trust in Indianness gets a serious jolt when contrary to all expectations, Moushmi, exhibiting American attitude, cheats on Gogol and

walks out of his life. Similarly, in the short-story 'Hell-Heaven' in *Unaccustomed Earth*, it is Pranab, an Indian, who betrays his American wife contradicting his mother's predictions at the time of his marriage that the marriage will not work out because of the girl and her non-Indian values.

8 Duality of Estrangement

According to Salman Rushdie, "The Indian writer, while looking back at India, does so through gilt-tinted spectacles." This is true of the first generation Indian diasporic psyche, which always carries this baggage of guilt of not sharing time and space with their own people back in India. They frequently find themselves faced with the confounding question as to whether the choice made by them was correct or not. They are estranged from their people due to physical distances.

On the other hand, the second generation, their own offspring too get estranged from them due to emotional disconnect. They find themselves unable to share time and space with their parents, who despite being physically close to them are still distant owing to difference in sensibilities and lifestyle. Hence, this generation too feels the guilt somewhere when they find that the gap between their parents and them has become so large that it cannot be filled. Unfortunately, the estrangement and loss of the first generation is dual in nature and complete, leaving them alone to deal with their own lives. In *The Namesake*, Gogol experiences the guilt pang for the first time after his father's death and his inability to do anything for his parents. "He knows now the guilt his parents carried inside, at being able to do nothing when their parents had died in India, of arriving weeks, sometimes months later, when there was nothing left to do." (Lahiri 2003, 179)

9 Adaptation: Coming Full Circle

For the second generation, undergoing cultural mutation or attaining cultural hybridity is an inevitable process. Ironically as they mature into adulthood and step into their thirties, most of them begin to unwittingly value what they earlier shunned, and begin to realize to what extent their Indian upbringing is a part of their sensibility and persona. Easy as it is to attach with the adopted culture, so is it difficult to weed out one's own inherited cultural bonds. With the passage of time, the second generation does tend to fall back on its own native culture inadvertently, as the customs and habits drilled during childhood begin to resurface.

In the short-story 'Unaccustomed Earth,' the protagonist Ruma, a second generation Indian, reconciles with the thought that she has become the reflection of her mother in lots of ways, a transformation that happened unconsciously.

Growing up, her mother's example — moving to a foreign place for the sake of marriage, caring exclusively for children and a household — had served as a warning, a path to avoid. Yet this was Ruma's life now. (Lahiri 2008, 11)

Contrary to her is the father, of the first generation, who has also come full circle in his adaptability as he easily accepts the fact that his children would grow up to forget him. After the death of his wife, instead of choosing to become dependent on his daughter, he opts the American way, strikes a bond with another woman and decides to travel all around the world with her.

The process of Deculturation seen prominently in the second generation is phased, starting with the total rejection of the inheritance, moving on to the homogenization with the mainstream, and then gradual, howsoever slight shift towards one's roots. A sense of in-betweenness is experienced by this generation in their mature years and they find themselves trying to achieve a balance between both their identities, a kind of biculturalism that explains the dual dimension of their consciousness and reality.

For the first generation, the interplay of varied cross cultural experiences over the period of time results in adaptation, resignation, passive acceptance or reconciliation with the reality, in varying degrees, largely for the sake of children and also as survival tactics. While living abroad on a permanent basis, they come to terms with their destiny, accept the distances with children as well as India, settling with the idea that home is where the heart is and also that geography is no guarantee of security.

According to Liesl Schillinger, Jhumpa Lahiri through her novels shows that: "[t]he place to which you feel the strongest attachment isn't necessarily the country you're tied to by blood or birth: it's the place that allows you to become yourself. This place, she quietly indicates, may not lie on any map." (Lahiri 2008, 1)

As per the book review of *Unaccustomed Earth* done by New York Times:

These Indian-born parents want the American Dream for their children — name-brand schools, a prestigious job, a roomy house in the suburbs — but they are cautious about the pitfalls of life in this alien land, and isolated by their difficulties with language and customs. Their children too are often emotional outsiders: having grown up translating the mysteries of the United States for

their relatives, they are fluent navigators of both Bengali and American culture but completely at home in neither; they always experience themselves as standing slightly apart, given more to melancholy observation than wholehearted participation. (Kakutani 2008, 1)

The Indian diasporic sentiments can be aptly summed up in Salman Rushdie's words:

India, I have swum in your warm waters and run laughing in your mountain meadows[...]I have eaten your independent salt and drunk your nauseatingly sugary roadside tea[...] India, my terra infirma, my maelstrom, my cornucopia, my crowd. India my too-muchness, my everything at once, my Hug-me, my fable, my mother, my father and my first great truth[...]India, fount of my imagination, source of my savagery, breaker of my heart. Goodbye. (Rushdie 2000, 248-49)

The process of negotiating cultures is an ongoing one and will continue to invite increasing attention with enhancement in mobility of people and blurring of geographical boundaries. The challenge to preserve the distinctiveness of individual cultural heritage and at the same time to fit in with multicultural people and environments will remain an essential concern of subjects and writers of the diaspora.

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“Tagore Syndrome”: A Case Study of the West’s Intercultural (Mis)Readings

1 The Rise and Fall of a Poet

“[T]hese prose translations from Rabindranath Tagore have stirred my blood as nothing has for years [...]” (Yeats 1913, 5). This is William Butler Yeats in 1912, writing his famous Introduction to the English version of Rabindranath Tagore’s *Gitanjali*, published the following year. We have here peeped into the second sentence of the Introduction. Yeats is so excited that he cannot postpone sharing it with his readers. He actually goes so far as to claim that “Tagore’s lyrics [...] display in their thought a world I have dreamed of all my life long. The work of a supreme culture [...]”. In 1935, however, Yeats begins a letter to his friend with the words “Damn Tagore” (as cited in Sen 2005, 95). What happened in those twenty-odd years to turn a qualified admirer into a detached denouncer? Actually, since Yeats’ reaction was characteristic of the West, rather than an isolated instance, we had better ask what happened with the Western readers of Tagore?

Tagore was a writer of prodigious production. By the time he came out of his teens he had accumulated an opus that in itself would have been quite sufficient not to make the long eighty years of his life seem only modestly productive. He wrote in Bengali, his mother tongue, and enjoyed an extraordinary reputation among his countrymen, though not undivided. Indeed, not few were those objecting to the audacity of his style, all kinds of technical innovations and the

unconventional treatment of only seemingly traditional motifs. In the West he was completely unknown.

All that dramatically changed at the poet's age of fifty-two. In 1912 Tagore presented a friend of his with a manuscript containing 103 poems in prose, translated to English by himself. The manuscript reached Yeats, who saw to its publication, prefaced with his introduction. The next year, the booklet, entitled *Gitanjali*, won him no less than the Nobel Prize, the first awarded to any non-Westerner (not infrequently one can read that it was the first Nobel Prize given to a non-European, which is not true, Theodore Roosevelt having got it in 1906 for peace; it is a fact, however, that Tagore was the first non-European to be awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature). The award rocketed him into heights that had not been seen before and have not been seen since. Amit Chaudhuri (2001) does not exaggerate when he observes that Tagore became "the first global superstar or celebrity in literature" (Chaudhuri 2001, 18). In the years to come he would be applauded, garlanded and adored wherever he went, including the Soviet Union and Fascist Italy. He made a dozen foreign tours, that took him to almost every continent. Among his enthusiasts were the most eminent men of letters such as André Gide and Boris Pasternak, both of whom translated him. In India, voices of dissension generally subsided and Tagore was by and large hailed as the national bard, pride of the country. It seemed as if the prophecy from Yeats' Introduction was becoming flesh and blood:

These verses will not lie in little well-printed books upon ladies' tables, who turn the pages with indolent hands that they may sigh over a life without meaning, which is yet all they can know of life, or be carried by students at the university to be laid aside when the work of life begins, but, as the generations pass, travellers will hum them on the highway and men rowing upon the rivers. Lovers, while they await one another, shall find, in murmuring them, this love of God a magic gulf wherein their own more bitter passion may bathe and renew its youth. (Chaudhuri 2001, 18)

But then something went awry. To all appearances, the West was becoming tired of Tagore and Tagoreism. Among the disenchanted, once again, we find outstanding writers. Ezra Pound, to name one. In 1937 Graham Greene drew the line: "As for Rabindranath Tagore, I cannot believe that anyone but Mr Yeats can still take his poems very seriously" (as cited in Sen 2005, 89). We saw, however, that at that time Yeats had already *damned* Tagore. Nevertheless, his rejection was not total and he did include some of Tagore's early poems in *The Oxford*

Book of Modern Verse he prepared in 1936. During the uneasy years between the two world wars, even after his glamour had started to wane in the West, Tagore preserved the aura of a spiritual authority, capable of transcending the current turmoils and battle cries. He died amidst these cries, in 1941. And the post-war West seemed to have completely forgotten even that Tagore. In the mid-1960s, Anna Akhmatova, admiring and translating the Bengali minstrel, looked like a lonely bird still defying a flock that had flown away a long, long time ago. And today, on the 150th anniversary of the poet's birth, *The Guardian's* columnist Ian Jack (2011) is left with nothing but astonishment when, opening the Oxford and the Penguin dictionaries of quotations, he finds "[n]ot a single entry. They skipped from Tacitus to Hippolyte Taine as if there was nothing in Tagore's collected works (28 thick books, even with his 2,500 songs published separately) that ever had stuck in anyone's mind."

2 The Rise and Fall of a Poet's Public

Multiple are the reasons behind this shooting parabola. We shall here try to trace them, moving from the apparent to the less obvious. First of all, what has been stressed innumerable times has to be repeated once again: among those who have been able to read Tagore in the original it is a matter of common agreement that translations of his poetry, to any language, are only a very feeble echo of its original richness and sound. Bengali has been called the Italian of India and one of the most melodious Indo-European languages, occasionally even the most melodious. Moreover, contrary to Tagore's own and the bulk of subsequent translating practice, what we find as uneven poetic prose is, in Bengali, verse respecting rhythm, metre and rhyme that can be easily put to music (much of his poems are in fact songs and rely more on their formal features than on the content). Translating his own lines Tagore must have felt the way he did when translating songs of Bengali *bauls*, wandering poet-singers, describing the job as presenting butterflies with their wings torn out. There are at least two reasons to Tagore's avoiding more formal translations of his own poems. Firstly, he never felt sufficiently confident of his English and had serious doubts even about his translations in prose. Secondly, he considered any attempt at saving the beauty of the original a wild goose chase in the first place, the discrepancy between the original and any target language being, to his mind, unsurmountable. He even openly discouraged his aspiring translators from learning Bengali and resorting

to the originals themselves and asked them to rather start from his own English translations. Fortunately, the aspiring translators have not always paid heed.

Tagore's translations of Tagore bring us to the next point. Numerous places in his letters and other writings, as well as personal accounts of people he was acquainted with, bear witness to the pains he took in order to produce a Tagore he considered was palatable to the average English reader. In other words, he deliberately and systematically worked to falsify his original poetic self, expunging or at least moderating everything he deemed "too Indian", rephrasing or even adding what in fact had to serve as veiled footnotes, "explaining the unexplainable". Edward Thompson's *Rabindranath Tagore: Poet and Dramatist*, published in 1926, with the second, revised edition dating from 1948, offers quite a number of such missed translations, which more often than not succeed only in watering down the splendour and pregnancy of the original imagery. This tendency seems to have increased in the course of the years and we find Tagore constantly adapting and re-adapting the English versions of his plays even in his advanced age, but it started as early as his English debut: the *Gitanjali* he was awarded for is far from its Bengali version, but rather a patchwork made of selections from ten books of poetry (with at least one poem created as an amalgam of what was originally two poems). I suspect Thompson (1948) is right in taking it to be Tagore's finest translation. Whatever he subsequently translated for the Western readership will be heavily boiled down, rearranged and then served. Furthermore, even when it comes to his original works, Tagore was often enough rebuked for his repetitiveness; trying to conform to a safe pattern, his English translations result much more so. These facts undoubtedly figure as a major reason for the change in the Western perception, exemplified again by Yeats' weariness with the "sentimental rubbish" of Tagore's later books and with his bad English (which, however, was probably just a misplaced rationalization of some other issues). Though never getting tired of rewriting his works, Tagore was at a different level well-aware of the inadequate position he had found himself in. Here is a part of his letter to Thompson, dated 2 February 1921:

You know I began to pay court to your language when I was fifty. It was pretty late for me ever to hope to win her heart. Occasional gifts of favour do not delude me with false hopes. Not being a degree-holder of any of our universities I know my limitations – and I fear to rush into the field reserved for angels to tread. In my translations I timidly avoid all difficulties, which has the effect of making them smooth and thin. [...] When I began this career of falsifying my own coins I did it in play. Now I am becoming frightened of its enormity

and am willing to make a confession of my misdeeds and withdraw into my original vocation as a mere Bengali poet. I hope it is not yet too late to make reparation. (Thompson 1948, 264)

Just as in the case of Yeats, appealing to language problem does seem rather a way of beating about the bush.

Instead of pandering to what he perceived as the Western literary taste, Tagore would have done greater service to both East and West had he offered authentic literature of his own self and his background. Acclaimed as he was, he missed the historical opportunity to educate the West and joined, instead, in complacently fondling the prejudices existing in the Western mind. Still, the most responsible is the West itself, for it missed its own chance to be educated. The self-Westernized Tagore was not that Western, after all. For what one can gather today from the enthusiastic atmosphere prevalent at the time, even if a newly made devotee had been acquainted with the fact that singing and playing to one's own poems was not a Tagorean invention, but Indian tradition, he or she would have gladly sacrificed this knowledge to the coveted image of the saintly, white-bearded wise man from the East, the singular incarnation of all arts and insights. This figure landed in Europe at a moment most fragile and vulnerable for the continent, and the messianic effect produced obviously had least of all to do with literature. No adequate translation would have corrected the distortions created in such an exalted state of mind. When the exaltation was over, it was over with Tagore.

Tagore himself was not unaware of the distorted reactions. In 1920, at the peak of his glory, he wrote to C. F. Andrews concerning some immoderate advocates of his: "These people [...] are like drunkards who are afraid of their lucid intervals" (as cited in Sen 2005, 96). In another letter he is even more specific: "People have taken to my work with such excessive enthusiasm that I cannot really accept it. My impression is that when a place from which nothing is expected somehow produces something, even an ordinary thing, people are amazed – that is the state of mind here" (Tagore 1997, 90). This is a very acute observation. If Tagore ever was guilty of condescending to the West, the West did the lion's share of the job, its eternal thirst for the exotic producing a Tagore very different from the Tagore that actually existed. For its own part, Bengal, afflicted with the colonial complex, readily mimicked the accolades imparted by the always better knowing ruler. The previous objections to Tagore's way of writing were by and large smoothed out and the poet became "a fetish [...] the holy mascot of Bengali provincial vanity"

(Chaudhuri 1987, 5). The problem with the exotic is that it has a shelf life. Once this expires, the exotic becomes just another platitude.

A good part of the blame for Tagore falling out of favour with the West certainly goes to those of its intellectual community who belittled the Indian dimension of his work and magnified the Western, in the desire to show that by praising Tagore the West actually praised itself. Very illustrative of such a stance is Luigi Luzzatti's (1920) Introduction to the Italian translation of Tagore's *The Crescent Moon*. He represents Tagore as a true Westernized Indian that did away with his native background and introduced a poetry hitherto unknown in India, highlighting the poet himself, singing about himself. Although Luzzatti draws on a great many of quotes from Tagore's poetry to prove his thesis, they do not exactly seem to corroborate his point. It is true that Indian classical literature avoids the first person singular, but this is certainly not true of popular, devotional and related poetry, where it is even common for the poet to openly mention his or her own name at the end of the poem. And this is precisely the kind of poetry Tagore avowedly drew upon. His readings of English poetry and the influence it made on him were largely exaggerated, to the expense of his rootedness in native ground. Luzzatti should have gone back to the Introduction by Yeats, who saw the relationship between East and West in Tagore much more clearly. Instead, Luzzatti's own Introduction gets completely out of hand when, towards the end, it signals that "Europe awarded India, that had given heed to its teachings" (Luzzatti 1920, 16). True, such criticism could also be heard among Tagore's countrymen back in India, as noticed by Thompson, but the latter, who was particularly familiar with the situation, advertently adds that "such things were said by, at any rate, a minority of his own countrymen" (Luzzatti 1920, 316), probably those who never came to terms with the poet's singular poetic vein, that expressed foremost his own idiosyncrasies, and only laterally any supposedly European ways. In other words, if Tagore at all sounded too little Indian, it was primarily because he was too much of an individual, re-articulating his own tradition in a fresh voice, and only very much secondarily because he was imitating European patterns.

3 "Tagore's Syndrome": Echo and Pizza Effects

Admitting the alleged untranslatability of Bengali verse, admitting Tagore's own oversights in gaining his Western reputation and the relative flatness of much of his later writing, admitting the flaws in some of his Western interpreters, I would still argue that the main culprit for the poet's disappearance from

the Western world is the latter's superficial curiosity and only slack readiness to open itself to the Other. Tagore's case has remained the gaudiest instance of one culture going from one extreme to the other in its appreciation of something belonging to a different culture. What began as excitation of the moment was doomed to soon exhaust itself once fresh fuel stopped coming and the interest not being genuine enough to enable any kind of deeper and sustained study. The episode ignominiously ended with Tagore even being accused of getting credit for the work of Yeats, who had supposedly "rewritten" *Gitanjali* (Sen 2005, 96). Tagore's Western illness became first and foremost part of the anamnesis of the West itself. It was not his fall so much as the fall of his public.

This is the extreme version of the behavioural pattern we are repeatedly coming across, with Tagore only as a – or rather *the* – case in point. It typically manifests itself in a somewhat different way, with the West appropriating the Other by adapting it to its own point of view and sensibilities. Although I argued this was not predominantly so in Tagore's case, it typically best acknowledges the Other when the latter is best representing qualities acquired from the West. I would call that the *echo effect*. In exemplifying it, let us stick to India. More than with Tagore, this indulging in its own reflection, its own echo, becomes visible in the four living Indian authors connected by the Booker Prize, what is generally considered the second best prize in literature at the global level. Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* not only won its author the 1981 Booker, but also the 1993 Booker of Bookers, the only one awarded so far. In 1997 Arundhati Roy got hers for the debut novel *The God of Small Things*, with Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss* following suit in 2006. Only two years later, it was awarded to Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger*. It is certainly not my intention here to question any of these (though I do have an opinion about each). My present concern is rather to propose these cases as much likelier instances than Tagore's of the West paying homage to its own taste and/or caprice of the moment. *Midnight's Children*, and Rushdie in general, is hailed as a grand representative of magical realism, a mode of writing the West has come to love so much, being well-suited to its postmodern preference for undermining any stable concept of reality and creating pastiche. However, once the West outgrows its own fashion, it is my suspicion that Rushdie's dashing reputation will be among the first to suffer. *The God of Small Things* is very near to making linguistic exuberance its protagonist, which, coupled with a tragic, cross-religious love story in an exotic setting, sounds like a pretty safe formula for gaining the sympathies of a Western panel. I find Kiran Desai's example peculiarly interesting as it can be seen against that of her mother, Anita Desai, who, sustainedly, writes much more careful, penetrating, but, alas, traditional,

prose, and has therefore only managed to be short-listed for the Booker, three times, which is in all probability the farthest she will ever get. Finally, *The White Tiger* contains at least two winning factors: the always welcome semi-childlike perspective, and raw, unmitigated depiction of an exotic urban world. Once again, I am not arguing here that all or any of these writers won their awards *because of* the reasons I summarily sketched, but these *are* worth considering as elements of an extraliterary pattern that keeps repeating itself in the Western appreciation of non-Western literatures.

If somebody might get the impression that the above remarks have put us off the track, let me clarify that, just as any syndrome, what I here propose to call “Tagore’s syndrome” cannot be represented by one case only. Rather, it should be understood as a common denominator designating all kinds of variations within the given phenomenon. Tagore’s simply happens to be the most celebrated and, at least in some respects, the most exemplary case. Let me rephrase the symptoms observed hitherto, in somewhat idealized lines, for the sake of clarity. The West loves when the non-West writes like the West. In Luzzatti’s words, it loves when the non-West gives heed to its teachings. (Of course, much of the present examination could be generalized to encompass spheres outside writing itself, but this would require separate elaboration and a different kind of text). If the non-West does not write that way, the West loves it to be at least exotic, juicy, wild, anything that can tickle its curiosity, stimulate its constant excitability, momentarily quench its thirst for the new, as long as it remains unmenacingly different and safely distant. Consequently, such writing and such writers are particularly vulnerable to impermanence, a shooting star fading as soon as its novelty becomes as boring as that of the stars of yesterday. Myself coming from a country bordering on or even belonging to the recently war-torn Balkans, I had ample opportunity to witness instances of foreign book markets showing interest in Bosnian, Croatian or Montenegrin authors *because* they were coming from that most exotic part of Europe (the fact that geographically they *are* part of Europe only enhancing the exoticness), writing about first-hand experiences of something so exciting as ethnic war. (By the way, the same can be said about the cinematographies of the countries in question.)

The easiest and safest way to recognize Tagore’s syndrome is exactly the presence of such non-literary factors intervening in supposedly literary evaluation. Interestingly, though not surprisingly, Western judgements modify non-Western perceptions, due to the colonial complex now turned postcolonial. We have already observed the phenomenon in the changed reactions of Tagore’s countrymen to his writing after the Nobel Prize. The effect has been noticed for some decades now

and was labelled by Aghananda Bharati (1981, though he first used it as early as 1970) as *pizza-effect*. Once looked down upon in its native country as a meal of the simple, pizza was made a hit by Italian immigrants in America and only then came back to Italy, now as a delicacy in its national cuisine and accepted world-wide. The same thing, adds Bharati, happened with yoga, become trendy in India after it had gained popularity in the West, or with Satyajit Ray, another Bengali, whose films became Indian pride only after Western critics had made him their darling (Bharati 1981, 21-22).

4 Final Remarks and a Tentative Conclusion

Arduous as it is, and for various reasons, constant care has to be taken to read literature simply for what it is. Though there are a number of factors that can and should be taken into account as contributing to our better appreciation, no extraliterary concern may claim to become the criterion of literary excellence. In this respect, contact with a different literary tradition or practice represents particularly slippery ground, there being so many distractions to tempt one into evaluating what should be simply appreciated. The road from impression to judgment is crowded with sirens and colourful blossoms the traveller may enjoy, but not follow.

Taking India as a representative of the non-West, exemplified primarily by Rabindranath Tagore, the present text has done nothing toward evaluating its or his literary quality. It has rather intended to clear some of the shrubbery and thus contribute to preparing the ground for a genuine start in unprejudiced literary examination. Tagore's solitary case turned into a syndrome, and everything should be done to eradicate it. It creates imbalances that severely undermine the chances of establishing authentic literary scholarship, not to mention the harm it does to realizing the lofty ideal of world literature and its study. Every time I revisit Tagore's case I seem less and less capable of spotting truly literary motives behind his past reputation in the West. The non-West, in its turn, is too easily conditioned by the West, and then eagerly sticks to the newly-created standards even after the West has abandoned them. So we find that the Western disenchantment with Tagore stirred up Indian enthusiasm for him, making Indians, and especially Bengalis, highly uncritical. As noticed by William Radice (1994), Tagore's authoritative translator and interpreter, they "have become fiercely protective towards him, and find it as difficult to face up to flaws and failings in him as parents do in a much-loved, vulnerable child" (Radice 1994, 26). It would be

instructive and highly advantageous to remember that what began as infatuation ended in fizzling out and creating the opposite kind of infatuation. Amidst such a literary scandal it becomes virtually impossible to discern Tagore's real literary worth (or to approach any nearer to that ideal goal).

Speaking for a while more through the emblematic case of Tagore, clearing up the ground has also to involve proper translation. This is actually the first specific step. In both his Preface (Radice 1994) and Introduction (Radice 1994) to Tagore's *Selected Short Stories* Radice points out that adequate translations of his literature are a job yet to be done, a job in which Radice himself certainly has the lead. These would replace all kinds of Orientalized translations produced so far, or, only seemingly at the opposite pole, Tagore's imprudent concessions to the expectations of the West and his underrating of the latter's ability to widen its own perception. The readers' horizon of expectation is something that needs constant enhancing, when it comes both to producing a text and to its translation. And then, if Bengali verse really is that untranslatable, why are bilingual versions of Tagore's poetry rather rare exceptions than common practice, in an age when Westerners have long become used to read one another's poetry in precisely that manner? Why not attach also a recording of them being sung, the more so since that has been intended as their proper setting from the very start? Secondly, the West has been unjustly selective in its readings of Tagore, leaving his stories, essays and other genres of his many-sided creativity beyond its ken. On the other hand, his less literary and non-literary writings have unduly affected the way the West has been reading the purely literary ones. Radice takes up this subject in a separate article (Radice 2010), stressing this filter of Tagore's ideas and ideals and the need to focus on the literary works themselves and on what and how they are saying as such. Before these steps have been taken – and all of them – we are bound to keep half-consciously staggering along the vast expanse between the poles of condemnation and adoration.

At this point I hope it is needless to say that Tagore's has remained only the most dramatic instance of the perils inherent in both the (post)colonizer's patronizing of the (post)colonized and the latter's trying to please the former. One cannot possibly be too alert when it comes to maintaining intellectual hygiene, letting the Other speak for itself and trying to hear it with an ear untrammelled by one's own voice. In the present times, when colonialism has only become more sophisticated, one should be the more attentive about the insidiousness of seemingly innocuous trifles and catchwords. It is potentially offensive, and at a deeper level certainly detrimental, to speak of the greatest Indian poet Kalidasa as the Indian Shakespeare, particularly when the identification is one-way; we

should cultivate ourselves into an amazed reaction at such rhetorics, just as we would react to hearing somebody call Shakespare the English Kalidasa, a thing unimaginable only due to the ingrained partiality of the game. The game was very popular in Tagore's youth, too, when, even among Bengalis, the best way to honour a writer of their own was to insert him into a pervertedly domesticated copy of the English literary pantheon. So Tagore became the Bengali Shelley. The shortness of an informative article on Tagore or Kalidasa, such as those we found in encyclopedias, should normally make its author think twice before affording the spatial luxury of pointing out that the first was hailed by Yeats, while the second made Goethe sigh. Even when not deliberate, let alone malevolent, such description nevertheless subsists on the underlying assumption that it is actually this that recommends and guarantees the quality of those foreigners. If that chap Kalidasa was able to move grand Goethe, he must be worth one's time! The "collateral effect", however, is that in such practice non-Western authors are given the opportunity to fully exist only through their Western colleagues. They become the latter's avatars.

Rereading this text I find a thing or two that might look like exaggeration or unwarranted generalization. Of course, the matter *is* much more complicated and deserves further elaboration. Drawing the line, however, I do not feel the need to introduce any changes. I unreservedly believe in the far-reaching importance of the subject here sketched, as well as in the need to forgive the clarion its occasional shrillness, if it is trying to warn. I have attempted at making Tagore's case appear essential to a much wider phenomenon, since "[n]o reputation which was in reality so well founded ever suffered so greatly" (Thompson 1948, 264). It is essential to understand why that should not happen again.

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ASSUNTA DE CRESCENZO

New Approaches to Literature, Globalized Narrative Strategies and Skills

1 Introduction

Narration, as a cognitive process, is an essential condition of human existence; one could say that it responds to the physiology of internal development, it contributes towards the creation of a personal identity, influencing perception of reality and enhancing the individual's relational capacity.

Philosophical support of this idea can be found in Henri Bergson's concept of time and memory. In the Bergsonian eye, from an extrinsic point of view, past time is – as Geymonat observes – “purely a succession of moments that follow each other in a well determined rectilinear order (past, present and future); for the conscious mind, instead, time is something irreducible to the instant; it is something lasting, a fluid process that conserves the past and creates the new”¹. Thus, conscious time is *durée*, a stream of events that are not unrelated, but congruent and homogeneous due to the mind's elaboration process, i. e. a sort of ideal reconstruction of experience in which the processes of enumeration, coordination and selection are involved and all contribute to reinforcing and defining personal identity. Such ideal reconstruction also occurs through the

¹ The reference is to the most notable work of Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution* (1907); see L. Geymonat 1970-76, vol. VII (79-85). (This quotation and the following ones were translated from Italian into English by the author of the present essay).

particular type of internal narration that each of us does, as if commenting on that which we are experiencing moment by moment. There is an internal ‘voice’ that considers, weighs up, and evaluates every act, every occurrence, retracing past experiences (both those of the immediate past, experienced just an instant before, and those of the more distant past) in order to ‘organise’ and integrate them into the conscience and the Self, as it presents itself at any given moment in the arena of personal evolution. Therefore, in such a process, the memory does not simply perform the role of an ‘archive’, a mere store of recollections – it cannot be considered, as it had been up until the middle of the 20th century, a ‘static’ faculty of the mind. If it is true that the memory projects itself onto the present, conditioning it, making it appear in one way or another, it is equally true that the present acts on the past, ‘updating’ it to meet the requirements of the moment (see Rosenfield 1988; Herman 2003; Zeki 2010): we are not the sum of individual moments in our lives but the product of the new features which they acquire at each new instant. Considered in this light, our life and the memory we have of it may be assembled as one big, perpetual, ‘auto-narration’.

Thus, narration is a work of construction and cohesion. From primitive tribes to modern society, the task of preserving history and immortalizing origins, knowledge and customs (in other words, the collective memory) has been assigned to this process. In the English-speaking world, the expression ‘to keep the home fire burning’ is of particular relevance and, with our argument in mind, the image takes on a greater significance – the fire’s vitalising strength has to be nourished and fed: “The fire must not go out [...] it is necessary, vital, bonded by blood [...] because narration is insuppressible: words must circulate, otherwise we would die without dying. Infinite is the plasticity of the narrator, infinite is the plasticity of the narrated story” (Longo 2008, 10).

It is no coincidence that, regarding words and narration, the term ‘plasticity’ appears in the previous quote. Words have a ‘plastic’ power, they ‘model’, ‘create’; *logos* brings about reality. Naming things, narrating them, means liberating them from the indefinite and formless, amorphous; it means forming something out of primordial chaos, giving order and concreteness. This idea bears even more value when referring to *fiction*. It is precisely this attribute that great writers share: the ability to put together vivid stories using the ‘projection’ of their own experience or via the subtle intuition of the emotions, feelings, and thoughts of others, experiencing a kind of sympathetic identification and mimicking that which goes beyond mere personal experience. They are capable of reawakening the soul, provoking inner development, and leaving traces on the hearts and minds of their readers.

Thus, we ask, what importance does literature hold today? Addressing this question is vital if we consider how the Internet and social networks affect our lives, our way of thought and behaviour. An answer to this question may be found by taking into consideration the New Italian Epic (NIE), a literary phenomenon of particular interest which involves all of the themes connected to this conference: NIE's birth on the Internet, and therefore its worldwide spread (which also explains why its name is in the new international *lingua franca*, English); its objective, shared by the participants, of analysing and defining the most recent outcomes of Italian narrative; and, on the basis of such an examination, its attempt to single out the turning points related to late-postmodern poetry and to give a better and more up-to-date definition of the aesthetical and ethical relationship between literature and society.

2 The New Italian Epic

April 2008: as if in confirmation of the belief that literature is the product of collaboration between author and reader, a heated debate on the Internet flared up between writers and readers of various nations over the significance that the literature of today, in particular narrative, is for the most part cloaked in a 'virtualized' and global multimedia reality. What triggered this was the "*New Italian Epic. Memorandum 1993-2008*", written and published by Wu Ming I² and presented at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Boston in 2008.

The appearance of the memorandum on the Internet, the international and intercultural dimension of its immediate spread (more than 30,000 downloads in just a few months, unheard of for a text on literary methodology and theory, let alone for poetry manifestos) caught the attention of both the public and experts who, at least initially, came from outside academic circles.

A second version of the original document, elaborated upon and with a commentary, came out in September 2008, and from this the *New Italian Epic. Literature, oblique gaze, return to the future* was born in 2009, which has become our main reference point³. The book includes *We must be the parents*, Wu Ming's

2 Wu Ming Foundation is the name given to a group of writers coming from the Bologna section of the Luther Blissett Project (1984-1993). See "wumingfoundation.com" (which comes with a complete video library and podcasts in the name of multimedia - interviews, readings, musical collaborations, radio dramas, audiobooks, lectures and presentations), "Carmilla on-line" and "Giap!".

3 Wu Ming, 2009 (from now on, the title New Italian Epic is shortened to NIE; in the text of the present essay the acronym is followed by the indication of the pages from which quotations are taken). The volume is constituted by the following pieces: *New Italian Epic. Memorandum 1993-2008* (Wu Ming I); *Noi dobbiamo essere i genitori* (Wu Ming I); *La salvezza di Euridice* (Wu Ming 2). *The Memorandum*

opening talk presented at “The Italian Perspective on Metahistorical Fiction: The New Italian Epic” conference, which took place on 2nd October 2008 at the Institute of Germanic and Romance Studies of the University of London, in which the defining features of this trend were listed and discussed. It also includes *Eurydice’s Salvation*, “a long journey into the territory of the narrated story, through mythology, neuroscience, linguistics and ‘pop philosophy’” (NIE, XII). In support of its intercultural and ‘open’ nature, the NIE acknowledges and tries to organize (not in a dogmatic or rigid way, but rather flexible) the various suggestions and continuous appeals that come from the aforementioned sources (the Internet, conferences, debates in overseas schools and colleges, articles in newspapers and journals), with the aim of creating a ‘virtuous society’ between the Web and printed word.

The debate is invading other countries, expanding and arousing interest, with more and more people participating. There are a growing number of conferences on the topic as well as open discussions at some of the most prestigious universities of both the UK and the USA. The neoliberal and widely circulated Italian press publishes articles by well known NIE authors, such as Carlo Lucarelli, Massimo Carlotto, Giancarlo De Cataldo, Valerio Evangelisti, Giuseppe Genna, Letizia Muratori, Marcello Fois, Roberto Saviano and Andrea Camilleri. “Many of their books have become best-sellers or long-sellers in Italy and other countries. They don’t make up a generation in the usual sense of the word, as they are all of different ages, but they are a literary generation: they share poetic segments, fragments of mental maps and a fierce desire that takes them back to the archives or into the streets, or to where the archives and the streets meet” (NIE, 11).

Some contributions to the debate come from the so-called ‘brain drain’, from researchers and doctoral students in literature and philology hosted by foreign universities. And those authors also take part in person, acting as spokesmen for themselves; this explains why NIE supports both a theoretical and a practical-experimental approach to literature.

Unlike the avant-garde movement, the NIE does not break from the past; it bases itself on “qualitative distinctions and historical evolution” (NIE, 95). Its approach, therefore, is evolutionary, historicist: “the great misconstruction of the Euro-centred avant-garde” is setting the new against the old, given that nothing is “one hundred percent new”, experience tells us otherwise – life and reality “do not work in that way. Novelty is born out of the play between continuity and

describes the period post-1993: the clash between police and demonstrators at the G8 in Genoa and the attempt on the Twin Towers in New York are indicators of “turning points” in the “perception of the relationship between literature and society” (NIE, VIII).

interruption and is recognizable only by comparing it to what is already known. On a clean slate nothing would permit recognition of novelty, let alone its being experienced” (NIE, VIII-IX). Furthermore, given NIE’s anti-highbrow nature, it does not look down upon popular culture: this must not be confused with the banal and poorly produced mediocre output of today, supported more and more by the mass media, in particular television. There is a ‘nuance of meaning’ that renders the mistaken coupling of mass culture and popular culture as void: the former “points towards how this culture is transmitted, that is via the mass media”; popular culture, however, places the emphasis on who actually makes and receives it. “Usually, when people speak of the relevance a certain song or film has in their lives (‘Listen! It’s our song!’), or how a certain book or comic has influenced the age, the expression popular culture is used” (NIE, 95)⁴.

2.1 ORIGINS ON THE WEB

We have outlined the NIE’s birth on the Web. The NIE writers had already used the Internet to publish their works as well as a literary forum; in fact, they had used the system that preceded it – BBS, ‘Electronic pre-web communication’ (NIE, 126).

According to Wu Ming, the Web has not been damaging towards the creation of texts of any nature; it is not a given fact, as it is in Nicholas Carr’s example (Carr 2008), that by its nature the Internet transforms reading into a frenetic dash from one site to another, shattering the reader’s possibility of any deeper understanding: “The Web has got us used to scrolling through texts quickly, focusing on certain lines, maybe copying them and then moving on to a new page linked to the previous one. We water-ski on the surface rather dive into the deep to discover its secrets” (NIE, 159-160). The only possible type of reading encouraged by the Web is a fragmentary and broken style, particularly favoured by the young. It is probable, going back to Wu Ming, that the Internet promotes a more ‘horizontal’ than ‘vertical’ way of reading, but it remains true that the different approaches related to the various tools and types of research do not damage our minds’ capacities if we do not allow them to do so. This is why a correct education in Internet use for the new generations has a fundamental and decisive role. Its innate speed is an advantage, says Wu Ming, as it allows the user to segregate items from the mass of information and then select only

4 It is a passage from Wu Ming, *Preface* to H. Jenkins 2007 (VII-VIII).

those that seem valid and interesting: “As far as I’m concerned, I don’t have any problems using a surfboard on the Web’s waves, or a diving suit in the abyss of a novel or a flying carpet among a night of stars. I don’t believe the habit of using one means can mould the brain once and for all. Driving around in a car all day doesn’t prevent us from swimming in a pool, riding a bicycle or walking in a wood. [...] ‘Superficial reading’ is needed to confront the mass without getting indigestion: I try various dishes before satisfying myself with those than seem more appetizing. Just like those who leaf through a newspaper to decide which articles to read in detail” (NIE, 158-160).

It is worth pointing out that market forces also influence authors and their works, from the big bookshop chains to supermarkets; and the only way of allowing freedom to triumph lies in the elasticity of the Internet, in the fact that readers can govern their own choices⁵, trusting their own intuition and maybe browsing around in darker and unguarded corners, often full of unexpected surprises: “The great media conglomerates have such an overwhelming firepower that they can annihilate any enemy. The shelves of bookshops are filled in a ‘*manu militari*’ manner with the best-sellers of the moment, conquering the readers’ bedside tables and whatever energy is left for novels. This problem most certainly exists but, again, one cannot evaluate certain marketing strategies presuming the public’s complete acquiescence. [...] The interaction between the concentrated power of the official media and the diffused power of the amateur media has always determined a story’s fortune. Popular culture is a battlefield where heavy artillery surrenders to germ warfare. In the field of narrative it is more important to be contagious than explosive” (NIE, 161-162).

5 Wu Ming notes that it is possible to maintain one’s own freedom of choice thanks to the Web’s flexible make-up; in the final part of the following argument, already covered in this article, the concept of narration as a constitutive part of each person and their relationships emerges: “Karen Blixen wrote that ‘being a person is having a story to tell’. Possibly more than one. It is only normal that people take advantage of technology to get their stories out, to share them, playing with their own identity and placing it in a world bigger than that of their own home. The pleasure of telling stories is the basis of projects such as ‘Banca della Memoria’ (‘Memory Bank’, www.bancadellamemoria.it), where those born before 1940 can upload a ten-minute video and record a significant episode of their lives. It is difficult to imagine that such an idea answers to a new consumerist logic. Storytelling is as necessary as eating. For at least two centuries, keeping a diary has been a creative pastime for people. Today it is also a tool that allows many to take an active cultural part in society, where consumerism is omnipresent, but the consumers have a large influence because of their relationship with the goods, more symbolic than material” (NIE, 153-154).

2.2 WHY 'EPIC'?

First of all we must clarify that the adjective 'epic' has nothing to do with the meaning it took on in Brechtian theatre (see NIE, 115; Jameson 2008). It refers to the nature of topics that have already been dealt with; these narratives are 'epic' because they cover ventures of a much wider scope, historical and mythical, full of adventure, not as an end in itself but towards a destiny of renewal, redemption and, one could also say, salvation: "wars, 'anabasis', voyages of initiation, the fight for survival, all within such huge conflicts that determine the lot of classes, populations, nations or even all of humanity, in the midst of historical crises, catastrophes, social structures on the verge of collapse" (NIE, 14). We know that the pure genre does not exist, it is only an abstraction, but in this case the hybridization between one genre and another is useful: "Stories often blend historic and legendary elements, when they don't overlap with the supernatural" (NIE, 14-15).

Many of these books are historical novels, or at least they appear so, in that "they take from that genre conventions, style and stratagems" (NIE, 14-15). This link with historical fiction is nothing to be surprised about as the story commands a central position in the NIE: it concerns the present, but at the same time looks back on narrative strategies that refer to similar genres (which ten years ago were considered as 'para-literary'), such as science fiction. As Wu Ming points out, such stories make way for a "synthesis of fiction and non-fiction" different from what we were used to (for example, the 'gonzo' journalism of Hunter S. Thomson), a method which we could define as "distinctly Italian" and from which originate "unidentified narrative objects" (NIE, 109) – books that "recount the turbulent history of Italy or the ambivalent relationship between Europe and America" (NIE, 14-15). These narrations are "great, ambitious, 'long range', 'wide scope', and all the expressions that come to mind" (NIE, 14-15). The meaning of 'epic', Wu Ming notes, can be found in novels such as *Q*, *Manituana*, *Oltretorrente*, *L'ottava vibrazione*, *Antracite*, *Noi saremo tutto*, *L'angelo della storia*, *La banda Bellini*, *Stella del mattino*, *Sappiano le mie parole di sangue*. Though it is true that the epic essence of a narration contains undoubtable traits of historicity and objectivity, one must not assume that there are not also autobiographical and introspective features: "Epic and 'introspection', wide scope and the psychology of characters often go hand in hand, without placing themselves on the horns of a dilemma. Wu Ming's *Star of the Morning* is an 'intimist' novel, as are parts of Saviano's *Gomorra*" (NIE, 15, note 9). The "disturbing dimension" of such narrative objects is highlighted, in that "they are no longer novels, but neither are they completely something else, and maybe they will never become 'completely

something else” (NIE, XI-XII). One of the NIE’s aims, therefore, is to “create a kind of electrostatic field to attract works that appear to be different, but actually share a strong affinity” (NIE, 11).

The hybridization of genres found in these novels is the natural result of the authors’ choices, always ethically aware, and of a new exercise in intertextuality that, in light of such considerations, we can redefine as “(web) narrative discourse”⁶: “It is almost impossible to piece together *a posteriori* what has entered into the mix of novels, like Genna’s *L’anno luce* and *Dies irae*, or Saviano’s *Gomorra*” (this is the reason why debates continue over the subject and will most probably go on for some time); therefore these writers “use all that they deem is correct and reliable enough to use” (NIE, 23).

The humour found in these stories has a different connotation, too: it is no longer the “postmodernist *pastiche* humour” (NIE, 23); it is not humour without “warmth” and “grace” (entirely compatible with the seriousness of the movement’s objectives), which often originates from the ethical aim underlying the narrative discourse; an aim which gives words and their meaning a new and vital propelling force: “In these narrations there is a sort of warmth, or at least an assumption of duties and responsibility, which ferries them beyond the obligatory playfulness of the recent past, beyond the squint of the compulsive eye, beyond the demand of ‘not taking themselves seriously’ as their only line of conduct. [...] The important thing is to recover a narrative ethic after years of compulsory play” (NIE, 22), regaining “faith in the word and in the possibility of reactivating it, recharging it after the attrition of *tópoi* and *clichés*” (NIE, 23-24). As a consequence, the NIE writers believe “in the maieutic and telepathic power of the word”, in its “capacity to establish links” (NIE, 22) and in the “healing” power of “language and stories” (NIE, 108).

We said that this new current promotes an approach which is both practical-explorative and theoretical-proactive; the dislocation of the point of view to inanimate objects or to energy flows, or even something immaterial, is an example of such a strategy in a story: Wu Ming cites Calvino’s *Cosmicomiche* and *Palomar* as distinguished precursors (NIE, 26), as the movement tactfully remodels their rhetoric. This is an account which is not incessant and on display, but “subtle”, it “tells your story in what you feel is the best possible way” (NIE, 109).

One of the most notable aspects of the NIE, in our opinion, is its attempt to define the nature of contemporary literature in such a way that it overcomes the creative “stagnation” of the late post-modern era (see Berardinelli 1989). This new

6 We have put the term ‘web’ in brackets because a good number of the novels mentioned by Wu Ming were not born on the Web.

literature does not sever links with the past, neither does it overturn the situation, rather it distances itself from Mannerist *cliché*, placing new emphasis on the “substance of the expression”.⁷ Moreover, the NIE is aware of the problematic nature of every definition, and hence it does not provide closed or normative formulas. Its attempt is an empiric-descriptive one that respects art in its unpredictability and reveals the multitude of ways in which it expresses itself; indeed, it is necessary to give order and sense to that which actually happens in literature, paying heed to the dominant features that characterize it. Here are some of those traits:

- The allegoric value of the majority of NIE stories; such a choice may even not be conscious or planned: the authors “may feel themselves pushed towards a story and only with hindsight can they understand what they were trying to say” (NIE, 109).
- A sense of losing the future, proven by the “tendency to use fantasy and alternative realities in order to gain our attention and push us towards imagining the future” (NIE, 109).
- The huge gap between the historic-ideological reality of the past (the postwar years and the birth of the modern republic) compared to the present, the consequent disorientation, and the need to overcome it: “the death of everything that was, finding ourselves the orphans of our ancestors and needing to process the grief in order to be capable of imagining a future, and this time being the founders” (NIE, XI).
- The community’s use of the Internet to follow developments in new literature, encouraged in the name of interculturality and multimedia, with the aim of “sharing an arm with the reader” (NIE, 109).⁸ “The only way not to suffer from one story”, Wu Ming points out, “is to tell a thousand other stories” (NIE, 160-164); hence, stories become “blood transfusion machines, devices to activate emotions” (NIE, 163-164).

7 See Wu Ming’s observation on the modern-postmodern-NIE transition: “In the *Postille to Il nome della rosa*, Umberto Eco gave a definition of postmodernism that has become famous. He compares the postmodern author to a man who would like to say to his lover: ‘I’m desperately in love with you’, but he doesn’t think he can say it because it seems as if it were taken out of a romantic novel, from a book of Liala, and so he states: ‘As Liala would say, I’m desperately in love with you’. / Over the following years, the misuse of this stance brought about a stagflation (stagnation + inflation) of words and an overabundance of metafiction: telling a story about one’s own way of telling a story in order not to be obliged to tell about anything else. / Today, the way out is to replace the premise and move the emphasis onto that which is really important: ‘Despite Liala, I’m desperately in love with you’. The *cliché* is evoked and immediately set aside, the declaration of love begins to renew its meaning” (NIE, 24).

8 The expression is Giuseppe Genna’s. With social networks, the danger of being transformed into goods is already a reality and, consequently, the “exploitation of individuals” becomes “more and more molecular”. But if it is true that big media tries to create business at the expense of the consumers, it is also true that they cannot avoid the question of “free, malleable, open and out of control content. There is a conflict between these two requirements, not a one-sided rule” (NIE, 153).

Another factor must be added to this short list of the NIE's fundamental points⁹, which we consider vital in determining the value of this constellation of writers in the context of the reality in which we live. At the point which we have reached today, it is inevitable that every political, social and cultural phenomenon has repercussions on a planetary scale. The same laws that have regulated life on our planet and guaranteed the integrity of the ecosystem for centuries have been, and are still, being repeatedly infringed; in less than a century the environment has undergone violent blows which have left incurable wounds requiring a drastic and immediate turnaround. The passage from the 20th to the 21st century was marked by disturbing events: "...then the bubble of the so-called 'New Economy' burst, followed immediately by September 11th, then the so-called 'War on Terror' and the invasion of Iraq, after which came the kamikaze bombers in Madrid and London, and now the global economy is foundering, yet many still can't gauge the gravity of the situation. In the meantime, polar icecaps are melting, reserves of petroleum are being exhausted earlier than expected, supplies of metal are running out, and within a few decades there'll be no more copper, no more iron, nor more cadmium..." (NIE, 123; Heinberg 2007).

Therefore, what stance do the NIE writers take on this scenario, on this series of ever more disturbing events? Wu Ming demonstrates, also on behalf of his colleagues, an ethical will to intervene, a strong cultural presence, which means a joint and effective testimony. We can find a meaningful example of this in the text presented at the London conference of October 2nd 2008: loving literature, Wu Ming is interested in seeing how the novelists' profession "can evolve despite these dangers". In other words, novelists are predominantly interested in "finding a different ethical approach to writing today, which hopefully overcomes the disenchantment of yesterday. Actually, it is a full assumption of responsibility despite all that occurs on a planetary scale". And being Italian novelists, they "are even more interested in seeing what occurs" in Italian history. "One begins from where one finds oneself, and Italy is always an interesting place from where to begin, a remarkable laboratory" (NIE, 123-124). Furthermore, Wu Ming restates the need to create awareness in the readers via the writer's own awareness, overcoming the "disenchantment" of literature from the previous period with a renewed "assumption of responsibility" (NIE, 124).

In conclusion, it seems opportune to mention Calvino once again, seen that he is one of the authors that Wu Ming has chosen as a forerunner of NIE experimentalism. We refer to *Lezioni americane. Sei proposte per il prossimo*

9 We refer to the text of the conference which took place in London in 2008 (NIE, 108-109).

millennio (*American lessons. Six suggestions for the next millennium*), written by the author upon the request of Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts, in the Academic Year 1985-8610. The awareness of the importance of literature and its uniqueness seem to be the common *intentio auctoris* of both Calvino and Wu Ming, which we have examined until now: “My faith in the future of literature”, the author of *Cosmicomiche* commented, “lies in the knowledge that there are things that only literature can give through its own specific means. I would therefore like to dedicate my lectures to some values, or qualities, or specifics of literature that are close to my heart, trying to place them into the outlook of the new millennium” (LA, 3).¹¹ According to Calvino, the characteristics that literature should preserve are lightness, speed, accuracy, visibility and multiplicity. These are qualities that we believe can be applied to the type of literature which we have spoken about up until now, which are made even more evident if we highlight the meaning of such prerogatives. By ‘lightness’, Calvino certainly did not mean escape “into the dream world or the irrational”, but rather the research of a new “approach” towards reality, of a different “perspective”, “another logic, other methods of knowledge and verification”. Moreover, lightness can be coupled with “precision” and “determination” (LA, 11, 19), not with vagueness and casualness. “Speed” is equal to the “agility”, “mobility” and “confidence” (LA, 48) of the narrative discourse. “Accuracy” is necessary against the “plague of language”, which diminishes, if not kills, everything, including the “cognitive and spontaneous force” of the word; accuracy reignites that “spark” which flies out “when words collide with new circumstances” (LA, 60). “Visibility” is a quality produced by the use of uncommon stylistic patterns that can stimulate the “figural fantasy” of the reader. Based on these assumptions, Calvino hopes for the birth of a new “pedagogy of the imagination” which would allow the images to crystallize into a “well-defined”, “self-sufficient” and “vivid” shape (LA, 91, 94). Finally, “multiplicity” refers to both style and theme; hence the novel and literature in general become a real and true method of knowledge, a network of connections with ethical implications, “between facts, between people, between the things in the world” (LA, 105).

10 Unfortunately the *Lectures* project (*Six Memos for the Next Millennium*) was not completed by the author due to his sudden death just before his departure for the United States. The book came out posthumously in May 1988, thanks to his wife Esther Calvino, and was published by Garzanti. The quotations that follow are taken from I. Calvino, *Lezioni americane. Sei proposte per il prossimo millennio* 2002; from now on shortened to LA (in the text of the present essay, acronym and page number).

11 There were six qualities in the initial project by Calvino, but the author was only able to describe five of them; in the posthumous book, a chapter corresponds to each of them.

In our opinion, such qualities represent a sort of “archetype” of NIE literature’s prerogative. From both its declaration of intent and its poetry the fundamental role of literature emerges, which, according to Calvino, lies in the creation of a type of “communication between what is different because it is different”; thus, it is an exaltation, not a dulling, of difference, “according to the vocation of the written word” (LA, 47). Literature combines with science; it does not contradict it but, rather, it complements it: “the great challenge for literature is to work out how to weave the various knowledge and codes into one multiple and multifaceted vision of the world” (LA, 111).

We can now see what Wu Ming confirmed some decades later; the echoes multiply and chase each other: “Rhetoric does not substitute scientific method, but it has the right to stay alongside it. It is a way of understanding reality, especially when other enterprises fail or are forced to remain quiet. Often we are only able to understand a concept, an event, if we find the right words to describe it. A similarity can help you understand the connection between two facts much more than a casual explanation. Our same thoughts get clarified by our interior monologue and we really don’t have an idea until we are able to express it. [...] There are secrets that one can tell only if the right words are found and if a story is found, with which to tell them” (NIE, 191-192). “Literature must never, ever, think to rest in peace. [...] Growth is the result of the conflict between opposite forces: on the one hand identity, or maintaining oneself, staying the same; on the other, liberty and change. Any word that addresses both forces is an *educating* word, which *draws out*” – the etymon is relevant – “freedom from identity: you are this and can become something else. To grow we need to know who we are and what we want to be” (NIE, 181).

The NIE writers, therefore, make effective interpretations of reality, of the relationships between individuals and the world of today; they are witnesses that come out onto the field, not hiding behind stereotypes but putting their talent, experience, and imagination into play. They write about our age, they anticipate scenarios, they commit themselves, through global communication practically, freely and without prejudice. Above all, they use words in order to both communicate and create, to build bridges between different cultures, respecting beauty and harmony which always reside in narrative writing.

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ELENA FURLANETTO

Voices from Anglophone Turkey. The Reasons for English in Contemporary Turkish Literature

1 Introduction

A multitude of reasons may lead a non-Anglophone writer to publish a book in English: this choice may conceal a desire of universality, and the long to reach, without the aid of translation, the vastest audience possible. In the twentieth century, Turkey produced a significant number of authors who decided to publish in English rather than in their native language. These authors are mostly first-generation women migrants who adopted English as their literary *lingua franca* after having published other works in Turkish. The amount of fictional and non-fictional works published in English by Turkish authors, and the common themes they share, point at Turkish literature in English as a unique phenomenon worth investigating in depth.

This study provides an overview of the reasons that led individual writers to chose English as their literary language; at the same time, it tries to contextualize the authors' choices in the recent history of Turkey, eventually highlighting how the reasons of English in Turkish literature do not only depend on the authors' personal lives, but are deeply rooted in the country's history. The results of my analysis reveal that a set of controversial feelings towards the West may reverberate in these English texts, in other words, the Turkish republic, established on

the principles of Westernization, modernization, and secularism, created deep unsettlement in a population that, until then, had been held together by the Islamic tradition and the notion of Ottoman citizenship.

This study examines interviews, articles and fictional texts by three Turkish authors: Elif Shafak, Alev Lytle Croutier, and Halide Edib, with the goal of emphasizing the relationship between the choice of English as literary language and the cultural contradictions generated during the republican period. I claim that the two are tightly related, and English always emerges as a response – either critical or supportive – to the republican ideology. Ultimately, these texts compellingly show how the very search for Turkey’s national identity can be carried out in English.

2 The Turkish Language Reform and Elif Shafak’s “Ottoman English”

From 1927 on, the newly born republican government of Turkey, headed by Turkey’s first president Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, started to elaborate a language reform that aimed to purge Turkish of all Arabic and Persian terms, replacing them with Turkish neologisms or, where possible, with Turkish synonyms. According to Atatürk, the reform was needed in order to “break Turkey’s ties with the Islamic East and to facilitate communication domestically as well as with the Western world” (Lewis 1999, 27). Not only does this statement brilliantly embody the reform and its intents, but it also summarizes two of the Kemalists’ most pressing concerns: bringing Turkey ‘closer’ to the West and minimizing the cultural legacy of the Ottoman Empire on the country’s present.

The eagerness to speed up “domestic” communications recalls the process of accelerated modernization carried out in the first years of the Republic: the new republican government invested itself with the task of bringing Turkey from the byzantine backwardness of the Ottoman Empire to the technological standards of the Western powers. Such process of sudden modernization was accompanied by a process of Westernization. The “Western world” – meaning Europe and the United States – was indicated as a model to imitate almost unconditionally. The divorce from the “Islamic East,” in Atatürk’s words, was fundamental in order to create a Westernized Turkey, but it also functioned as a declaration of Turkish national and cultural sovereignty. By expelling Arabic and Persian words, Turkey severed the remaining bonds with the ancient Persian colonization and declared its own cultural sovereignty. The idea of Turkey as a culturally autonomous

country went together with the introduction of Turkish nationalism, a concept that emerged as part of the Kemalist ideology and was totally alien to the former idea of Ottoman citizenship, which was characterized by a higher tolerance of ethnic diversity.

The work of Elif Shafak, one of the most representative contemporary Turkish novelists, goes in the opposite direction. Shafak's choice to write in English is a conscious political statement through which she questions the Kemalist language reform. After a series of works in Turkish, Shafak published her first novel in English, *The Saint of Incipient Insanities*, in 2004. *The Bastard of Istanbul*, which tackled the theme of the Armenian genocide, followed in 2006 and became extremely successful, although the author was heavily criticized by the Turkish nationalists and eventually tried for having "insulted Turkishness."

Writing in English is an ambivalent choice: on the one hand it may suggest that Shafak, who is well acquainted with the functioning of the global literary market, decided to publish in English to increase the visibility of her work. To say it with Pascale Casanova, Shafak "assimilated" to a dominant, hegemonic market in order to avoid being marginalized in the role of a national writer. Nevertheless, the choice of English over Turkish must not be dismissed as a mere business manoeuvre, as, in the case of Elif Shafak, it is connected to a more complex agenda. Resuming Pascale Casanova's definition of national vs. international writers, it is possible to include Shafak in the category of international writers, who "subvert the dominant norms of their respective national fields" to "uphold an autonomous conception of literature" (Casanova 2004, 109)

Indeed, Shafak has repeatedly attacked the "norms" of Kemalist ideology, still highly esteemed by many strata of Turkish society, and the idea of nation state it originated. I contend that her choice to write and publish in English rather than in (reformed) Turkish does not exclusively boil down to a strategy to gain international visibility, or enter the pantheon of world literature, but is also a precise political statement, and it represents a conspicuous part of her critique towards the ideology lying at the basis of present-day Turkey.

In her articles and interviews, Shafak describes the Turkish language reform as a colossal problem, something comparable to ethnic cleansing,¹ and an element that makes the handing down of tradition and information impossible. In this respect, her position is supported by more Turkish intellectuals, as exemplified by the following quote from Turkish German writer Emine Sevgi Özdamar's novel *Das Leben ist eine Karavanserai* (*Life is a Caravanserai*):

¹ See Shafak's 2005 interview "Linguistic Cleansing" on this topic (Shafak 2005).

After 1927 the Republicans made a language reform. And Latin letters replaced the Arabic symbols in the Turkish alphabet. I could only write in the Latin alphabet, but my grandfather could not write in the Latin alphabet at all. He could write in Arabic. If my grandmother had ever learnt to read and write, she would have learnt to write in Arabic too. I realized that if my grandfather Ahmet and my grandmother Ayşe were deaf and mute and we could only communicate by writing, I would have never known them. So today I would have no grandmother, and no grandfather. I began to cry. (Özdamar 1992, 69)²

On the contrary, Shafak talks of the Ottoman variety of Turkish as a “magic and unique” language made inaccessible, “made of many things,” a “multiethnic fabric” that reflected the religious, cultural and ethnic variety of the Ottoman empire (Shafak 2006, n.p.).

In her novels, Elif Shafak struggles to retrieve not simply the words, but also the Ottoman linguistic openness – which the language reform and its nationalistic agenda meant to erase – and recreate it into English. Her English is peppered with a variety of terms from modern Turkish, Ottoman Turkish, Armenian, Arabic and Persian, whose meaning is seldom revealed to the reader. As it appears from the following quotations, such terminology – oftentimes alienating for Anglophone readers – mostly covers the fields of food, drinks, colloquial expressions, Islamic invocations and folklore.

In multihued clay bowls of different sizes were many of his favorite dishes, fassoluye pilaki, kadin bodu köfte, karnıyarık, newly made churek, and to Uncle Dikran’s delight, bastırma. (Shafak 2006, 51)

“Das’ mader’s mom’ri, noren koh chi m’nats” Dikran Stambouljian, grunted, switching to Armenian as he always did when he tried to teach a young person a lesson. (Shafak 2006, 56)

“What’s the big deal? That sounds just like a mumbar. You should try it sometime, it’s really good.” (Shafak 2006, 100)

The use of foreign words of Arab and Persian roots, Armenian, and Ottoman expressions in an English text is both a way for Shafak to evade from Turkish, a language that did not satisfy her literary agenda, and to articulate her critique

² Author’s own translation from German.

against the Kemalist doctrine and language reform. The following quote, drawn from an interview with Alison McDonald, illustrates how the use of the “old words” ostracized by the Turkish language reform assumes a political value in Shafak’s writing, and how the choice of “assimilating” to a different literary center (the United States instead of Turkey) is deeply connected to her effort to recreate the linguistic variety of Ottoman Turkish, made irretrievable by the reform, into American English.

So I was very much upset because in Turkey in the name of Westernizing and modernizing the society, the first thing they did was to change the language, and they changed the alphabet. They got rid of old words whereas I love those old words. It was always a struggle for me. Let’s say if you are open minded, if you’re a liberal, if you’re a leftist you shouldn’t be using those old words because they are something old. So it’s very politicized, and very polarized. When I came to this country it was like a relief. Here you hear the word chutzpah from someone who is not Jewish. I love that. I love that the word has travelled to another community. (Shafak 2005, n.p.)

Therefore, Elif Shafak’s work goes in two main directions, and both of them contradict and discuss the Kemalist legacy. Firstly, she chooses to undo what the Kemalist modernization/Westernization policies of Kemalism had done; if the main concern of the republic was the future, Shafak concentrates on the past. In this respect, the deconstruction of the Turkish language reform in her purposely “anachronistic” prose is combined with the rediscovery of the Ottoman culture and its various aspects that the republican ideology labeled as outmoded. Two telling examples are the Armenian genocide, to which Shafak dedicated *The Bastard of Istanbul*, and Islamic folklore, banned for the sake of secularism and scientific thought, and yet conspicuously emerging in Shafak’s narratives. Shafak herself refers to her retrieval of the Ottoman past as “unearthing”:

I do not only try to unearth the stories that have been buried under the ground by the Kemalists. I also try to unearth the words that have been kicked out of Turkish language. I bring them back. (Shafak 2006, n.p.)

Secondly, Shafak’s texts aim to describe a new Turkish identity characterized by *addition* instead of *removal*, two concepts the following quotations will clarify;

We try to modernize and Westernize and secularize by distancing ourselves as quickly as possible from our Ottoman past. So everything in Turkey starts at the year 1923. Anything that might have happened before that is of no interest to us. That's part of a big problem. (Shafak 2006, n.p.)

Turkish history is a good case to study because we were once a multiethnic empire and then in the name of creating a supposedly monolithic nation state all those ethnic religious minorities have been discarded and their voices have been silenced. Part of my job is to bring back these voices. (Shafak 2006, n.p.)

The new idea of Turkish identity proposed by Shafak's novels sets out to integrate the diverse aspects of Turkish culture, and celebrate Turkey's stratified history, which necessarily includes the Arabic and Persian legacy, the Ottoman one, the silenced histories of the imperial minorities (Jews, Armenians, Greeks and Kurds), and, ultimately, the Kemalist and post-Kemalist years. The retrieval of linguistic diversity, the integration of ethnic narratives in the body of a novel in order to mirror and give a sense of the Ottoman empire's ethnic variety, and the celebration of the empire as a cosmopolitan, polyglot, multiethnic space are articulated in English and presented to a global readership. Turkey's new identity, as displayed in Shafak's novels, appears therefore as an international, rather than a national identity, including the individual histories of Turkish migrants abroad and those of ethnic minorities in Turkey. In conclusion, Shafak envisions English as a fertile terrain where the Ottoman linguistic *pastiche* can be re-enacted. Through her use of English as a literary language, she articulates her critique of Kemalist monoculturalism and regenerates the perception of Turkey's history and cultural tradition as multilayered.

One contradiction can be identified in Elif Shafak's critique of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's republic. The widespread enthusiasm for all things Western encouraged by the Kemalist doctrine that characterized the first decades of the Turkish republic paved the way for the country's Americanization. The peak of Turkish pro-Americanism was reached in the Fifties. In 1957, president Celal Bayar manifested the intention of transforming Turkey into a prosperous "little America" (Mufti 2011, n.p.). The admiration for the Western world will be heavily criticized by Turkish and American writers such as Orhan Pamuk and his best-known translator, Maureen Freely, as the element that triggered the loss of Turkish memory and capacity of self-representation.

In her idealized approach to the United States, and in her "assimilation" to the American literary market, Elif Shafak emerges as a late (she was born in 1971),

atypical product of the Kemalist enthusiasm for the West. If the republic opened Turkey's door to American "cultural imperialism" (as Maureen Freely defines it in her novel *Enlightenment*), Shafak, in her literary assimilation to the United States, where, as she puts it, she feels more at home than in Turkey, perpetrates this tendency. The role played by the United States in Elif Shafak's writing is indeed fundamental: the United States are a geographic manifestation of what English is on a linguistic level, namely, a new fertile terrain where the flaws of reformed Turkish can be redeemed. In other words, if on the one hand the ductility and diversity of Ottoman Turkish were lost due to the 1927 reform, on the other hand the "multiethnic fabric" of such language could be re-enacted on the texture of English. In the same way the United States, a multiethnic, multicultural, multi-faith empire, appear in Elif Shafak's novel as a new embodiment of the Ottoman empire, where the Ottoman utopia of multiculturalism can be re-enacted. The United States are equally idealized and turned into a utopia of pluralism where "internationalism is your patriotism" (Shafak 2005, n.p.) and are set in stark contrast with the monolithic nation Turkey has allegedly turned into.

A way to solve the contradiction seeing Elif Shafak as, after all, a product of Kemalism in her idealization of the United States, can be found in the notion of hybridity. If on the one hand the Kemalist ideology constructed a selective version of history from which the Islamic and Ottoman faces of Turkey are erased, pushing Turkey towards the West, on the other hand Shafak shows the same enthusiasm for both the Eastern and the Western components of Turkish history, opening the doors of Turkey to the legacy of two empires, the Ottoman and the American, choosing to respond to Kemal's reductive vision of history with a hybrid, stratified one.

The case of Elif Shafak is an effective pragmatic manifestation of the theoretical debate on national/international writing. In fact, not only does the case of Elif Shafak embody the paradigm of a national writer deciding to assimilate to a different literary pole in order to escape the norms of a country where political power also influences literary production, but it also mirrors contemporary Turkey, where, as Elif Shafak puts it:

On the one hand we have the nationalists with a lot of xenophobia, people who want to live with their mirror images; on the other hand there are the cosmopolitans, people who are willing to live with others coming from different backgrounds. (Shafak 2006, n.p.)

Apparently, Casanova's dualism between national and international literary production is felt very deeply in Turkey, where not only writers, but also the population has to choose one of the two paths.

3 National Shame. Halide Edib and Alev Lytle Croutier

The cases of Halide Edib (1884-1964) and Alev Lytle Croutier (1945) document the impact of the republican admiration for the West on literature. The election of the United States as a political and cultural guiding light for the newly born republic of Turkey was necessarily going to collide with other aspects of the republican doctrine, such as, for example, the idea of Turkish sovereignty, implying that the country had to be free from any foreign influence, political as well as cultural. Consequently, the Turkish population developed contradictory feelings towards the United States and towards the homeland itself, producing a peculiar type of nationalism directed against the West and enamored of it.

These controversial feelings directed both inland and abroad are mirrored in more than a century of Turkish literature, on a generation of Turkish writers who received an American education and bred significant resentment towards both the United States and Turkey. English is the means through which these writers express such conflicting tendencies: some display anti-American positions, whereas others indulge in self-apologetic writing and detachment from their own cultural tradition in favor of the American way of life: a set of feelings I would term "national shame."

I claim that the works of Halide Edib and Alev Lytle Croutier, two Turkish novelists whose summed life-spans cover a century of Turkish republic, effectively exemplify the issue of "national shame." Even though their choice to write and publish their books in English is motivated by different factors – Edib wished to be a model of westernization and modernization, whereas Croutier openly assimilated to a more profitable, more visible literary center – their English contains evident embarrassment for and detachment from Turkish culture as well and, most importantly, its literary situation, *milieu*, and norms. Therefore, their choice of English over Turkish as literary language symbolizes their admiration for the United States, declares their adherence to international literature and dismisses Turkey's national literature as faulty, undeserving and inconclusive.

4 Halide Edib

One of the first testimonies embodying the necessity of English as a literary language comes from one of the most relevant figures of the Turkish war of Independence, the feminist writer and scholar Halide Edib. Her contribution to the making of the republic of Turkey was enormous, as she fought and served as a nurse on the battlefield and contributed actively to the shaping of the new republican spirit and ideology. She witnessed the birth of the republic and the rise of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk as its charismatic leader, to whom she was very close. In spite of the mutual admiration – Kemal is known to have said that his greatest wish was to give the opportunity to every Turkish girl to become a Halide Edib – the relationship between the two was never unproblematic.

Halide Edib always nurtured profound admiration for Western culture and society. She was educated at an American college for women in Istanbul, she lectured at American universities and finally became a professor of English literature at the faculty of letters in Istanbul. Moreover, during and after the Turkish War of Independence, she fervently supported the American protectorate over former Ottoman territories. This position contradicted Atatürk's dream of uncompromised political sovereignty of Turkey, and earned Edib the fame of "betrayal" of the same Turkish nationalist cause for which she had fought.

Halide Edib's *oeuvre* very much contributed to the formation of republican discourses and narratives, as she was involved in the search for a new Turkish identity that might have suited a modern, progressive country that had recently transformed from an empire into a national state. This study focuses on the first volume of Edib's autobiography, entitled *Memoirs of Halide Edib*. The two volumes (*Memoirs* and *The Turkish Ordeal*) were originally published in English between 1926 and 1928, and translated into Turkish only in the Sixties.

The choice of English as the language of a Turkish writer's autobiography is a curious one, as one wonders why such an intimate text was conceived and published in a language other than Turkish. Nevertheless, as Hülya Adak convincingly argues in her article "National Myths and Self Narrations," Edib's autobiography is not merely a fictional work, but a historiographical one. In fact, the author positions herself as a filter through which recent events in Turkish history such as the fall of the Ottoman empire, the War of Independence and the figure of Atatürk are perceived and understood. Adak adds that Edib's historiographical effort has to be considered complementary to the version of history constructed around the figure of Atatürk as a prophetic, untouchable leader, which became the "official" version of history in post-republican Turkey. *Memoirs of Halide*

Edib and *The Turkish Ordeal* are therefore alternative versions of Turkish history, containing several instances of criticism against Atatürk's charismatic leadership, and emphasizing the role other influent personalities had in the creation of the republic, diminishing the towering stature of Atatürk as the only originator of the republic. The volumes, published in England, enjoyed success and credibility in Europe, but were banned from Turkey until the Sixties, when Edib's status and credibility were reconsidered by scholars. Even then, the Turkish translation mystified the text with massive modifications that celebrate the figure and achievements of Atatürk and mitigated the text's disruptive quality.

By deciding to publish *Memoirs* in English, Edib consciously directed her book towards another readership and another market, since it would not have been positively received in Turkey. Turkey, in fact, was experiencing the monopoly of Atatürk's pronouncements on history – collected and summarized in his most important speech, the "Nutuk" – as the only possible historical narration, equalizing the nation and its leader. Edib chose Europe and the Anglophone market as a less hostile space ready to accept an alternative version of the Turkish War of Independence and its immediate consequences. Edib's choice, therefore, not only aimed to make *Memoirs* more marketable worldwide, but is closely related with Turkey's recent history.

If on the individual, personal level Edib's choice to write her own memoirs in English is a curious one, the quest for national identity in a foreign language is even more remarkable. Nevertheless, besides being a text that resists an official, charismatic, male version of history, *Memoirs* is also a fundamental text in the investigation of Turkey's post-republican identity. The biggest problem in the formulation of Turkey's new identity is the balancing of its contradictory selves. In other words, every writer who sets out to participate to the finding of Turkey's republican identity is confronted with the task of combining the Persian and Islamic aspects of Turkish culture with the Ottoman legacy and, eventually, with the republican discourse of Westernization. In her memoirs, Edib dismisses Persian influences, which chained Turkey is an age of mannerism, and devolves her effort in integrating the Ottoman elements with the discourse of Westernization.

Her attitude towards Westernization is, at times, extremely insecure. She has difficulties in finding a satisfactory balance between the Ottoman and the Western, and seems to continuously re-evaluate the extent to which Turkey should imitate the West. In *Memoirs*, Edib manifests admiration for the American culture, seen as constantly rising, and set in a stark contrast with the decadent Turkish system. A particularly significant episode shows young Halide's fascination for American commodities and lifestyle:

So when miss Prime proposed to take me with her to visit some people on an American yacht that was anchored in the Bosphorus I went with her as naturally as an American girl [...]. We took tea with them and were returning with our caiqueji about sunset, but before we had gone far someone from another caique shouted authoritatively to us to stop in the name of the law. In a flash I felt rather than judged the situation. The other caique had been sent, on the information of spies, to prevent a Turkish girl from going aboard a foreign ship. I saw us taken by the police, passing the night in some horrible hole, with no end of diabolical questioning, and above all the shame and the humiliation of having to go through this in front of Miss Prime, an American. (Edib 1926, 198)

The Turkish authorities brusquely interrupt the narrator's fantasy of Americanness. Turkish ways provoke an intense feeling of embarrassment and shame in the young narrator, who feels embarrassed at her country, and all the more embarrassed at her country in the presence of American expatriates.

Edib's memoirs are also full of admiration for Western literature, whereas they show perplexity towards the developments of Turkish literature, mostly due to the development of a "new taste" in Turkish literature that Edib describes rather as "lack of taste" (Edib 1926, 136) Such new developments put a distance between the present and the typically Ottoman forms of art such as satire, the Karagöz theatre, and the traditional love-legends that are "fully as beautiful as the medieval legends of Europe" (182). Although in the first part of her memoirs ("Our various Homes in Scutari"), Edib praises Western literatures and shows disappointment for the spreading of a "new taste/lack of taste" in Turkey, in the second part ("The Tanzimat, 1839-76") she equates Turkey's new taste to the ever growing Western influences on the original forms of Turkish art, which she feels as more sincere, original, and akin to her understanding of her country. In other words, if in the first part Edib seems to be apologizing to her Western audience for the piteous state of Turkish literature in comparison to the great Western literary tradition, in the second part she identifies Western influences as the element that allowed this "new taste" to take over Turkey, as this line from the Tanzimat chapter exemplifies:

The Tanzimat period, which brought the first serious political reforms, also produced a wide change in the language, literature, and thought of the country. Modern Europe was furnishing a new current of thought and was creating a new spirit in Turkish writing. [...] The nightingale and the eternal rose, the

spring, and nature themes gave way to a wider range of subjects and a new way of looking at man and nature. (Edib 1926, 243)

Through the example of the nightingale and the eternal rose, Edib refers to a very well known Turkish fairy-tale, and illustrates how the Ottoman and Islamic legacy are in the process of being eroded by a new range of themes imported from Europe. In the following paragraph, she ponders on the influence French translations, especially Molière, had on Turkish art. Although she never openly criticizes the extent to which Turkish literature was influenced, and eventually transformed, by France, she maintains a diplomatic ambiguity that, at times, transpires a feeling of disappointment at the loss of more “authentically” Turkish art forms and hints at how Turkey’s imitation of French literature had become highly ambivalent and had worked as a double-edged sword, refining Turkish art on the one hand, making it indulge in mannerism and imitation on the other. “The adaptations, especially of Molière’s ‘Mariage Forcé,’” Edib writes, “have so recreated the art of Molière that for once the great artist would have been pleased at the perfect shape his masterpieces have taken in an alien culture and language” (Edib 1926, 244).

The role of English in Halide Edib’s quest for Turkish identity is indeed central. In the first place, English represents a space where Turkish authors are free to question and discuss the issue of Turkish identity, and challenge the official, male, idolatrous version of history established by Kemal’s narratives. Similarly, English is the language in which Turks can give vent to the contradictions embedded in Turkey’s recent history, such as the controversial attitude towards the West – a mixture of resentment and desire – and feelings of “national shame” aroused by the constant comparison with Europe and the United States.

On the same note, carrying out the search for national (as well as individual) identity in a foreign language opens up a problematic scenario, implying that the national identity one is searching must be a hybrid one. Halide Edib seems to be far from the realization of Turkey’s hybridity and still struggles in order to find an “essential” Turkishness that incorporates certain elements (Western influences) more willingly than others (the Persian heritage). Thanks to its effort to balance the three cultural aspects that compose Turkish identity – the Persian and Islamic, the Ottoman, and the Western – Halide Edib’s *Memoirs* can be considered a foundational text of modern Turkish literature, as younger authors such as Elif Shafak, Orhan Pamuk, Maureen Freely and Güneli Gün are still confronted with the same goals.

5 Alev Lytle Croutier

Alev Lytle Croutier is a writer of Turkish origins living in San Francisco, United States. Educated at the American-owned Robert College in Istanbul (now nationalized and re-named Bosphorus University), she moved to the United States in 1963 to continue her studies in Oberlin, Ohio. Later, she co-founded a small publishing house in San Francisco and worked as an editor before starting her career as a novelist; she published a non-fictional book on Ottoman harem life (*Harem. The World behind the Veil*, 1989), and several works of fiction such as *and The Palace of Tears* (2002) and *Seven Houses* (2003).

Croutier appears as a full-fledged international writer and an impeccable representative of what goes by the name of “world literature.” In fact, she writes in English and counts on an international audience, as her books are translated in 22 languages. Like other world-literature giants such as Isabel Allende and Salman Rushdie, she continuously intermingles the levels of realism and magic in her novels; her English has an “exotic” quality and she describes herself as one who “does not belong anywhere” (Croutier 2000, n.p.), placing herself in a state of in-betweenness and intellectual exile like many other expatriate writers.

Yet, what is even more striking about Alev Lytle Croutier are the number of contradictory declarations she made about her literary intents and her relationship with Turkey. Most of the time she oscillates between manifestations of proximity to her country of origins, and statements through which she strengthens her distance and detachment from it. The following analysis will expand on these two conflicting perspective on Turkey – proximity on the one hand and distance on the other – addressing the ways in which the writer contradicts herself when talking or writing about her homeland, and establishing a connection with Turkey’s political situation.

Croutier’s declarations of proximity with Turkey construct a myth around her own origins; through such myth, she can make a claim of authenticity and present herself as a reliable testimony of Turkish culture. In fact, Croutier frequently reminds journalists and scholars that she was born in a harem, as the following quote from *The Christian Science Monitor* exemplifies at best:

Alev Lytle Coutier grew up in Turkey surrounded by images of harems. Her family lived in a house that had been home to a harem; in the attic she played dress-up with silk scarves and slippers left behind by the odalisques. (Croutier in Brown 1989, n.p.)

By insisting on being born in a house that hosted a harem, and on the fact that her grandmother was “a harem lady,” Croutier presents herself as the ideal candidate to trade Turkish culture to America, since her writing is a first-hand account on a world that has so far been depicted as impenetrable and mysterious in the Western imagination for centuries, and represented through second- or third-hand reports.

Her knowledge of Turkish strengthens the claim of authenticity by establishing one more connection to the secluded world of the harem, and to Turkey:

The word harem means forbidden and sacrosanct, closed [...] so what we have is second- or third-hand information about harems. I had access to some letters and journals and some first-hand documents that women put out themselves, because I can still speak Turkish and I was able to read some of the texts and translate them myself without going through another source. (Croutier in Brown 1989, n.p.)

Therefore, the knowledge of Turkish and her alleged birth into a family that boasted direct connections to the harem of a Pasha subscribe to Croutier’s claim of authenticity. Thanks to her direct access to Turkishness, Croutier emerges as the perfect filter through which Ottoman culture can be narrated to an American (and international) readership, as if through the voice of a reliable storyteller who was present when the narrated facts happened.

At the same time, while insisting on her legacy with Turkey’s Ottoman past and nominating herself an ideal interpreter of Turkish culture in the Anglophone literary market, an opposed undercurrent argues in favor of Croutier’s distance and detachment from her homeland, its past, and its present. If on the one hand she uses her own family origins to certify the truthfulness of her literary inspiration, on the other hand she quotes a remarkable list of sources that, as she argues, have significantly influenced her writing, especially in the cases of *The Palace of Tears* and *Seven Houses*:

“The Palace of Tears took me to play with Eastern and Western traditions. I was influenced by 19th century travel fiction, especially French travelers who went to the Near East.” She read Kipling, Coleridge, Shelley and George Eliot. (Rosen 2000, 73)

Among other sources Croutier mentions to various interviewers one finds Alessandro Baricco’s Orientalist novel *Silk*, the *One Thousand and One Nights*, William Blake and Gustave Flaubert. The centrality of the Western gaze of the

Orient in Crouter's writing highlights an apparent contradiction with her repeated attempts to certify the "first-handedness" of her narrations. Why would a writer of Turkish origins whose aim is to "demystify what we've come to believe through Western art and history and films and advertising art, television, ballet, music and opera" (Rosen 2000, 73) let herself be inspired by a complete tradition of Western travel writing whose blatant misrepresentations of the Orient have been target of criticism since Said's book *Orientalism* (1978)? One hypothesis would be that, by referring to the Orientalist tradition, Croutier aims to distance herself from her Eastern background and, at the same time, to declare her affiliation to Western tradition and conceptual framework. In doing so, Croutier replicates very closely Kemal's divorce from the Islamic Middle East and desire of proximity with the Western democracies, mirrored onto many political choices carried out in the early republican age.

The hypothesis of a detachment from her country of origins is confirmed and supported by Croutier's attitude to historicity. Besides constructing a discourse of authenticity based on the myth of her own origins, Croutier plays with the notion of historicity by denying that her novels have any historical value and represent works of pure fiction. One example is provided by the epigraph in *The Palace of Tears*, reciting "This is a work of fiction. Not only the characters and events but also the historical facts have been sacrificed to tell the story. Do not believe a word of it" (Croutier 2000).

Nevertheless, the abundant use of historical figures such as Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, Empress Eugénie de Montijo (wife of Napoleon III), Andy Warhol, and the Turkish prime minister Tansu Ciller attracted the attention of the *Washington Post*, which accused Croutier of "heavy-handedness with pop culture and historical figures" (Cahill 2000, n.p.). This shows that the author does empty her novels of any historical value, and yet does not refrain from introducing names of historical characters that may make the far-away events more domestic and familiar to an Western audience.

Taking a closer look at the proximity/distance dualism in Alev Lytle Croutier's writing, what emerges is more than a magic-realistic approach to Turkish history and culture, of the "once there was, once there wasn't" kind. By frustrating her own claim of authenticity with the reference to Western Orientalist literature as her main source of inspiration in the representation of Turkey, and the use of Turkish historical figures and events in an openly un-historical narration, Croutier seems to display an ambiguous, contradictory attitude towards Turkish culture and history.

The theory of the clash between proximity to/distance from Turkey in Croutier's novels is supported by numerous interviews where Croutier reflects on her self-perception as a writer and relationship with Turkey. In addition to that, it is possible to relate the proximity/distance dualism to the one between national and international literature proposed by Pascale Casanova. Although Croutier has been living in the United States since 1963 and writing in English ever since she started her literary career, she does not classify herself as an American writer and describes her novels as far from being mainstream American stories. Nevertheless, to this declaration of distance from Americanness, Croutier adds much more powerful declarations of distance from Turkey, through which she shows indifference towards her national identity and the history of her country, and rather expresses a desire for assimilating to a Western, Anglophone environment. Croutier affirms that her intention as she undertook her first intensive English studies was "to speak without an accent" (Croutier 2000, n.p.), and her experiences of life abroad found her reluctant to go back to her home country. Her position on Turkey is in fact quite critical:

I felt oppressed at the thought of going back to Turkey, and I still do. There's always that tightening, if you behave outside the prescribed way. It is a function of class, it is a function of society, it is a function of a country which went through a reform instantly instead of it developing gradually. It's a very schizophrenic country. (Croutier 2000, n.p.)

Nevertheless she manifests appreciation for such instant reforms, and seems to share the Kemalist dislike for the Ottoman heritage, seen by the republican ideology as a dark chapter that hindered Turkey's race for modernization and westernization: "In the 20th century's process of modernization" Croutier says, echoing the republican propaganda, "we turned away from the cultural patrimony of the empire. It was necessary because if we glorified the empire, it would have prevented progress" (Croutier 2000, n.p.).

As far as her literary orientations are concerned, Croutier advertises herself as a novelist "caught between Turkey and the United States," who "doesn't belong anywhere" (Croutier 2000, n.p.). In my view, the reality of Croutier's case is quite different, since, in other moments, and much more frequently, she openly distances herself from Turkey and manifests affiliation with the United States instead. The following quote explains my point effectively:

Writers who live (in Turkey), like Orhan Pamuk, look at it with a close-up lens, and I'm looking at Turkey with a telephoto lens. Having been an expatriate for more than 30 years, I haven't grown up with the changes that would have made me part of the Turkish literary machinery. I'm a foreign writer to the Turks, and I'm a foreign writer to the Americans. I write in English and get translated into Turkish. It's an odd position and in a way difficult, because I don't belong anywhere. (Croutier 2000, n.p.)

Her pronouncements on how she would position herself in the national/international literature dualism reflect a very clear assimilation to the Anglophone pole, and a rejection of the national one. If the previous quote illustrated how Turkey feels to her like a claustrophobic environment whose oppressive norms would impact her creativity, here she affirms to be looking at Turkey with “a telephoto lens,” and denies to be acquainted with the Turkish national “literary machinery,” referring – quite arguably – to Orhan Pamuk as an example of a national writer, whereas she would position herself among world literature authors. Her adhesion to the American literary pole, also considering the fact that she founded her own publishing house in San Francisco, is therefore hardly debatable.

On the one hand Croutier constructs a careful discourse of proximity to her home country, conferring an aura of authenticity to her novels. On the other hand, her lack of involvement in Turkey's history and national dynamics creates a significant distance between the writer and her country of origins. I claim that, in spite of her declarations and affiliation to the Anglophone literary market, Croutier might also be considered a very Turkish author, as her unofficial “manifesto,” composed by a multiplicity of declarations to newspapers and scholarly journals, mirrors the controversial universe of feelings that bind Turkey and the Western world. The feeling of national shame, embodied by Croutier's alienation from Turkey's past and present, and the various accusation directed against the Turkish system in general, is in fact mixed with the desire for assimilation in the American literary market. In her display of national shame and preference for the West, Croutier and her literary career can be seen as an unmistakable product of republican ideology.

6 Conclusion

At the beginning of my analysis I set out to explore the reasons of English as a literary language in the work of Elif Shafak, Halide Edib, and Alev Lytle

Croutier, and eventually establish a connection with Turkey's republican history, highlighting how these women authors' choice to write in English can be labeled as a compelling response to the republican ideology and the Kemalist doctrine. Other central questions that accompanied this study were, for instance, to what extent can Shafak, Edib, and Croutier be defined as products of the Kemalist ideology, and how their work contributes to the creation of a new identity for modern Turkey, once the region ceased to identify itself in Ottoman and Islamic tradition.

The relevance of Elif Shafak's works consisted in her personal crusade against Atatürk's language reform, determining the programmatic expulsion of Persian and Arabic terms from the Turkish language. Elif Shafak chose English not merely because of her familiarity with the language, but especially because of the malleable quality of American English, which integrated linguistic contributions of the many diasporic and migrant groups populating the United States. Because of its liberal and flexible nature, American English is particularly appealing to Elif Shafak, who sees it as a fertile terrain where the Ottoman linguistic *pastiche* – an extinguished variety of Turkish that integrated linguistic contributions from all the Ottoman ethnic components – can be re-enacted. To the quest for republican Turkey's identity, Shafak contributes the idea that Turkey is necessarily hybrid, and points at the United States as a model of multiculturalism, rather than of modernization and secularism.

Halide Edib's *Memoirs* was born as a feminine, alternative version to the dominant historical narrative of the Turkish republic – embodied by Atatürk's founding speech, the "Nutuk" – identifying the nation with its charismatic leader. Since the 20th century Turkey saw little room for alternative visions of history, Edib chose to publish her memoirs in English. Nevertheless, *Memoirs* is a controversial text, imbued with the republican incertitude about the relationship with the Western world. On the one hand Edib celebrates the West as a cultural and political model, on the other, she blames it for the loss of Turkey's primordial, "authentic" art forms, sacrificed on the altar of Western imitation. Therefore, besides being the language of freedom of expression and liberation from constricting national norms, English also displays a "darker side," as it is also a means through which cultural resentment towards the West, and towards Turkey itself, is formulated. The concept of "national shame," for example, refers to Edib's inferiority complexes and apologetic tone in comparing Turkey's literary scenario to the European literary tradition. Such apologetic mode, nevertheless, is always accompanied by a subtle denounce of Western cultural imperialism in Turkey. Even if Edib is considered one of the figures who contributed the most to the creation of republican Turkey's identity, she is still far from Shafak's liberal,

hybrid notion of Turkishness, integrating all aspects of the nation's history, from the Persian domination to the Kemalist era, and she rather pursues an idea of national purity and authenticity.

Alev Lytle Croutier is the most extreme case of assimilation to the Anglophone literary market. On the one hand she establishes a myth of the origins that roots her and her personal story in the most inaccessible heart of Turkish culture, the harem, proclaiming herself as a reliable source of information about a culture that has titillated Western imagination for centuries. On the other hand, in her declarations to various journals and newspapers, Croutier promotes the opposite discourse, trying to increase the distance between her and Turkey, advertising herself as a full-fledged international writer. In doing so, she re-enacts the "divorce" between Turkey and its Ottoman, Islamic, Eastern legacy in the attempt to emphasize the country's affinity with a Western mindset.

The study of literature opens up unexpected perspectives on the history of a country, as literature often reacts to national discourses that may influence the vision of national history. I am therefore convinced that the every historical period must be examined through its own literature: this is especially the case for Turkey, and even more so for Turkish expatriate writers reflecting on the republican era. Moreover, Turkish literature in English is fundamental to the study of both Turkish literature and world literature. In the course of this article, English has emerged as a very central element in the recent history of Turkish thought, as a way for Turkish authors to express resentments, denounce the weaknesses of the republic, formulate alternative visions of history, and, paradoxical as it may seem, negotiate their national identity.

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MAKA ELBAKIDZE

Medieval Georgian Romance by Shota Rustaveli in the Context of European Chivalry Romance

1 Introduction

The Knight in the Panther's Skin (hereafter abbreviated to KPS), the most significant text of Georgian Literature, written by Shota Rustaveli in the late Middle Ages, belongs to a chivalry romance from the standpoint of genre. Conceptually it represents the worthy reintegration of Medieval Georgian literary processes in European literary traditions. Within the scope of comparative analysis, the Georgian author, in general, reveals various interesting reference to the European authors of chivalry romances (Chrétien de Troyes, Wolfram Von Eschenbach, anonymous author of English *Gawain and the Green Knight*, etc).

KPS clearly reflects the Georgian institution of social life in the 12-13th centuries called *patronqmoba*, which is analogous to the institution of vassalage in medieval feudal Europe, therefore the ideal of man embodied in the romance is that of chivalry. The male characters of the KPS, adorned with all positive features of an ideal person, strive for personal perfection, for the realization of their own ideal in this world, for helping their neighbour and for winning an honourable name.

The plot of the romance unfolds through an Oriental-type framework adapted to Georgian reality. The opening point of the plot is the Arabian royal

court, whose harmony is broken by the appearance and sudden disappearance of a stranger knight. Subsequently, the narrative develops against the background of loss-quest-discovery – the basic motif of the medieval chivalrous romance. At the request of his beloved lady, Tinatin, (who is at the same time the Queen of Arabia) Arabian military commander Avtandil sets out in quest of the stranger knight and, after three years of roaming traces his abode in a thick forest, in the cave of giants (devils). He learns from the stranger knight's story that he, commander-in-chief of India, Tariel, had lost his love, had looked for her on sea and land and upon losing all hope of finding her, left the human abode and, desperate and enraged, set up his abode among wild beasts. Avtandil promises him help, and renews a long quest of Tariel's love Nestan-Darejan. As we see, analogously to European chivalrous romances, minor conflicts (the appearance of a strange knight, causing the departure of Avtandil from his love) and major ones (the loss of Nestan-Darejan and Tariel's ranging) are identifiable in KPS; these conflicts are resolved in the finale of the work: following the rescue of Nestan-Darejan from her captivity with the kajis by the knight and their return to Arabia, where Avtandil too marries his love. The plot of the romance returns to its starting-point and the circle is closed.

While considering the genre in KPS, we are confronted with a so-called "historically formed" stereotype: actually all researchers going back to the first editor of Rustaveli's literary work king Vakhtang the VI-th, base themselves on the view set forth by Rustaveli (1966) in stanza 17 of the prologue: "Those are not called poets who cannot compose a long work" (Rustaveli 1966, 23), which can be considered a kind of final conclusion of the *theory of poetry (Shairoba)* along with the views expressed in stanza 13 ("Even so it is with the poet who composes and indites long poems") (Rustaveli 1966, 23) and stanza 16 ("Who cannot kill big game; they are able only to slay the small") (Rustaveli 1966, 23). Evidently, in the given context, *long work* and *long poems*, as well as stanza 16's killing of *big game* are antonyms to the phrases *small verse* and *slay the small*, which imply, first of all, a preference for extension in volume and composition. Naturally, the ideological/thematic depth of the composition and its artistic/aesthetic perfection are also to be taken into account. Due to the fact that the prologue refers to the **verse** (text of poetic form), almost all researchers have concluded that Rustaveli acknowledges the superiority of *long verse* i.e. the epic genre, over *small verse* i.e. the lyric. It remains unclear, which of the big epic forms (epopee, song, romance, poem, or ballad) is implied under the words *long verse* by Rustaveli, and correspondingly, to which literary genre the poet attributes his own composition. If

we take into account the views which have been expressed in Rustvelology until now, the *KPS* is a:

1. National epic (G.Deeters, G.Patch);
2. National-romantic epic (N.Urushadze);
3. Romantic poem or romantic story (N.Marr);
4. Romantic-heroic poem (A.Tsagareli, A.Baramidze);
5. Philosophic poem (Sh.Nutsubidze);
6. Specimen of courtly literature (K.Beynen);
7. Romance of chivalry (M.Bowra, Z.Avalishvili, H.Huppert, R. Stevenson);
8. Romance of chivalry in verse (E.Meletinskii);
9. Novel in the contemporary sense of this word (N.Natadze).

Let us consider these views separately:

2 Epic or Poem?

2.1.By the definition of the Literary Encyclopaedia (1987) it is typical of the **epic** (“Epic” 1987) as a genre that it depends upon an organized function of narration: a narrator recounts past events that, in the process of narration, are “enriched” by description of the setting and artistic images of the personages. The narrative stratum in epic composition naturally interacts with the monologues and dialogues of the characters. It dominates in the text as a uniting factor, although its main function is to state what has occurred as there exists a certain distance in time between the course of narration and represented action. The epic poet narrates an event as if it existed irrespective of him, while a narrator functions as is a kind of a mediator between the represented reality and the listener (reader). Correspondingly, he appears as a witness and evaluator of what has happened. In the majority of cases the reader knows nothing about the narrator’s fate, his relations with the characters, or the setting of “narration”. It is this fact that is stressed in relation to **heroic epic**, the main characteristic of which is the “absolutization” of the distance between a narrator and character. The narrator is equipped with such attributes as restraint, calmness and omniscience, and this in itself give the narrative the color of **maximal objectivity**. According to its classical form, epic glorifies historical persons and events; it shapes their existence in plastic extension, with development in space and time, and a multiplicity of events. The representation of historical realities is subordinated to the schema of traditional plot, and sometimes ritual and mythological patterns are used (Literary Encyclopaedia 1987, 513-514).

In the theory of literature six main characteristics of an epic are singled out:

1. The impressiveness of the main character, his national, international or historical and legendary significance;
2. Extensive area of action;
3. Heroic deeds which require the more-than-human strength of the heroes;
4. Inclusion of supernatural forces in the development of an action (gods, angels, demons);
5. Eloquent style of narration;
6. Objective position of a narrator.

In our view, based on the given characteristics (particularly on the items 2 and 3) and without taking account of characteristic specifics for each of them, some researchers, namely N. Urushadze (1960), have arrived at the conclusion that *KPS* is “the national epic for Georgians as Homer’s *Iliad* is for the Greeks and Dante Alighieri’s *Divine Comedy* for Italians. Due to similarities with the first and differences from the second, it has been defined as the heroic national epic of Georgian people” (Urushadze 1960, 45). In N. Urushadze’s view, the genre of *KPS* is determined by the “wide social spectrum of the narration, its content and compositional wholeness, and its lyrical subjectivism, which is felt in Rustaveli’s poem in its treatment of each question and especially in matters of love” (Urushadze 1960, 45). Based on all of the above, and taking into account the fact that the *KPS* artistically reflects events of historical reality”, N. Urushadze considers Rustaveli’s composition to be a “national and romantic epic” (Urushadze 1960, 46). In some way, this view is a development of G. Deeters’s opinion who considers *KPS* to be a national epic as well.

A similar view of the genre of *KPS* is expressed by N. Marr (1917) (for whom *KPS* is a “romantic poem”), but he places more stress on the author’s (narrator’s) position: “The creator of the romantic poem *The Knight in Panther’s Skin* is completely alien to subjective mood in the poem itself; by his impartiality it is an epic work ” (Marr 1917, 427).

Opposing this opinion, A. Baramidze’s statement (1975) seems to be quite true when he says that, first of all, *KPS* is not constructed on Georgian historical legends or generally on historical events” and importantly, when he affirms that, within the frames of the epic genre, Rustaveli strongly manifests his own personal subjective attitude (Baramidze 1975, 115). He cannot follow the narrative course with epic calmness, and it is his *subjective*, lyrical/emotional aspirations that run through the composition in the author’s intrusions:

*“Rustaveli’s individuality as an author is manifested in the separate situations of the poem and his attitude to the characters. Rustaveli does not hide his subjective attitudes, and expresses his own lyrical feelings in the open, strong lyricism running throughout the *The Knight in the Panther’s Skin* from the beginning to the end.”* (Baramidze 1975, 107-109)

The scholar gives more than one example of the fact that all “events” in *KPS* (1966) are rendered with the author’s active “participation” (“Let us not follow the swordsman but return to Rostevan’s palace”; (Rustaveli 1966, 121), his comments (“This is a marvel to me – how he could thus steal his blood!”) (Rustaveli 1966, 249) or subjective position (“Therefore I see that in the end all seems vain wherever anything may be”; (Rustaveli 1966, 268) which excludes belonging of *The Knight in the Panther’s Skin* to national or national-romantic epic.

It is true, A. Baramidze disagrees with Marr’s opinion concerning the genre of *KPS* but, at the same time, he agrees with A. Tsagareli’s “accidentally used formula” – *romantic-heroic poem* – because in *KPS*, as he states “love and friendship, romanticism and heroism are merged with amazing harmony and this contextual and semantic property determines the nature of genre in the composition” (Baramidze 1975, 116).

2.2. A **poem** according to German, French or English poetics means short or long lyrical verse. However, Russian and Georgian literary criticism regards it as a big poetic composition having narrative or lyrical plot. A poem is also called an old and medieval epic, anonymous or authored, when it is created either by cyclization of lyrical-epic songs and legends (N. Veselovsky), the extension of one or several folk tales (A. Heusler) or a complicated modification of the oldest plots in the process of the historical unfolding of folklore (A. Lord, M. Parry). It should also be noted that lyrical and epic elements in a poem are almost equivalent. A poem is a story written in verse (maybe this explains N. Marr’s duality – *romantic poem* or *romantic narration*), rather than a novel in verse, but neither definition is quite accurate because an essential feature of a poem is its lyrico-epic form, which is not characteristic of a novel. This fact only emphasizes that the poem is characterized by the frames of a narrative world rather than the totality and universality of the epic world of the romance. Besides this, there is a lyrical hero and lyrical vision in a poem that is not found in *KPS* (in spite of Rustaveli’s lyrical subjectivism, all the same, he does not appear as *KPS*’s lyrical hero). It is interesting to note that all foreign scholars who have written about *KPS*, as a rule, do not use the term *poem* (as we understand it) in relation to it

and everyone agrees that it is a *romance in verse* or a *chivalric romance* – and the majority gives preference to the latter.

The English scholar Maurice Bowra (1976) emphasizes that Rustaveli had “all the makings” to create pure heroic epics, but he pursues his own path in poetry:

No matter what big tradition could have been before Rustaveli in Georgian literature, after Rustaveli it was obviously changed by new type of love poetry which in many respects has much in common with medieval French romantic poetry. In spite of amazing dynamism of a poem and lots of exciting battle pictures described in it and specific humor, KPS is not a specimen of heroic poetry because the heroic deeds described in it represent the tribute paid by a beloved knight for the gift of inspiration he receives through love and not as a manifestation of his own valor and acts of chivalry... Such a transition from heroic poetry to romance is a rather natural phenomenon at that stage of the development of feudal society when old traditional norms start breaking and turn into something new which is more difficult and lofty. (Bowra 1976, 351)

The scholar proceeds from the following arguments: 1. Dominant role of love; 2. Selfless friendship between two main characters; 3. Accomplishment of almost impossible deeds; 4. Description of battle scenes; 5. Vivid description of especially remote and desert native land pictures of nature; 6. Concept of wealth and noble hospitality (Bowra 1976, 358-359). At the same time, Maurice Bowra pays attention to Rustaveli’s “originality and independence” which, in his opinion, is revealed in: 1. Interpretation of love in a new way – for Rustaveli love is a “detector of kindness in the human heart and, the establisher of norms of behavior of men and women with various background”; 2. Denial of supernatural and unreal – “from this viewpoint KPS is almost realistic, magic plays no role... Here Rustaveli’s strong, healthy human feeling and French tendency – to turn everything into abstraction and allegory are opposed to each other”; 4. Description and artistic images of the characters – “The characters of Rustaveli’s personages in spite of their remarkable idiosyncrasy stand closer to men of our imagination” (Bowra 1976, 359-361). The scholar concludes that KPS is a Georgian work of literature “which combines the East and West equally and still it is of pure national character” (Bowra 1976, 363).

Almost the same idea is expressed by Z. Avalishvili (1931) – KPS’s “European parallel must be found in the romance of chivalry in verse” (Avalishvili 1931, 144), Hugo Huppert (1976) – Rustaveli’s composition “by exterior form represents a type of chivalric romance which was known in the Western Europe” (Huppert 1976, 235), Gertrud Patch (1976) – “Rustaveli’s epic yet bears the trace of medieval

romance of chivalry” (Patch 1976, 247), Robert Stevenson (1977) – It was the term “A Georgian Romance of Chivalry” that he brought in the title of his English translation of *KPS*, Koolemans Beynen (2006) – “Nevertheless, *KPS* is a romance of chivalry because for the main characters their amorous love is a moving force” (Beynen 2006, 56), and many Russian or Georgian scholars.

In Eleazar Meletinskii’s view (1983), *KPS* is a romance of chivalry in verse that is conditioned by several important factors: expression of amorous feelings; idealization of lofty love (resembling the Provencal doctrine of love) and the cult of woman. As he puts it:

KPS bears a well-expressed hallmark of Arab and Persian influence but Rustaveli’s original conception of love and chivalry are virtually closer to the courtly ideals of the western Middle Ages [...] and that description of amorous feelings as well as in French chivalry poetry is not deprived of known wholeness, i.e. Rustaveli’s personal experience, whatever it is, is intersected in KPS with already ritualized secular norms of behavior. (Meletinskii 1983, 207)

However, at the same time, the researcher mentions that Rustaveli’s genuine poem differs both from French and Persian romances and represents an original Georgian variant of epic romance which is placed within the frames of the “High Middle Ages”.

To quote Vladimir Shishmaryov (1988, 349):

Shota Rustaveli as a poet is not satisfied with old epic song. He needs more contemporary, flexible forms but, at the same time, was brought up on his native traditions, from which it is not so easy to break away. The secular poetry he dreamed about in his imagination is closely connected with certain forms, motives or images that should not be ignored because lots of elements of this tradition have gradually taken different shape and meaning in accordance with the demands of time.

Correspondingly, the scholar finds a complete analogy between *KPS* and West European romances of chivalry. First and foremost, this is revealed in Rustaveli’s and the courtly concepts of love and in the artistic images of main characters (Shishmaryov 1988, 355).

Koolemans Beynen (2006) sees a parallel between *KPS* and courtly literature in two essential issues. They are: a) love service – “two main male characters Avtandil and Tariel act according to the orders given by the ladies of higher rank

in order to find their love” and b) hyperbolized rendering of emotions – “At the beginning of the poem, tears poured from Taniel’s eyes but afterwards, at the end of the poem, with dry eyes he releases Nestan-Darejan. His tearless eyes show that now he is a hero who can totally manage his own emotions in a way that goes beyond ordinary human strength” (Beynen 2006, 40).

As has been justly pointed out by Nodar Natadze (1974), *KPS* is a creative work germinated from the traditions of heroic story, love epic and courtly poetry; and both in its general structure and in the separate details of form and ideas repeats the peculiarities typical to these genres. However, in his view, *KPS* essentially belongs to none of these genres, but it is a **novel in full modern sense of the word**, i.e., work of literature which combines in itself the features of tragedy and epic... *KPS* is connected with epic by its external manner of narration and, partially, heroic elements ... Unlike the *Odyssey*, *Shahnama* and other epics of less quality, *KPS* has no concrete (real or legendary) stories but universal values, generalized images who, by the way, are obliged to “praise” ideal love thanks to their generalization namely, in the main text of the poem, a completely unmentioned person – Queen Tamar” (Natadze 1974, 182-183). While speaking about the peculiarities of *KPS* as a novel the researcher singles out such important moments as dynamism and connectedness of a plot, the naturalness of action, lack of fabulousness, and, what is important, the author’s approach to social, psychological, biological or other peculiarities of characters and the individual manner of modeling their artistic images that, on the one hand, is a characteristic of the novel, and on the other, a chief means of manifesting the author’s ideal world (Natadze 1974, 183).

In order to comprehend the essence of a question properly and draw the appropriate conclusion, in our opinion it is necessary to determine the specifics of the **romance** as a genre taking into account the principle of gradation, for at each stage of development (to follow the change of world-outlook/ideological or artistic/aesthetic concepts) compositional principles, forms or methods of expressiveness were subjected to transformation. Correspondingly, literary criticism distinguishes two different genres: the first corresponds to the word **romance** and the second to – **novel**. Our purpose is to find out particularly to which of these genres *KPS* belongs.

3 Romance and Novel

3.1. **The Romance** as literary phenomenon is always associated with medieval literature. In the early Middle Ages, this term denoted the vernacular language in contradiction to the learned language, Latin itself. Thus the words - *enromancier*, *romançar* – denoted the composition of books in vernacular. Correspondingly, in old France the terms *romant*, *roman* implied “courteous romance in verse”, literally – “popular book”, one with both “popular” and “aristocratic” elements. The subject-matter of these romances was courteous (because romantic-heroic-adventure elements dominated in it from the beginning), and the language was understandable for everybody.

As Beer (1970) points out, Medieval romance as genre stood separately from epics and allegory; although at the same time it contained the elements of both (as well as heathen, Christian and classical elements). It allowed a casual interplay of historical reality and miracle. Here love and adventure were represented as ritualized codes of conduct (refined manners, aristocratism, nobility) whose universally recognized irrational impulses and unforeseeable actions mercilessly offered the reader a system of values as well as complex psychoanalysis, and opened the infinity before eyes which, as a rule, bordered the world freely imagined on the fourfold (literal, allegorical, tropological and anagogical) system of medieval allegory (it is allegory that was considered as main criterion of artistic merit of a text) (Beer 1970, 17-19).

Due to the fact that romance chose antique literature and folklore as its literary source, in its plots Greek-Roman stylistics and Celtic Anglo-Saxon or French cultural traditions were organically merged with each other. However, if at the early stage of genre development the processing of a historical theme was topical (*Roman de Thèbes*, *Roman d'Enéas*, *Roman de Troie*, *Roman d'Alexandre*), in later period (70-90ies of the 12th century) a new concept of representing reality is formed which implied the maximal separation of narrative from the reality and the creation of a “new (ideal) reality”. From that time on, the action of romance develops at King Arthur's court, which shows the reader most vividly maximal polarity of his existence, and environment with those high ideals and morals which are represented by Britain's royal court. Proceeding from this, Arthur's popularity in the 12th century became uncommon phenomenon. Medieval tradition discovers two different aspects in Arthur's image – historical and mythic, so that Arthur's legend as a kind of combination of history and myth turns to be quite admissible for a society tending to mythology.

The formation of this kind of society occurred at the court of Eleanor of Aquitaine and her daughter Countess Marie de Champagne where the ethics of courtly love – the major moral and aesthetic code of romance was developed. Having borrowed the terms from the law and religion (namely, their sophism and ecstasy), courtly love significantly regrouped the poles of their meaning. Now the essential relationships were established not between a man and society, a man and God, but lady and beloved man. The courtier of Marie de Champagne Andreas Capellanus developed the “love code” which consisted of 31 items - *De Arte Honeste Amandi* – a work revolutionary for that epoch, which destroyed the values of feudal society because it emphasized a love that was not based on mercantilism and utilitarianism, that granted a dominant function to woman by bringing her individualism into the foreground, and obliged man to adore and obey woman – the “new sovereign” without a word. The most celebrated author of romance Chrétien de Troyes could not hide his delight with the world in which heroic ideals of chivalry, duels and tournaments, flow together with refined, romantic relations. In his perception, the revitalized ideal world was a reflection of that existence which was opened before him and that in itself was destined to courtly love, toward the idealization of courtly love, the courteous rule of life. In such a situation, folklore (magic, fairy) and historical elements interlaced easily with the romantics of duels, although an increase of the woman’s role as character and as a result of emphasizing sexual love heroics already could not fulfill the function of romance’s central crisis. As F. Heer (1962) points out, the *roman courtois* did not ignore the energizing springs of life, the deeper layers of personality: they encompass life as a whole...The skill in “depth psychology” found in these romances is astonishing. The motives used here, on the one hand show a certain communication between the generations (e.g. the hero’s attitude to ancestors), and on the other hand, an antagonism between characters which remind the modern reader of Jung’s investigations (Heer 1962, 144). It is with just this factor in mind that some researchers of the late medieval romance speak of a psychological analysis present in the artistic images of the characters.

The change of ideological and thematic or artistic-aesthetic fabric of romance in itself brought about changes in its organization. Completely novel structure of a romance was formed for the definition of which a well known medievalist, C. S. Lewis introduced a term “polyphonic narrative”, a term that recalls polyphonic music, where opposing characters and episodes in the narrative preserve their individuality and originality but, at the same time, are interwoven with each other in order to make a congruent wholeness. The action is intricate, often dense, but the polyphonic form means that the tension is based on sensations (light colors,

sounds, swift change of scenes, elaborate description of architectural monuments or ornaments, etc.). It is rarely an intensity of plot-climax. The crucial or violent episodes tend to be recorded in the same narrative tone as the descriptions.

In spite of this polyphony, in the centre of romance there is one main hero (correspondingly, there is also one conflict) around which an entire action of the narrative is concentrated. There is also one main plot – a young hero-knight on a quest for internal harmony. Correspondingly, along with courtly love and its morality of behavior, the leading motive in a romance is a quest, wandering (romanticism of traveling) which is crowned by the formation of a hero as a perfect personality. From this viewpoint, of the narrative chronotope should be taken into account, when time-space dimensions depend on the character and way of life of the personage (Bakhtin). In spite of the existence of one hero and one conflict, a specific feature of this genre is (particularly in the highly developed form of romance – Chrétien de Troyes, Wolfram von Eschenbach, etc.) its two-staged sintagmatic structure (Meletinskii), and a tendency of dividing the composition into a “small” and a “big” romance (Mikhailov), from which the contradiction between love and chivalry, the main problem of romance, originates.

Romance, the peak of whose flourishing is considered the second half of the 12th century, was also very popular in the 14-16th centuries (*Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, Malory's *Le Morte d'Arthur*, Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*, despite the fact that at this period the first prosaic specimens of the genre appeared (e.g. two stories from Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* are written in prose), in Elizabethan epoch (Tasso's *Jerusalem Delivered*, Spencer's *The Fairy Queen*) and also in the 18th century (Ann Radcliff's *A Sicilian Romance* and *The Romance of the Forest*) when a gradual polarization of romance and the novel occurred, if indeed the first did not become a substitute for the second. What is the essential difference between them?

3.2. As Beer (1970) points out, the purpose of a **novel** is to describe and make an interpretation of a real, cognitive world while romance makes apparent what is put beyond the garments of the world. Romance is the narration of cherished wishes for which various forms are used – heroic, pastoral, exotic, mystic and romantic. It is usually acutely fashionable, cast in the exact mould of an age's sensibility. Although it draws on basic human impulses, it often registers with extraordinary refinement the peculiar forms and vacillations of a period. As a result, it is frequently as ephemeral as fashion and, though completely beguiling to its own time, unreadable to later generations (Beer 1970, 10-12). A novel narrates the fate of separate character in the process of its formation and development. It

reflects individual and social life as independent disasters which neither disappear nor overlap with one another. Correspondingly, the history of an individual fate acquires common substantial meaning Northrop Frye (1957) in one of the chapters of his book *Anatomy of Criticism* entitled *Theory of Genres*, which deals with the narrative methods of romance, states that: “The romance does not attempt to create “real people” so much as stylized figures which expend into psychological archetypes...Romance radiates a glow of subjective intensity that the novel lacks” (Frye 1957, 196).

No matter how different is theme, volume, compositional principles or manner of narration of a novel, several stylistic dominants can be separated within the frames of genre: 1. **Plot** which aims to reflect the conflict between society and personality, a conflict that serves to stimulate and organize the personage’s behavior (at the same time, unlike romance, the novel’s plot always ends when a knot is loosed, for the completeness of the plot is characteristic for each novel); 2. **Structural dualism** – on the one hand, an “opened” extensive structure (reflection of diversity of social life, evolution of the main hero’s character, numerous minor characters, mixed events, etc.), on the other hand, - a “closed”, intensive structure, focused only on one personage and one conflict (but it differs essentially both from romance’s two-stage syntagmatic structure and the motivation of a conflict or specifics of a hero’s character. It is mainly psychological romance which, proceeding from the specific feature of a genre, must not be based on a model or scheme of the character’s artistic image once developed). 3. **Compositional specifics** – it is a fact that a novel borrows from romance certain compositional elements (unrestrictedness and diversity, the principle of existence of several adventures connected with one character, the width of geographic locality of the narration, etc.) but they are maximally transformed both from the viewpoint of form and content when the so-called “romantic fantasy” of a romance is shifted by phantasmagoria saturated with vital prose.

Proceeding from this, works created in the Middle Ages (in our case *KPS*) cannot be termed “novel in a contemporary sense of a word” (as Nodar Natadze (1974) states it) irrespective of their describing “common values, generalized images” (Natadze 1974, 183) or aiming at “demonstrative representations of existence and the creation of the impression of reality” (Natadze 1974, 187). In favor of the given statement, it can not be said that Rustaveli is interested in man not only as an acting person in an interested event, but also irrespective of the event - as a man with a complex nature and vivid identity different from men of other types”. In critical literature it has been noted more than once that this manner of portraying the characters (showing man as an individual, with character traits with

a development of psychological nature, - which is characteristic for Renaissance thinking) is found in *KPS* two centuries prior to the beginning of Renaissance epoch, and evidences Rustaveli's creative individuality and innovation (that this author by his world outlook or aesthetic views was "before his time"). It is true, in the *KPS*, the profound conventionality of the early Middle Ages is partially declined – though its artistic reality is still conventional (ideal characters, hyperbolization of their qualities, a marked difference in the completeness of the artistic images of main/second-rate characters, etc.). Correspondingly, the *KPS* reflects typical trends of its epoch (though we evidence the existence of Renaissance elements in it) and stands too far from contemporary novel.

And still to which literary genre can *KPS* be referred to?

4 *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* - a Medieval Romance of Chivalry

4.1. Taking account of the above listed principles, we can conclude that the structural and compositional organization of the *KPS* (a rather wide area of action, the specificity of the descriptive factor, a polyphony of "narration", a specific chronotope – "adventure time" (M. Bakhtin), the cyclization of its composition, the artistic function of wandering/quest motive, etc), its ideological and thematic motives (the political and ideological background – feudal court, social environment and the circle of characters – chivalry society, the institution of vassalage; the concept of love – it's premier character, the principles of *servir*; and conventional motives – madness, pouring of blood-tears, love torments, desire for death, going into wild, etc.) and its compositional elements display enough resemblance with the genre known as **romance**. If we agree on this term, in our view, both from the lexicological and etymological points of view, the *KPS* can be called **medieval romance of chivalry**, rather than a novel – a term which is used to denote the texts of the following period (including contemporary examples) of this genre.

4.2. In spite of this, it should be mentioned that *KPS* is not a typical specimen of medieval romance of chivalry (or, moreover, of courteous literature). A number of specific features are found in the composition which indicates a far higher level of genre development:

1. Unlike European romance of chivalry, in the *KPS* there is no collisional contradiction between love and the call of duty, between lover and fighter;

correspondingly, here the deep interiorization of a conflict which is present in romance, does not happen; it is this inner conflict that gives rise to the “duality” of the action of romance, the formation of its two-stage syntagmatic structure, but in spite of the existence of two main heroes, this conflict was overcome in the *KPS*. The structure of Rustaveli’s composition is one and indivisible, the rhythm of narration is dynamic and constant, the descriptive side of fights, tournaments or travel is reduced to minimum, while on the other hand, the informative function of such pages is increased;

2. The relationship between the main characters of the romance (vassal, lover or friend) is determined by aesthetic-emotional factor (charmed by genuine beauty); and in the dominant role of love – obligation (vassal/sovereign; friends) is substituted by love);

3. Innovation in the courtly model of the concept of love – with an introduction of psychological motivations in conventions, and a reduction of them to tropes; bringing to the foreground the moral basis in parallel with the “courtly basis” of love service; dramatization of love feeling at the expense of psycho-emotional factor;

4. Change from the allegoric plane to the real plane (minimization of fantastic elements; concretization of literary abstraction; transformation of ideal schemes (characters) by means of the introduction of psychological accuracy and truth;

5. Individualization of characters – introduction of innovative elements into traditional material; in parallel to hero’s psychological, emotional or moral side, the intellectual side is brought to the foreground; the dominant role of female characters and a deepening of their functional category by means of introduction of new elements in it.

We can thus conclude that the *KPS* is **a romance** (medieval romance of chivalry) which in the so-called “transitional time” (late Middle Ages,/Renaissance) must be considered as a new stage of the genre’s gradation, its highly-developed form of renewed construction, with more developed expressive forms, plasticity of narrative and versatility.

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Introducing New Georgian Literature: In and Out of World Literary Process

1 Introduction

The presented paper is the methodological attempt to comprehend the New Georgian Literature (19th-20th centuries) in a broad cultural-literary perspective, within the context of world literary process, intercultural dialogue, conceptual and methodological intersections and contradictions. The research is based on intercultural and comparative studies.

During the period which is under revision, in particular 19th-20th centuries, Georgian literature developed against the background of diverse historical stages and mentalities, alongside different ideological-political and religious-cultural trials. The purpose of the paper is to explore Georgian literature in this perspective, illustrate the influence of political, religious and social aims and outcomes on New Georgian literature; also, to display the diversity of relations between the World literature as a system of literary interactions and interference, that shape international literary processes and New Georgian literature as the specific national literary model throughout the 19th-20th centuries. Here some terminological definitions should be offered.

In 1827 Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, in his letter to Eckermann, introduced the term “*Weltliteratur*” or “World Literature” (Eckermann 1986, 87). The poetry was understood as the universal possession of mankind, “National literature is now a rather unmeaning term, - he wrote, - The epoch of world literature is at hand,

and everyone must strive to hasten its approach” (Damrosch 2003, 1). Goethe’s term, for the first time, was adopted by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels in the light of the theory of “shared property”, but theoretically was investigated later, by Rene Wellek and Austin Warren in their “Theory of Literature” (1948). Rene Wellek and Austin Warren emphasized three meanings of the “World Literature”: 1. in the light of all that has ever been written in the world culture; 2. in the light of “great books”, which cross the boundaries and effect national literatures; 3. in the light of literature as an art in itself. Due to the first two approaches, world literature is interpreted as trans-national system rather than “universal possession of mankind” as it was considered by Goethe. While the third approach of Wellek and Warren conforms perfectly to Goethe’s appeal to view the world literature as “one” - cosmopolitan collective model. Since then the ideal concept and term of “*Weltliteratur*” is widely being talked about. Some critics are suggesting that it is time to return back to Goethe’s “*Weltliteratur*” aspiration to save national literatures from the “great unread problem”; some critics imply that the idea of “*Weltliteratur*” is something that world literature has not been realized to date, because there always exist two different models of literary space - national and international: “At the same time, each writer’s position must necessarily be a double one, twice defined, - Pascale Casanova admits, - each writer is situated once according to the position he or she occupies in a national space, and then once again according to the place that this one occupies within the world space” (Casanova 2005, 81). We are tended to suggest that the idea of national literatures remains predominant. “The creative work of the writer is always identified with his national memory; neither language nor geographical location, but – memory as an archetypal understanding of roots” (Ratiani 2010, 158): writers join the international literary process with their own cultural memory and, on the other hand, accept the world literary process through their own cultural memory. Therefore, the idea of Wellek and Warren about the world literature crossing the borders of national literatures through “great books” and some other expressions of universal canon is also acceptable. In this case, world literature might be widely regarded as a system of literary interactions and interference, that shape international literary processes (Damrosch), reception of which is possible only through the system of national literatures; whereas each national literature is considered as a model with distinct cultural memory - an individual “version” of the world literature, which widens aesthetical possibilities of world literary process by means of its originality. The World literature and National literatures, Georgian among them, stipulate each other and create a general literary paradigm.

Due to its historical fate and geographical location, understanding of the “World Literature” in Georgia has been very specific all the time: the already assimilated western standard was constantly facing the replacement by eastern, and eastern – by western one. Furthermore, quite often, Georgian literature appeared at the intersection of eastern and western literary realities, characterized by different cultural trends and ideologies; herewith, the reception of international literary process was always very specific, derived from Georgian national ethics and characteristics and tightly linked with ongoing political, social and cultural problems, despite the position of Wellek and Warren, according to which: “It is difficult to trace national literature as art when the whole framework invites to references essentially unliterary, to speculations about national ethics and national characteristics which have a little to do with the art of literature” (Wellek, Warren 1986, 268).

During the period which is under revision, in particular 19th-20th centuries, Georgian literature, after almost six centuries break, was back to the western cultural and literary standard, but the rejoinder was very complicated and unstable. To explore the main part of the paper, it would be reasonable to offer a brief review of the history of Georgian literature.

2 Georgian Literature – A Very Brief Review

Georgian literature is one of the ancient literatures in the world and Georgian alphabet is one among the 14 existing alphabetic systems of the world. For a long time it was considered that the first extant piece of Georgian Literature was “The Martyrdom of the Holy Queen Shushanik” purported to have been written in the V century by Priest - Iakob Khutsesi. Though, even then the scientists consider that this written text did not indicate the very beginning of the Georgian Literature, but its development in a certain period. Lately it was asserted that the Historical Chronicles of XI century “The Conversion of Kartli” included a very special text - “The Life of Saint Nino”. After reconstructing its prototype and analyzing its ancient layers Georgian researchers have revealed that “The Life of Saint Nino” can be traced back to IV century and be declared as a first improved text in the history of Georgian literature. So, nowadays, the beginning of the history of Georgian literature is dated back to IV century, to the epoch, when Georgia was converted to Christianity.

Despite the declared connection of development of Georgian literature with Christianity, while talking about Georgian Literature we should take into

consideration the richest inheritance coming from the pagan period. Except the patterns of materialistic culture it includes the remains of ancient writings preserved in the later literary works, the patterns of folklore and mythos, traditions and the information about the existence of philosophical school in Kolkhети. The ancient estate of "Georgia" was "Kolheti" and "Georgians" were known as "Kolkhis". You all are well acquainted with the famous myth of Medea, who was the Kolkhi Princess and run away from Kolheti to Greece with her lover, Jason. Euripides' tragedy Medea is the literary reconstruction of this ancient story.

But, it should be noted that the adoption of Christianity played a vital role in the formation of Georgian national culture as it is the Christian culture in its essence. The most important event in the history of Georgia was the proclamation of Christianity as the state religion in about 326. Apostle Andrew the First Called was the first to preach Christianity in Georgia. St. Nino has enlightened Georgia - Georgia became a Christian country and many churches have been built.

In the Early Medieval period Georgia was already included in the European net of Christian writing. The two most vivid medieval genres of Georgian literature were Hagiography and Hymnography. Georgian Hagiographic writings are documentary by nature and often have poly-generic structure. On the background of the hero's life one can see the cultural peculiarities of that epoch that make the text more interesting. For this reason in hagiographic works the reflections of all types of ecclesiastic writings are visible: Bibliology, Dogmatics, Polemics, Asceticism, Canonics, Liturgics, Mysticism, or other Apocryphal writings and studies about Christian Saints and Holy things. It is a part of liturgy and stands close to people, and expresses the national ideals. Hymnography gave birth to Georgian verse. A vast number of them are the samples for the poets of all times. The unique masterpiece of 10th century is collection by Mikhael Modrekeli ("Satselitsdo Iadgari") introducing a number of Georgian poet Hymnographs (Mikhael Modrekeli, Ioane Minchkhi, Ioane Mtbevari, Kurdanaia, Ezra, Stephane Sananoisdze, Ioane Kinkozisdze). In the following 11th – 12th centuries a number of outstanding hymnographs have been added to this list (Ekvtime and Giorgi Atonelebi, King David the Builder and his son Demetre I, philosophers – Ioane Petritsi, Ioane Shavteli, Nikoloz Gulaberisdze and others).

Also, from 11th – 12th centuries, with the formation of United Georgian Kingdom, the Secular writing began to develop. It was the heyday of fame for Georgian National Literature as much as it was the epoch of Shota Rustaveli. Rustaveli's text "The Knight in the Panther's Skin", which is translated to numerous world languages, together with "Iliad", "Shahnameh" and "The Divine Comedy" is the most important crossroad in the history of the Aesthetical development of

mankind. "The Knight in the Panther's Skin" reflected the clashing of two huge universes in Georgian culture - The West and the East. The West implies the Christian culture, while the East - Persian Poetry. But in spite of these stylistic syntheses, conceptually and philosophically, the poem belongs to Christian culture, reflecting the Georgian reality. "The Knight in the Panther's Skin", written in the late Middle Ages, belongs to a chivalry romance from the standpoint of genre. Conceptually it represents the worthy reintegration of Mediaeval Georgian literary processes in European literary traditions. Thus, 11th-12-th centuries are considered as a period of Renaissance of Georgian literature and culture.

But the natural development of Georgian literature, as well as of the culture in general, was broken by the tragic historical events – invention of the Mongolian invaders and their 3 century reign in Georgia, which, lately, in 15th century was replaced by Persian rule. Georgian culture began to fall down and the revival was noted only from the 16th century by the emergence of Eastern themes in literature (King Teimuraz and his literary school).

From the 18th century Georgian scholars and writers, as well as politicians, were trying to return Georgian political and cultural life within the European frame. The outstanding figure of this epoch was Priest, Sulkhan Saba Orbeliani, who played an important role in the development of Georgian Prose with the influence of the European Enlightenment. His main work was the collection of fables "Sibrdzne Sitsruisa" (Wisdom of a Lie). In addition, he has written "The Voyage to Europe", first Georgian Dictionary and some other important works. In the same period, by an outstanding Georgian Poet David Guramishvili was created the masterpiece "Davitiani", which articulated the natural aspiration of Georgian poetry towards the European literary processes. It is the Biographical work in its character, divided in several parts: Historical, Didactical, Pastoral, bringing the breeze of European verse and expressing more Western than Eastern tendencies of Georgian culture. Though, in the same period the poetry of outstanding Georgian poet - Besik Gabashvili is flourished, and not alike his contemporaries, Sulkhan Saba Orbeliani and David Guramishvili, his poetry is equally influenced by western and eastern poetical law.

Thus, at the end of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th centuries, Georgian literature, Christian in its essence, due to the historical fate of Georgia, appeared at the intersection of eastern and western cultural realities, characterized by different cultural trends and ideologies. Correspondingly, during this period, Georgian consciousness regarded "World Literature" not as "Western" or "Eastern" system, as it was traditionally considered, but as a synthetically "Eastern-Western" one.

3 New Georgian Literature. 19th Century

From 19th century the new era in the history of Georgian Literature has been started: Georgia falls under the oppression of Russian imperialism, which is later turned into the Soviet regime, and simultaneously reflects contradictory cultural-literary processes of “New Colonialism”; as for literary context – going back to the western standard, where the alternation of various tendencies and methods – romanticism, realism, modernism, symbolism, socialistic realism and others are observed; It is an almost two hundred years, marked by the constant cultural clash against the imperialistic ideology and soviet totalitarianism; During this period Georgian literature undergoes through hazardous phases and regularly gets in and out of World literary processes. The formation and evolution of European literary schools was a very specific process in Georgia, developing between and betwixt the political and national hopes and disappointments, constantly searching for independence and new national identity.

The new stage in the history of Georgian literature, as we have already mentioned above, started from 19th century with the development of Georgian Romanticism and was followed by the historical transition of Georgia into the period of new colonialism, which can be otherwise called the “era of Russian colonialism”. The question: whether was connected or not the rise of Georgian Romanticism with the Russian experience of this European literary school, should be answered positively, but the question: whether was damaged or not the normal development of Georgian romantic literature regarding to Russian colonialism, also should be answered positively. Georgian literature, as well as culture in general, was involved in a very tricky situation, conditioned by the regional political course of Russia in Caucasus.

As is known, the beginning of Russian colonialism in Georgia dates from the early 19th century, though movement towards this process was noted earlier – from the day of the signing of the Treaty of Georgievsk (1783) with Russia by King Irakli, and, to a certain extent, even prior to that. From the early 19th century tsarist Russia comfortably takes over the status of colonizer, proceeding consistently with the implementation of the strategic plan of colonization. The political strategy of Russian colonialism was defined from the outset by the principle of dividing and breaking up of the occupied regions of Georgia and Caucasus as a whole, while the social structure assumed the form of a micro-model of the social system of the Russian empire. What was the attitude of Georgian society to the new standard of the colonialism and in what form was it revealed in Georgian literature?

Given Georgia's experience, the status of "being conquered" was not alien to her; at various times Georgia was occupied by Iran, Arabia, Turkey, and by the Mongols. Hence Georgia's traditional response to colonialism was marked by anti-colonialist movement under the token of preservation of her religion, which primarily implied protection of religious values. In the period of Russian colonialism the status of the conqueror changed radically: the Russian conqueror acted under the policy of "co-religionist" enemy and friend. On the one hand, she enjoyed the privilege of an orthodox country, and on the other, she set Georgia against the non-Christian peoples of Caucasus, depriving her of the needed political distinctiveness. The initial reaction of Georgian society to Russian colonialism assumed the form of double standard. This was clearly reflected in the life and literature of Georgian society of the period of romanticism, primarily from the viewpoint of the interpretation of the concepts "Caucasus" and "a Caucasian".

In speaking of "double standard" I have in mind the ambivalence or misunderstanding that has existed in Georgian society and literature regarding the co-religionist colonizer: one part of Georgian society, deprived of the necessity of protecting its confession, lost the motivation for anti-colonialist struggle from the beginning and – totally disoriented – moves to the position of ambivalent expectation; the other part tries to convince itself in the reasonableness of the "new era" and in the need of protection by a powerful co-religionist country (that is allegedly capable of returning Georgia back into European society); correspondingly, they considered service of the Russian throne their patriotic duty – even under grave doubts and vacillation. There also is a small group of people that clearly feels the tragedy of the opposition of the idea of welfare, masked behind the idea of religious unity, and national originality, and seeks to awaken the stupefied society at the cost of his own heroism. Son disagrees with father, brother with brother, friend with friend: society is dissimilated, while literature clearly mirrors each detail of this fateful dissimulation: all questions or doubts, wavering or fear, indecision or bravery are deposited in the layers of thought, accumulate and find their way into literature.

It is not difficult to find the traditional themes and motifs of European Romanticism in the poetry of early representatives of Georgian romanticism, but the bottom line is the vagueness of political and cultural status of Georgia. The idea of "Caucasian" unity is relegated to the historical past; some of significant Georgian Romantic poets – Alexandre Chavchavadze and Grigol Orbeliani are dressed in uniforms of Russian generals and, on order of the colonialists, fights the leaders of the Caucasian movement. But, having done their duty, they sadly mourn the historical might of Georgia, now turned into ruins; so, this

tragic feeling of inner dualism overlaps their poetry; as for aesthetics, the early Georgian Romanticism suffers with the obvious nostalgia of eastern poetics: under the Romantic scent oriental tunes are felt. Alexandre Chavchavadze and Grigol Orbeliani are courageous enough to bring the unusual for Romanticism “Urban or City Text” in their poetry, mostly linked with the oriental cultural reality of Tbilisi (Tiflis). The eastern poetical model of “Mukhambazi” becomes an important piece of Grigol Orbeliani’s poetry.

Meanwhile, fear becomes the reality in Georgian society! all who secretly sympathizes with the idea of “Caucasian” unity are punished, e.g. Prince Aleksandre Orbeliani, prior to the plot of 1832, received a most severe warning because of a supportive letter sent by him to Shamil, leader of the anti-Russian movement in Caucasus, and was shifted to the camp of “undesirables” for the empire (Tsereteli 1989, 101; Ghaghanidze 2010, 87). Caucasian confrontation and dividing the Caucasian peoples by religious differences, under the mask of Orthodoxy, turns into a major plan of Russia’s policy; accordingly, the notion “a Caucasian” is differentiated into separate designations – Georgian, Armenian, Chechen, Dagestanian and so on, and for each of them any “other” is the carrier of the symbolism of enemy rather than friend. In this general chaos and discord the most impressive role fell to the great Georgian Romantic poet’s, Nikoloz Baratashvili’s lot. Baratashvili’s poetry was germinated in the depth of the best traditions of European Romanticism as well as Georgian literary traditions. Except the main concepts of matured Romanticism, reflected in the poetry of Shelley, Byron, Mitskevich, Lermontov and other leading poets, Baratashvili is activating one of Romanticism’s key ideas and most enduring legacies - the assertion of nationalism, which became one of a central themes of his Romantic art and philosophy. Alongside his aesthetic interest towards the Individualism, Imagination, Mythology, Religion, Folklore, Nature, he focused on development of national consciousness, the importance of local customs and traditions; the movements which would redraw the map of Europe and lead to call for self-determination of nationality; nationalism as one of the key vehicles of European Romanticism became the main theme of Baratashvili’s Romantic poetry, its expression and meaning. Thus, phrase of this great Georgian romantic poet, concerning the situation of Georgia within the Russian colonialism, assumes special significance: “The unity of faith will bring no good for the state, if the character of nations differs” (Baratashvili 1968, 145). It may be said that Baratashvili was the only Georgian intellectual of the first half of the 19th century in Georgia who not only got down to the bottom of the principal problem of the Georgians, but made his position known. The poet’s phrase just quoted demonstrates his belief

in the uselessness of the traditional means of fighting against colonialism and the need to look for new ways: this is the path of national struggle that must salvage Georgian identity and statehood. But Baratashvili's appeal – notwithstanding quite a few like-minded supporters and of course predecessors – was destined to come true later, in 60th.

From the 1860th, the genuine purpose of the political course and strategy of the new colonizers acquired more intensity: Russian vicegerent's, Vorontsov's liberal (though essentially imperialist) rule in Georgia was replaced with radical imperial policy; Russia's plan of transforming Georgia into a peripheral zone of political and cultural development took clear shape, conforming to the classical interpretation of "colony". Due to this the response of Georgian society to Russian colonialism, the ambivalent attitude of the romantic period changed to radical political and social course of Georgian Realism: the historically worked out confessional strategy of anti-colonial movement was replaced with national strategy. It was not accidental that the leader of Georgian public movement and great representative of Georgian Realism, Ilia Chavchavadze snatched at the figure of Nokoloz Baratashvili. Ilia Chavchavadze – and not only he – followed Baratashvili in relation to the Russian colonial policy. As a result, the 19th-century Georgian realistic literature, which is well acquainted (through original languages, as well as through translations) with the writings of Zola, Balzac, Dickens, Nekrasov, Tolstoy, Turgenev, Dostoevsky and which protects the main themes of European Realism, like – relations of Person and Society, Social Life Details, Psychological Problems and etc., however transforms into the specific model of Realism: Georgian Realism is loaded by the sentiment of protecting Georgian national identity and this political attitude forms the basis of the writings of Ilia Chavchavadze, Akaki Tsereteli, Aleksandre Qazbegi, Vazha Pshavela and other Georgian classic realist writers. The idea of nationality is directly related to the recovery of the historical notion of "a Caucasian": if Georgia dissociates herself from the other regions of the Caucasus, she will find herself in isolation – face to face with the Russian bear. Against this backdrop, Akaki Tsereteli's poem "Shamyl's dream" sounds as an appeal and stand: it is not accidental that Tsereteli threw this poem like a gauntlet at the general of Russian army and romantic poet, Prince Grigol Orbeliani, by which he underscored the differing stance in relation to the Caucasian problem of the "children's" (new generation) camp from that of the "fathers" (old generation). Tsereteli's phrase "and let us not give ourselves up as slaves to the "giaour" (the term has meaning of aggressor "Russian") (Tsereteli, 2010, p. 16) is symptomatic: before long Al. Qazbegi altered radically the literary interpretation of the notions of "a Caucasian" and "Caucasus", shifting them to

an emphatically anti-Russian plane: in his texts a tragic fear takes shape of a nation that invades Georgia, and generally, the Caucasus, with “strange” language, morality, traditions and customs; in his fiction characters connected with Russian rule are from the beginning conceptualized in a negative context or the other way round, if a character is negative he is definitely interpreted in a Russian context; while the peoples of Georgia’s mountain region are associated with heroism, self sacrifice, nobility of mind, love; nor should the fact be devoid of interest that Qazbegi never expresses his, author’s, social or political stand while describing the relations of Georgians and other peoples of the Caucasus mountain (and we are well aware of the methodological inclination of realist writers to record their position); on the other hand, the writer’s stand is unshakably national when it concerns the relationship of Georgians and Russians or Russophiles. The same tendency may be observed in Akaki Tsereteli’s poem *Gamzrdeli* (“Tutor”), in which we have Abkhaz characters both positive and negative, while their tutor is a Kabardian. The author, who emerges in the text as a rigorous regulator of ethical and moral norms, never accentuates the ethnic differences. Nor should we forget Vazha Pshavela’s famous characters from non-Georgian mountain places - Mutsal and Joqola and the respectful attitude to them of Georgian mountaineers. Vaja Pshavela’s fiction is considered as an entirely new step in the development of Georgian Realism. The ethical and social Pro et Contra underpinning the scale of values of Vazha Pshavela’s characters goes beyond the standard of narrow separatism, reaching the deepest layers of humanism.

The painful for Georgians problem is accentuated on the stage of the late period of Georgian Realism. Interestingly enough, the full paradigm of the accents of the Identity theme, discussed above, is given with artistic mastery by Iakob Gogebashvili in his “*Iavnanam ra hkmna?*” (“What Did the Lullaby Song Do?”). Against the backdrop of the tragic fate of a Georgian family the aggravated ethnic confrontation between Georgians and Lezghins towards the close of the story transforms into overall harmony and idyll. The question asked early in the 19th century of “why we should stand together in the absence of confessional unity?” transforms towards the end of the same century into the question of “what have we to disagree upon in the presence of a common enemy?”

Thus, from 19th century Georgian literature rejoins the main flow of western literary course and accepts the notion of “World Literature” as basically western one. Although, literary schools and directions, formed in 19th century Georgia are strongly affected by the local political and social problems and, as a result, transformed into the specific literary forms.

4 “*The Hafezian rose I put in Prudon’s vase, / In Besik’s garden I’m planting Baudelaire’s Flowers of Evil...*” 20th Century

The more paradoxical it is to note that the “Problem of National Identity” – so ripe and intellectually prepared in 19th century – cardinally alters its perspective in 20th century Georgian literature when, owing to the historical and political cataclysms of Soviet totalitarianism, the attitude to the issue changes, even being split into several stages: revolutionary and post-revolutionary, ideological diktat, the Patriotic War, liberalization and post-liberalization. Before starting the analyze of this problem within the frame of Soviet ideology, it should be admitted, that the beginning of the 20th century was marked by the fatal clash of Modernistic tendencies in Georgian literature with newly born Soviet principles.

As we all agree, literature constitutes a conceptual reflection on actual processes. The context in which a literary text takes shape always finds reflection in the conceptual or expressive layers of this text. If we bear in mind the inherent aspiration of literature to intellectual and representative freedom, we may form a clear idea of the contradiction that arises in conditions of a totalitarian regime between the artistic text and the actual context. The primary feature of totalitarianism as enforced rule is creation of ideological dictatorship, forming of clichés and their implementation. This obviously restricts considerably the frame of literary freedom. This is clearly exemplified by the 1920s, when the modernistic trends established in Georgian literature found themselves in conceptual antagonism with the ideological principles of Soviet dictatorship. Outstanding Georgian poet Galaktion Tabidze, who is regarded as the reformer of the Georgian verse at the beginning of 20th century, and splendid Georgian symbolist poets (Titsian Tabidze, Paolo Iashvili, Valerian Gaprindashvili, Kolau Nadiradze, Giorgi Leonidze and others) played a major role in the development of Modernistic tendencies in Georgian Poetry. It should be admit, that the attention of European Modernism towards the oriental cultural patterns was very successfully adopted by Georgian modernist and symbolist poets. Due to the Georgian cultural experience it was not difficult for Georgian writers and poets to go back to the past practice. In confirmation of our suggestion we should recall the famous phrase of Titsian Tabidze, which became one of the slogans of Georgian Modernism: “*The Hafezian rose I put in Prudon’s vase, // In Besik’s garden I’m planting Baudelaire’s Flowers of Evil...*” (Tabidze, http://www.lib.ge/bodt_text.php?2551). Hafez is a famous Persian poet of 14th century; Prudon is a French philosopher and publicist of

19th century; Besik is a well-known Georgian poet of 18th century, famous by his inclination to the eastern poetical forms; and Baudelaire is a major French poet, symbolist, modernist. Huge influence of eastern motifs might be vividly felt in the poetry of Ioseb Grishashvili, who devoted numerous wonderful verses to the eastern look and beauty of Tbilisi and Tbilisians and wrapped it up in the eastern poetical forms. It was very natural for Georgian literature and culture to evoke the forgotten sense of oriental breeze. Innovative directions emerged in Georgian Prose as well. Western Modernistic spirit together with national literary traditions defined these innovations, revealed in the works of Niko Lortkipanidze, Mikheil Javakhishvili, Konstantine Gamsaxurdia, Leo Kiacheli, Grigol Robakhidze and some other talented writers. But it was a hard way to pass! By destroying spiritual values, the cited political course of Soviets came into antagonism with the literary process informed with inner spiritual quest which, for its part reflected precisely the crisis of the times – the common skepticism and nihilism that existed in a society oppressed by intellectual terror. The opposition between totalitarian regime and modernistic artistic-literary thought accounted for decades of painful experience, creating a major stage of the history of Georgian culture.

Even the weak hopes of freedom and independence were buried in 1921, when Georgia, after three years of independence, once again became the colony of Russia, this time – of Soviet Russia. The problem of regional relations and identity now was thrown into the claw of a new type of dictatorship and Georgian writers needed to restart their main objective. The best example of the revolutionary and post-revolutionary conceptualization of the problem of national identity is found in the works of the 20th-century Georgian classic writer Mikheil Javakhishvili, with special emphasis on his novel “Jaqo’s Dispossessed”. This novel unites the principles of High Modernism as well as some Realistic trends. This is the tragic story, tracing the disastrous relations between the Person and Time. The anti-hero of the novel Jaqo Jivashvili is a character distinctly bearing the symbolism of the brutal time: wearing an Ossetian cap, Ossetian chokha (traditional Caucasian dress for men), Tatar socks, Dabakhana shoes, Georgian sword and Russian rifle: “Jaqo is a Sharikov artificially created by the epoch, serving his creator with dog’s fidelity” (Ratiani 2010, 143). Mixed up in him is everything, that had retained the make-up of independent units in the 19th century: whereas the basic question in relation to the Caucasian peoples revolved round their disharmonious or, on the contrary, harmonious existence, in Soviet conditions it transformed into the problem of being-nonbeing: Jaqo – the product of the “new times” – is the result of the so-called “Soviet integration”; he is a typical individual “without kith or kin” in whom it is hard to say where a Georgian begins and where

a Daghestanian ends, where an Ossetian begins and where a Russian ends. Who needs such distorted integration that is tantamount to destruction? Of course the colonialist – the Russian empire, now hidden behind the incomprehensible symbiosis of Soviets.

Against this backdrop, the position taking shape in the works of modernist Georgian writers acquires somewhat nostalgic significance in relation to the problem of national identity. Although the texts are often screened with social themes serving as an eye-wash for Soviet ideologists, going deeper, one can feel the attitude of Georgians' respect and mutual appreciation of the identity of Caucasian peoples. However, this is only an exception. "My address is neither my house, nor street, my address is the Soviet Union". This is the slogan that obliterates differences. Can anyone be bold enough to speak of the differentiation of the Caucasian ethnos, with an ethnical Georgian - Stalin at the head of the Soviet dictatorial regime?

Here the distinction between the Soviet and Anti-soviet discourses should be offered.

For decades the Soviet Union was the symbol of historical and cultural eclecticism, though the in-congruencies were successfully masked by the smooth work of the hypertrophied state mechanism and the principle of centralization of power: what is needed by one person is needed by all, what is a rule for one is a rule for all, as one lives so must all others live; the centre took an individual decision; nationality, history, tradition, thinking, aspiration are only unimportant details against the backdrop of the large-scale Soviet marker. Is the interior of this artificial system as naïve as the façade? Clearly, it is not.

The brave revolutionaries have long since developed as cynics and fanatics, while the notion of leader assumed ambivalent and equivocal character. In the first place, the leader is not the one who merits it (at least by any token), but he who desires leadership more than others and strives for it by all means. Whereas, under normal circumstances achievement of leadership is linked to definite characteristics – the person's wit, competence, merit or heredity for that matter – in the Soviet structure it is subject to one principle alone: aggressive desire. A kind of governing ideology takes shape – an irrational structure that at its own will assumes a demiurgic or constructive function, implying the "creation" of a new social model and "remaking" of human beings according to the corresponding pattern. The process of "creating" and "remaking" takes the course of definite regression: the leader creates a new social model or implements a utopia concept, but in his quest for organized good and happiness, relying on force, he alters the life of humans, which gradually develops into chaos and war and finally assumes

the form of organized evil (Ratiani 2005, 59-130). Transformation of the leader is inevitable: his constructive functions transforms into a punitive and destructive function. C. Z. Frank notes: "Utopian movements are always launched by dedicated persons, filled with love for the people, ready to give their lives for their neighbor. Such persons not only resemble saints but from a definite point of view, have something of holiness. However, gradually – because of the approach of the practical implementation of the goal set – they themselves either transform into persons possessed of the power of satanic evil, or yield the authority as their successors to corrupt and heartless seekers of power. Such is the paradoxical development of all revolutions, the attempt to transform all utopian conceptions into a way of life" (Frank 1991, 54). The leader turns into a personified embodiment of evil, a monster that is the object of the artificial-pathetic admiration of the people or the subdued mass.

What can the effect of such a political system be on culture, art, in particular, literature?

Barring a small group of enthusiasts excited (or intoxicated – I.R.) with the idea of "saving the masses", the establishment of Soviet ideology in the sphere of social thought and life was effected through emotional-psychological influence. Various aspects of influence may be enumerated. In the first place, ideological zombifying of writers and, through terror, putting them in the service of dictatorship, when fear performs the function of a kind of Hermes between the machinery of state and art, while as a result, ideological texts devoid of genuine artistic value are created, as the literary model of Soviet discourse. By classical definition, "Soviet discourse is a socio-cultural phenomenon of lingua-rhetorical nature" (Vorozhbitova 2000, 1). The anthem of course is the socio-psychological key to its mentality. On the one hand, it is a discourse of "new democracy" and leftist intelligentsia, where the word-fiction dominates over the word-object, on the other hand, it is a "superficial discourse" that has no depth and is devoid of the experience of national individuality. Nothing can be understood in the framework of this discourse, but only simulation, and we all know: radical manifestation of simulation in literature is ideologized junk.

Georgian Proletarian Literature is not only a classical but exaggerated model of Soviet discourse that "normalizes the proletarian psychology" through merging thought with objectification" (Gastev 1919, 10), whose source should be sought in agitation-leaflet (anti) culture of the second half of the 19th century. The proletarian discourse, armed with the slogan: "We shall build our own new world" (on what? supposedly, on the ruins of the old? – I.R) in order to implement the core idea supports radical means of social innovation, including vandal ones

too – torture, murder, destruction: “I will throttle father and kill mother, if Party will ask me to do so!”, the leading Georgian proletarian poet was threatening. Terror was considered as the shortest way to the cultivation of mass character: “In this case, there are no millions of heads, there is only one common head. Subsequently such a tendency leads to the elimination of individual thought, turning into objective psychology as the whole class, manifested in the system of psychological switching on, off and over” (Gastev 1919, 10). The conceptual and moral stance of more or less radically disposed authors, voluntarily or forcibly united under the sign of Soviet discourse expresses extremely well the principles of Soviet rhetoric devoid of individuality or nationality (Remember: “My address is neither street, nor house, but the Soviet Union”).

However, this process has an opposite side, marked by the struggle of disobedient, fearless nonconformists: the writer opposes the superficial illusion of forced happiness and chooses an attractive form of literary protest, resulting in the shaping of an anti-Soviet discourse. We should take Georgian modernist writing as the initial model of anti-Soviet discourse with its diverse forms and tributaries, for it was high modernism, characterized by a striving for representational freedom, the artistic tendencies of quest for truth and establishment of individuality that constituted the main threat to Soviet demagogues. Modernism is an organic part of the overall development of Georgian, as well as of European literature. Accordingly, opposing it is an analogy of not only ideological but of anti-historical and anti-national struggle. Hence, it is not surprising that there are no authorities in this struggle: the notion of “writer” is replaced with “ours” and “enemies”, the former being the marker of Soviet discourse, and the latter of anti-Soviet discourse. Avant-garde art and literature create no less threat. Although avant-gardism rejects “the whole system of spiritual problems, existential relations” (Tsipuria 2008, 262), it is actively implemented in experimental models of representational forms: “The essence lies in expressiveness itself...The idea of permanent quest of modernism is here preserved in the quest for artistic expression, turning into the quest for an ever new artistic form of opposition to the accepted form” (Tsipuria 2008, 262). What is non-standard opposes “common sense”, and what opposes “common sense” is anti-Soviet. Let us declare “social disgust” against it!

If we sum up the foregoing, we shall arrive at the conclusion that the oppositional model of literary discourse: Soviet discourse / anti-Soviet discourse constitutes a differing response to one and the same process, which may be compared only to shock therapy: both forms of literary discourse become maximally active in

the 1920s-30s – precisely when communism began to take shape from a utopian dream to an implemented project.

The young Soviet system was gaining ground on a broad front on the territories of forcibly united countries; in the space of specific Soviet narrative, side by side with other politicized terms, a place of honor was accorded to the concepts: “Soviet Literature”, “Socialist Realism”, “the Soviet Critical School”, which expressed extremely well the priority nature of literature marked under the token of ideology, promising special privileges and honor to the servants of the muse. A fairly large space of belles-lettres was filled with “masterpieces” of troubadours of the state system, which were, unfortunately, significant only from the chronological and quantitative standpoints: so many works were written at this time, and yet their themes are almost identical. But belles-lettres cannot be assessed either from the chronological or only quantitative viewpoint. One of the main criteria, along with conceptual and artistic innovations, is the degree of intellectual freedom, and the Soviet society suffered unequivocally from its deficit. On the one hand, fear, and on the other guarantee of stable well-being proved a strong stimulus for those who gave little thought to eternal glory. Poems and odes eulogizing the helmsmen of the Soviet country were written; bulky novels were written on the collective work and work heroism of Soviet people, on the life of the people fighting for unity and equality and their relentless fight against the still surviving, so called, bourgeois and aristocrats; Soviet criticism praised such literary experiments, and this was not all: it relentlessly distorted the interpretation of the now rare quality literature. Quite a few texts of Georgian writers of landmark significance fell victim to such wrong, unacceptable interpretation. Authors of mediocre talent and capacity sized up well the process under way, though even authorities developed cracks. It is hard to name sincere trust of the Soviet ideological course, even less, enthusiasm with it. Predominantly there was fear – ordinary human fear that determined obedience to the leader and state structure. But neither fear had an unequivocal significance: for a certain part of writers it was fear that made them feel the absurdity of the empirical reality, strengthened the experience of protest and played a coordinating role in working out an alternative discourse.

What was the reaction of the authorities to the alternative literary discourse?

The writer was simply declared an “enemy”, and his works – anti-state activity, invariably ending in punishment. A rather long list of Georgian writers punished for this reason can be drawn. But in this case, the tragicalness of the situation is created not only by the ruined fate of individual persons, but by the total break of the whole paradigm of the literary process, which as a rule needs long cultural

rehabilitation. “Anti-Soviet writers” put up with sacrifice, for they believed that all other ways were either compromise, which they could not allow, or a wrong mechanism of prolonging one’s existence. Accordingly, genius writers revolting against the “ideal type” of slavish society and “poisoned” with western modernistic, symbolist or avant-garde influence, consciously faced execution, exile or even suicide: Mikheil Javakhishvili and Titsian Tabidze were murdered, Paolo Iashvili committed suicide, Grigol Robakhidze immigrated to Germany. These three forms of “settling” the problem were identical in content, the difference lying only in the strategy of implementation. The writer himself was a tragic personage who felt victim to his own principles.

We are forced to admit, that in the end of 30-ies, after the big political and cultural “cleaning”, Georgian literature, as well as literatures of other Soviet countries, was isolated from the world literary process: new Soviet canon was emerged to replace the universal one. Main streams of the world literature were abolished in Soviet Georgia. But it was not a natural condition for the Georgian literature, which used to be involved in the world literary process for a long time. Georgian literary society began to emerge from the shock state, otherwise, began forced adaptation to the context - writers learned to use indirect ways in their struggle; the totalitarian political rule was assessed as an inevitable historical reality, and getting out of it - a long-term political process. This model of anti-Soviet literary discourse worked under mask effect and conceptually may be assessed as a strategy of “indirectly casting stones”. However, it resembles rather a guerrilla fight, marked by the *festina lente* principle. Writers fight with all weapons available to them: satire, allegory, irony, the absurd; they fight on their own territory and beyond it – in emigration – openly and underground. All roads are effective to attain one’s end, though in this case the writer himself is not the character of the tragedy, but is only a tragedian who tries to replace the reality with an intense process of mythopoeia.

One circumstance is no doubt interesting. The anti-Soviet literary discourse, stemming from constant quests for representative models, emerges as a generator of the genre diversity of Soviet period literature. For example, such important literary genres of a world literature as literary anti-utopia, mythological-realistic novel or satirical novella may be considered to have been ideal genre models of anti-Soviet discourse. Of course, I do not contend that the origin of these genres is linked to Soviet ideology. However, at this stage of my research, in individual cases, I do not rule out such a conclusion.

How stable or flexible was the literary discourse of the Soviet period?

Obviously, the stability and flexibility of literary discourse is determined by the context. When the process is long, or the totalitarian rule lasts almost a century, it of course involves different periods: more or less radical, relatively radical, inert, or on the contrary, turned active, and other types of period. Although, each of them do a serious damage to the idea of literary freedom, the flexibility of the Soviet period literary discourse is beyond doubt. A clear example of this is first the literature of the period of the “Patriotic War”, and later that of the “period of thaw” in the 50s-60s.

During the Patriotic War soviet publicist discourse proved to be the most successful functional and stylistic implementation. However, in a discourse of this type we can distinguish different layers: the official press, as a manifestation of the position of Soviet ideologues (radio-reportages, recall for that matter, Levitan’s well-known timbre and dramatic texts); the refined patriotic texts of authoritative writers, expressing sincere support for the overall ethnic problem; finally, the epistolary texts – personal records or correspondence, in which the split was felt between the official stand and the real situation. However, owing to the experience of general physical threats, this is probably the underground period of anti-Soviet discourse, when it acquires relatively fragmentary character. Instead, the generalized Soviet mental correlate of *Homo Sovieticus* is successfully formed. The political need for integration was especially enhanced in the period of the Patriotic War, when the mental model of the *Homo Sovieticus* entered the phase of its historical might: the concept “we” had long since taken the place of “I” and this replacement was one of the major achievements of the colonialist policy of Sovietized Russia.

But soon after, from late ‘50s and ‘60s, Soviet regime enters the new stage of development: after Stalin’s death, in the post-Stalinist period of the so-called “thaw” quite a different image of the cultural and literary life of Soviet Union, including Georgia, is offered – after an interval of almost thirty years the influence of Western literary trends grows overtly. Against the background of the doomed generation of the Georgian modernists of the ‘20s-‘30s, the writers of the Georgian sixties appear to be in a much more privileged position. This pro-Western model of anti-Soviet discourse was obviously the result of political liberalization: whereas the world seen beyond the iron curtain found its way into the homes of the Soviet leaders in the shape of Marlboros and other “imported” (a soviet term) wares, literature was given the chance of “taking a glance” at Western trends and conceptions. The anti-Soviet liberal discourse invaded the territories of Soviet countries with Hemingway themes and bold neo-realistic experiments, accompanied by romantic dreams of friendship, sincerity, refined

relations, even freedom and searching back for “almost forgotten” national identity! One of the best examples to this literary trend in Georgia is the fiction of Guram Rcheulishvili and Erlom Akhvlediani, as for poetry – Ana Kalanadadze, Mukhran Machavariani, Murman Lebanidze.

As soon as the thaw took a dangerous shape, the instinct of banning the unfamiliar awakened in the Soviet leaders. The aggression of Soviet authorities to everything new becomes intensive. On the one hand, this aggression assumes an extremely artificial character, on the other - it disrupts elementary norms of communication. As a result, the writer, as one of the most qualified user of information, suffers from its deficit. The entire paradox of this situation is that in the process of creating an artificial structure anew it was not Soviet discourse that acquired radical character but anti-Soviet discourse, dissident discourse (Representatives - Merab Kostava, Zviad Gamsakhurdia, who later became the first President of Liberated Georgia) becoming its textual manifestation. Or perhaps this is not a paradox at all but a cultural manifestation of logical movement to the end of the regime?

In the obtaining situation of the so-called “Soviet stagnation” the literary system became inordinately fragmented and more influenced by Western literary climate: Georgian literature, despite the political regime, managed to be reunited with the general streak of world literary process. The following models of literary discourse took shape: subjectivistic discourse (“differently minded” writers), as an in-depth model of anti-soviet discourse; radical discourse (dissidents), as an exaggerated model of anti-Soviet discourse; adapted model (conformists), as an attempt at intellectual reconciliation of anti-Soviet and Soviet discourses; neutral model (uninvolved), as a passive model of anti-soviet discourse, internally related to subjectivistic discourse, though differing from it from the viewpoint of position activity; and of course modernized Soviet discourse (foresighted apologists), as a new prop of Soviet power. It should be admitted, that the small group of so called “differently minded” writers or “Georgian Subjectivists” deal with the conceptual and stylistic peculiarities of their western colleagues. Otar Chiladze, Chabua Amirejibi, Guram Dochanashvili, Otar Chxeidze, Guram Gegeshidze, Jemal Qarchkhadze, Revaz Inanishvili and some other writers were activating important topics of their contemporary World writing: devaluation of spiritual values; moral crisis of the society; intellectual and ethical deficit; loneliness, estrangement and searching for the “self”. These themes were intersected with the local Georgian problems, like: aspiration for the self-representative freedom; search for the mechanisms to escape from the Soviet ideological clichés; struggle for the National identity.

It was obvious: an intellectual destruction of Soviet regime already has been started. To save the situation, Soviet leadership rushed back to already experience (by Russian Tsarism and Stalin's period) imperialistic regional politic: in the late '70s the phrase the "image of Caucasian ethnicity" was aired first timidly and then resolutely – the image of Russia as a "big brother" becomes unwritten rule for all other people living in Soviet Union. As one of the first objections to this statement might be named Giorgi Danelia's motion picture "Sparrow-hawk" (Mimino), first visual marker, in which the problem of the issue of ethnic identity may be perceived beyond tragicomic chiaroscuro, while the relationship of two good guys - a Georgian pilot and an Armenian driver bears the traits of consolidation of two Caucasians lost in a vast, foreign Russian environment (however, the stage-manager has to pay tribute to Soviet conjuncture by the method of revealing the negative character of the other Georgian). Although in Danelia's film a positive rather than negative interpretation of the problem is given, one thing is clear: Baratashvili's "character of nations" was declared once more, the foundation of the empire has been shaken and is awaiting new processes.

If we begin to look for the beginning of the destruction of the Georgian literary discourse of the Soviet period, we shall of course pinpoint 14 April 1978, when Georgian people demonstrated first general protest strike against the decision of The Ruler Centre to abolish the Georgian National Language and Identity with it. That was a most eventful day in Georgian history from many points of view, including that of transformation of Georgian literary discourse and the beginning of crucial struggle for the national independence. It became clear that the civic will of society, if it is mature and motivated, is more powerful than any state mechanism. Since the end of 80s of the 20th century, Georgian literature steps into the post-soviet and post-colonial era. The tense political and economic environment of the '90s aggravated the meaning of "ethnos", Soviet dictatorship was coming to the end of its existence, while the ethnic units come close to the phase of recognition anew, though as expected, with a negative interpretation: the policy of "Soviet unity" was buried in the ruins of the empire, but the way was cleared for no less hazardous open ethnic confrontation in the Caucasus region. From the '90s, as a result of the break-up of the Soviet system, Georgia, as well as the whole Caucasian region became the zone for non-ending ethnical oppositions. As for literature, new models of correlation with World literary systems were defined: literary discourse, as well as the political regime itself, has continued to exist under a new status, which might be distinct as a Post-modernistic literature. However, this is a topic of another essay.

5 Conclusion

Despite the fact that during the 19th -20th centuries, through almost 200 years, Georgia suffered from different types of dictatorships and regimes, the country managed to preserve its own culture and literature, primarily within the frame of western cultural and literary traditions. Except the period of Stalin's rigorous political terror in '30s and '40s of 20th century Georgian literature was linked to the world literary process. Leading European literary schools and trends, shaped in Georgia, were always marked by specific local problems and themes, underlying the "national ethics and national characteristics" of Georgian people as well as political, social and cultural peculiarities of Georgian life. In addition, it brings to light the close relation of Georgian literature towards the oriental culture and literature. We can summarize the following: New Georgian Literature is an original national literary model, occupying its special place among other literary works in the world. World literature was crossing the borders of New Georgian literature through masterpieces and some other expressions of universal canon, but was always transforming into the specific national model with distinct cultural memory - an individual "version" of the world literature, which widens aesthetical possibilities of world literary process by means of its originality. The World literature and Georgian literature stipulate and widen each other throughout the centuries.

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DARIO SAFTICH

Eastern Adriatic: Intercultural Laboratory

1 Introduction

Since the fifteenth century, Croatian territory has been subject to the pressures of three great powers of that age: the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, the Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Venice. The latter two, although significantly weaker than Austria-Hungary and Turkey, possessed certain characteristics of a colonial force: stemming from a narrow city territory, it managed to conquer and control all larger overseas enclaves. If we view colonialism from the classical 19th. and 20th. century perspective, differences in relation to the greater forces of that age are gigantic, foremost because Venice did not act as a national country and collapsed at the exact time when the Napoleonic Wars led to a gradual awakening of national consciousness throughout the Old Continent. This doesn't render speaking of Venice and its colonial factors irrelevant, due to the fact that this lagoon –stationed oligarchy knew every well how to profit in relation to its “colonies”. The Venetian rule implied an unquestionable cultural influence, as well, although there was no planned, intentional imposition of the Venetian “language”. This was further underlined by the fact that Venice gradually began to accept the “Tuscan language”, a language which affirmed itself on the Apennine Peninsula and beyond, thanks to the great Medieval and Renaissance writers and economic influence of Florence. Venice's presence within countries under its dominance, and generally the Mediterranean pool, left behind visible traces. If anything,

“overseas nations”, seen as such from a Venetian perspective, developed within certain port regions and social classes a Koine language, often referred to as a syntagma of colonial Venetian. With the fall of Venice and the affirmation of national matrices, speakers of “colonial Venetian” found themselves as a lingual community positioned as a certain “Italian colony”, at least from a lingual point of view. These syntagmas are used by the writer Enzo Bettiza who prefers to call himself a writer from Split, but of the Italian language. The collapse of Venice led to the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy assuming control over all features of a dominant, centripetal force down the length of the Eastern Adriatic, which, up until that moment, it possessed in the continental region of Central Europe. From this moment on, and at this point we are already in the nineteenth century, the century of awakening in terms of national consciousness and the development of modern colonialism, we can speak of colonial relations or at least a colonial consciousness in the Adriatic, now at a level equal to that in Northern areas. Simply put, from then on, Mediterranean Central Europe began sharing the fate and psychological characteristics of continental Central Europe.

Upon returning to his homeland during the early nineties as a reporter, he metaphorically travels the length of the Adriatic coast, feeling the pulse of the coast’s relations as well as that of its hinterlands. The matter at hand is not so much a real, physical journey, but a journey into the past of one’s memory, one’s prejudices, and perhaps even misconceptions, through which cultural contradictions and problems tied to identities typical of postcolonial situations often become evident. To Bettiza, his personal and family-oriented memory, the Eastern Adriatic represents what the Danube represents to Claudio Magris. The Danube and Adriatic were “travelled” not only by trades, but by cultural and civilizational influences, as well.

2 The Language of Renaissance Globalization

In today’s world, English is the *lingua franca* of globalization because it is the language of the “empire”, the only “empire” to have survived in the modern world after the fall of the iron curtain. The logic of this empire, an all-encompassing center led by goal of total assimilation is in its core monolingual and monological. This same logic, only much more pronounced in its methods of imposing a dominant language and culture, was present in the colonial era. The problems of domination and subordination in a cultural sense, are most relevant to the matter of language, i.e. the denigration and oppression of the indigenous

culture by the colonial power. This includes the language of English literature itself. Is the English language, the language of the largest colonial force of Great Britain, an appropriate means of expression for postcolonial writers? Obviously, the same question presents itself, although not to the same extent, for French and Portuguese as well as all other languages of ex-colonial powers. On one hand, it could be said that matters of language only carry assumptions and ideas of colonial power. On the other hand, in terms of English, this language exists in many forms throughout the world, indicating to postcolonial literature the problematic of English's widespread nature. Depending on the local situation and its needs and affinities, a postcolonial writer may choose to either revoke or adopt the colonizing language, including rejecting the remains of colonial cultural rule over means of communication. Alternately, adoption of a language and its novel application marks a certain distancing from the regions of colonial privilege. Abrogation implies rejecting the category of "imperialistic" culture, its esthetics, and its illusionary standard regarding what is normative or its specific usage as well as its assumption of the existence of a traditional and fixed meaning "written" into the words. Adoption is a process through which a language is accepted and "burdened" by one's own cultural experience. In other words, a language which is not one's own is used to express a spirit which is.

Domination and subordination is not a relationship which appears solely between nations or ethnic groups, but also within them. Acceptance of a certain culture or language can be a way in which a certain social group tries to distance themselves from the masses, thus becoming elitist or believing they have become so, not only in economic power but political power, as well. The role of *lingua franca*, in terms of a language utilized by speakers of differing tongues, as well as in terms of a language which was representative of a link with the culture of that time's metropolises, was helped for centuries by the Venetian dialect even in our regions, only to later buckle before the Italian language in written documents.

However, the relationship of dominance and subordination within a post-colonial situation can create a novel transcultural identity. This occurred with "Italian colonies" on the Eastern Adriatic, as Bettiza calls them, which either had or acquired clear contours of a transnational identity. Still, the core of these "colonies" was comprised of domestic, indigenous populations, as Bettiza himself explains whilst speaking of his family's roots.

Such a problematic identity unquestionably leaves marks even in literary creation. Physical contact and mixing between peoples can also cast suspicions on the entire idea of national and ethnic literature. This means that hybridization and creolization of language, literature and cultural identities is a usual theme

of postcolonial literature and theory, and that they mark a certain acquaintance with postmodernism. The overlapping of lingual usages and the transference of codes becomes characteristic of the people and places at culture-contact points along the Adriatic. But not only here. The meaning of old words changes, and new ones begin to be used. Neither colonial nor colonized cultures and languages can present themselves in their “pure” form, nor can they separate from one another, warns Bhabha: in this way, a hybridization is formed which not only leads to the question of the colonial culture’s centrality and the marginalization of those colonized, but tests the very idea of a “center” and outskirts as nothing more than mere representation.

In the postcolonial world, the term race is often emphasized too frequently at the expense of the term nationality, or rather ethnic and lingual affiliation, although the latter enjoys a much larger cultural value in modern societies. The reason is that ethnicity, race and nationality are uncertain cultural categories, in contradiction of universal biological facts. Ethnicity as a concept refers to the formation and maintenance of cultural borders, and holds as a priority the emphasis of history, culture and language. Race is a problematic concept due to its ties to biological discourses related to inner and inevitable superiority and subjugation. In our region, however, the notion of racial belonging has not managed to impose itself. Lingual affiliation was often crucial in creating a feeling of belonging, along with another component which clearly peeks out from Bettiza’s opus: the sense of belonging to a local homeland, city or region.

3 Racial and Ethnic Affiliation

In postcolonial theory, the notion of race is often prioritized over the problematic of language. However, cultural affiliation plays a much more significant role than racial affiliation, because it marks identity without regard to skin color. In his work *Toward the African Revolution* Franz Fanon writes to categorize all blacks under the common label of “negroid” means stripping them of every possibility of individual expression. In 1939, Fanon concluded that not a single Caribbean native referred to himself as black, that it was the white man who had forced him to make this determination on account of skin color. According to Fanon’s relational viewpoint expressed in *Black Skin, White Masks*, the black man is not only obliged to be black, but black in relation to the white man. The black man, according to Fanon, represents comparison. Besides that, colonialism was not racially motivated in its core; colonialism was, he claims, only accidentally hued

white. To affirm Fanon's viewpoint, one can cite Ireland, the first British colony, as an example. Ireland was subject to the process of transformation into another, a process later suffered by other, epidermically darker colonies. According to Fanon's theory, racially marked perception is expressed even in language. A black man will be all the more white the better he speaks the French language, it is written in *Black Skin, White Masks*. Fanon perceived race as something conditioned culturally. For Fanon, the battle between rival identifications and projections constitutes the very core of colonial acquaintance. As such, it manages to avoid being trapped in an absolute privileging of "race" in relation to other factors, as well as its fixation. Therefore, it is not skin color that is decisive, even in situations where differences in skin color are truly present. The notion of racial affiliation is even less important in places where ethnic differences are often minimal and inclinations for one language or identity are the result of mere coincidence, or simply an alternative choice even amongst members of the same family. The loss of a certain language's power can lead to a feeling of exile even within one's own homeland, felt by speakers of the "losing language". The extent to which the theme of language, a sense of belonging to two cultures, almost to the level of hybridization, is present in Bettiza's opus is evident in his own speaking of his childhood:

I am truly an outcast, to whom his own house appeared as exile much before the path of actual relocation appeared before me leading to the great migrations which, toward the End of WWII, deformed the ethnic and geographic map of Eastern Europe. Ever since the time I had to constantly shuffle between a forced scholastic stay in Zadar and the completely Slavic and warmer ambient in Split, I felt the hardships of a bilingual boy, the difficulty of division, an unfamiliarity with even myself. A boy who never knew to whom and what he belonged. Always in a confused and questionable state of suspense in the midst of parents, grandfathers, uncles, cousins, friends, nannies and servants of all nationalities. Always insecure in a country which, especially following the collapse of Austria-Hungary, deprecation and national contradictions were a bitter, stale bread eaten by its restless inhabitants. (Bettiza 2004, 43)

4 Identification and Lingual Relations

The colonizer can achieve complete victory only if he manages to assimilate the colonized population, as this is the best way to keep it under his influence and control without having to resort to means of force. Thus, the fight against

colonization can often be identified as the fight against the colonial spirit. As Fanon states, revolution mobilizes national identification; it drives out the colonial force which has assumed and brought forth even the most intimate corners of a colonized spirit. The relationship between a nation and psyche is one of homology. National revolution motivates a mass redirecting of loyalty, from the metropolis to an introjected and ideal ego.

In that sense, Fanon points to “three phases” founded upon the moment of identification. In the first phase (colonized assimilation), the colonized subjects identify with their paternal colonizational force; in the second phase (native authenticity), they equalize themselves with a certain idealized myth of their heritage; here we encounter a type of ancestress and ancestor; and finally, in the third phase (revolutionary syncretism), they identify fully with a collective future shaped by the wishes of the people.

Fanon acted, emphasizes Diana Fuss, at the center of anti-imperial politics and psychoanalytical theory, and he located the link between the two within the notion of identification: the notion of identification, which “doesn’t merely designate the history of the subject, but also the subject within history”, provided Fanon with a vocabulary and intellectual frame which doesn’t only allow for dealing with psychological disorders evoked within individuals as the result of violent colonial domination, but also the neurotic structures of colonialism itself. To Fanon, identification was simultaneously a psychological, cultural, historical and political matter.

The notion of identification in that sense is also present in the Adriatic: the difference lies in that during the time of which Bettiza speaks, the usual difference between the colonizer and the colonized people is replaced by a battle for national awakening, a national identification in which the “metropolis” or “center of power”, i.e. Vienna, was unable to directly and globally impose its language, and was forced to find a balance between the various languages of the empires in order to sustain its power. However, regardless of the lack of lingual identification, Vienna’s centripetal force was strong: all peoples and nationalities of the Monarchy aspired to at least seemingly identify with “Austria, the tidy country”. Bettiza writes:

the definition of “homo austriacus”, which encompassed regions from Vienna to Krakow descending all the way down to Split, implied a certain sleekness, nice habits, an adaptable royal manner of thinking, but did not include markers of nationality, which remained inappropriate and consensual, more divided than conjoined from the characteristics of politeness. A citizen of the Empire

could act and behave in a completely natural manner within society as a prefect “homo austriacus”, feeling at the same time as a Slovenian, Czech, Pole, Jew, Croat and Italian. This was the case with my father. (Bettiza 2004, 32)

5 The Role of Language in Postcolonial Regions

The question of language presents itself in all postcolonial areas. In North America, postcolonial writers are left without a choice: the black community has completely lost ties to its “maternal African continent”, it has irreversibly lost its original languages and adopted the language of its “new homeland”. In the Caribbean, *patois* is incapable of competing with the English language. In postcolonial Africa, the principle matter of choice still exists because native languages are not totally lost. And so, whilst deliberating postcolonial literature, writes Zdenko Lesic, the Nigerian writer Achebe has set the question of language as crucial. Through an almost fatalistic reconciliation, Achebe wrote almost all his works in the language of his colonizers, but he attempted to “reformulate” the English language in his novels and stories, introducing many speech forms of his own lingual community (the Ibo peoples) into the texts, with the aim of constantly reminding his readers that what they are reading came to be in a significantly different cultural context from a European or English one. Typical “*transculturating*”. However, other African authors came to the conclusion that the colonizers’ languages were permanently “soiled”, and as such writing in English (or French) in its essence draws a colonial thought structure into the text. In other words, the revitalization of original African culture cannot be realized in the language of ex-colonizers. To them, it is specifically the colonizers’ language that represents the most lethal weapon with which Western imperialism subjugated the African people, a weapon being used even today to halt the rebirth of genuine African culture.

In that sense, it is interesting that postcolonial critics realized that the question of language in postcolonial literature presents itself in almost the same way as with certain Irish writers, which implies that the matter of language has deeper implications than merely race or coloring. W. B. Yeats, for example, repeatedly expressed his unease at having to use the English (colonial) language, in the same way that Stephen Daedalus ponders English in Joyce’s novel *A Portrait of the Artist as Young Man*. Namely, when a priest, an Englishman, rebukes him for using a local word, Stephen thought to himself: *the language I speak is more so his than mine... my soul is gnawing at itself in the shadow of his language.*

Just like postcolonial writers, Irish writers also experienced this lingual “difference” as a warning that the language they were using belonged to another, and would serve to constantly keep them in a state of subjugation unless they were to subject it to themselves.

6 In Relation to Another

Since Jacques Lacan, following Freud’s lead, challenged the Cartesian conception of an autonomous and integral human being which becomes conscious of himself and his existence through autoreflection, and based the subject’s identity upon the complicated relations he assumes towards others around him, the idea of others as a reflection in which, viewing others, we can see ourselves became an important and crucial part of modern critical consciousness, writes Zdenko Lešić. Namely, according to Lacan’s words, others are a place from which the question of his existence is placed before the subject. This idea, in addition to psychoanalytical theory and practice, within which it first appeared, continues Lešić, also had a strong impact within cultural theories which deal with the relationships amongst social, ethnic and racial groups and also within the modern approach to literature, especially postcolonial critique.

Naturally, people have always spoken of themselves and others, and in addition have always set up the same antithetical position, within which we present the “measure of all things”, because that which is normal, usual and right is determined in relation to us, while they, because of the very fact that they are the others, assume a place outside the system of adopted norms, because they are different from us and as such represent a deviation from the normal, usual and right. It is redundant to further emphasize how this position constantly breeds stereotypes in which people always harbor opinions of other races, other nations and other social classes.

Stereotypes can quickly multiply: nations view one another as others, religious groups see each other as such, lingual communities also have a similar mutual relationship, etc. That which should ideally be a whole (family, society, nation, people, humanity) disintegrates, notes Lešić, into pieces viewed as foreign amongst themselves. This attitude is not a question of choice, but rather subconscious. Because the ego is not a firm and stable headquarters of a unique individual system of perceptions and opinions, but is uncomfortably wedged between social and moral imperatives of oneself as a social being (that which is in Freudian terminology called the super-ego) and the biological demands

of one's animalistic nature (the so-called id). The ego is not an independent and self-conscious subject which knows precisely what it wants and wishes and which articulates its wants and wishes as it wants and wishes. He observes other and then finds his identity in relation to them. His subconscious then becomes completely articulated into language. The subconscious is "structured as language" anyway, as Lacan emphasized repeatedly. The ego enters into the symbolic systems of language in which it identifies both itself and others more with fixed markers than with live, dynamic, and variable realistic displays. The ego becomes I, the first person (either singular or plural) and cannot gain independence. Its identity is determined by the system within which it exists: I, you, he, she, it; we, you (pl.), they, it (pl.). Just as is the case in grammar, a subject within human society is always placed in relation to another (to you or you (pl.), and especially to him, her and them), and as such determined its identity.

In that basic psychological attitude, from which stereotypes regarding others are generated, Jacques Lacan recognized, notes Lešić, some deep psychological processes which, stemming from the depths of subconsciousness (whether individual or collective), manage occurrences not only within the human psyche but also within human society and culture. The subject seeks out confirmation of himself in relation to Another. He subconsciously projects his alternative, dark side upon the image of the Other. Thus, the Other is as essential to him as a mirror. In that sense, the Other really does become a sort of mirror, in which the subject finds his identity and establishes the integrity of his personality in relation to the image he harbors of the Other, an image he himself has subconsciously created (or one which has been created within his social grouping in the same manner).

When one crosses over from the realm of psychology into the realm of sociology with such ideas, it becomes evident that these psychological mechanisms transform into social and political mechanisms. Otherness becomes the basic ideology of our culture. At the same time, it establishes the basic position of our language, in which variable life experiences regarding others replace fixed lingual characteristics. In the classic colonial situation, "our culture" naturally implies Western European culture which became of the most powerful mechanisms through which European colonizers kept other nations oppressed, imposing their system of values as a universal norm and their language as a perfect instrument of communication. In the specific situation of our region, "our culture" found itself interacting with "another culture": the result of such an interaction may be interculturalism, but also forcefully enhancing small differences so as to clearly differentiate from one another. These are often symbolic differences which manufacture the notion of otherness. In order for the dichotomy amongst Dalmatians

to survive even after the collapse of Austria-Hungary, the “other” identity, Italian was artificially tied to the notion of Italian citizenship, Italian culture being one Dalmatians were inclined to although they only held a symbolic tie to it. As such, some Dalmatians became formally different in relation to the majority, although the reasons individuals listed for becoming strangers in their own country or even becoming closer tied to the majority were often outside the realm of identity.

My father's father, my grandfather's great grandfather, all autochthonous Dalmatians, belonged to an old entrepreneur family, important within our city's economic milieu, and also very influential in political and cultural circles because of our tradition and heritage. Other than that, my father and his youngest brother chose Italian citizenship following the collapse of Austria-Hungary and the creation of a new Yugoslavian kingdom, unlike the older and somewhat Hamlet-like bother Marino, a biased anarchic internationalist. The choice was not at all easy. On the contrary, a very painstaking one, discussed to the point of causing laceration between Dalmatian families harboring Italian culture and feelings. The word “choice” could have, in that time, acquired the meaning of two-fold separation, one within the city walls and another within family walls. Take for example the resigning decision of uncle Marino, who wrote philosophical notes in perfect Italian, a decision which opened a painful wound within his already distressed relations with his closest relatives. With quite founded evidence, he advocated the opinion that it was logical to adhere to historical fate, rather than resist it. It was therefore much more natural and useful to accept the transition for the archaic Austrian citizenship to the new Yugoslavian one, and not use choosing Italian citizenship as a means to go down the path of open separation from the Slavic majority. (Bettiza 2004, 33)

In order for the Italian identity to find confirmation of itself, some sort of “aid” was necessary for it to differentiate it from the majority: this aid was the Italian passport. Suddenly a “piece of paper” categorized an individual as “one of the others”:

Under Austria the word “under” was actually very relative, since all Dalmatians, whether they spoke Croatian or Italian, were Austrian citizens and enjoyed all the same rights. Under Yugoslavia, on the contrary, the word “under” could truly connote trouble for those ready to separate themselves from the majority of their fellow Slavic citizens with an Italian, or foreign, passport. For those who chose Italian citizenship at that time, it was truly as though

they had pledged against Yugoslavia, newborn from the dismembered Austria. Although it was a lovely and romantic choice, it was also impractical, harsh, a sort of self-deprecation, it was a challenge that brought the person into a situation where he was disagreeable in his own home. It is in this sentimental notary act of choosing citizenship where lie the first historical foundations of migration after World War II, the extinction of Italian Dalmatians, already forever disappeared from their own country. (Bettiza 2004, 33)

7 Suddenly Strangers

To Bettiza's family "Italy was first and foremost the West, technical and cultural emancipation, Fiat's first factories and D'Annunzio's free-minded novels." (Bettiza 2004, 36) The call of the Apennine Peninsula was a way of metaphorically escaping another peninsula, the Balkan one. Deeply ingrained prejudices toward that peninsula led to the birth of almost mystical ideas of Italy. Bettiza writes:

Only he who was born in Dalmatia can anatomize and reestablish, with his multiple incentives, that odd idealistic projection of national fervor from that side of the sea's horizon, which possessed the breath of the skewed and the seeming, like a tricolor dreamed rainbow which floats between two shores of the Adriatic. To many Dalmatians in that time, the dreams and images they created of Italy meant much more than the true Italy upon that other shore, the Italy of "natives" - which they didn't truly know. (Bettiza 2004, 36)

Seeking out self-identification in one of numerous warped forms, continues the writer "in a way replaced the inadequate certainty of a firm national identity, which was blissfully unaware of itself." (Bettiza 2004, 36) In other words "the desire for Italianism interwove with the desire to escape the primitive Balkan dreariness, distancing from the certain overtaking of local Slavdom, both of which represented a significant threat after Austrian cosmopolitanism" (Bettiza 2004, 36).

8 A Rival Alter Ego

The development and maintenance of any culture, wrote Edward Said in 1994, requires the existence of another difference and rival alter ego. The building of identity includes establishing opposition against the "other", whose reality is

always subject to constant interpretation and reinterpretation of his difference in relation to “ours”. Each period creates its “otherness” anew. Naturally, it isn’t the least bit odd that the most active and consistent authors to set up such a perspective in relation to literature and culture in general, were those who, through life circumstances, found themselves on the very border of That-sidedness, a feeling which Edward Said, a professor at an American university, a Palestinian by heritage, once described as such:

The feeling of being between two cultures has always been very, very strong within me. I would even say that it is the strongest thing to weave through my life: the fact that I am always simultaneously within and outside of things, and that nothing ever truly belongs to me.

This feeling of not belonging is exceptionally strong in Bettiza’s opus and in his view of the Eastern Adriatic coast’s Italian identity:

it was a quizzical, peripheral sort of Italianism, maybe more so cultural than ethnic, deeply coalesced with family, sons who during Austria’s rule couldn’t have any sort of direct educational contact with the true, genuine Italy. (Bettiza 2004, 32)

The base of all this, claims Bettiza, could have been

an ambiguous psychoideological paradox which was then surreptitiously spread across our regions; or perhaps an odd osmosis between the fervent and conscious feeling of Italianism, accepted at the spirit’s surface, and its secretive Slavic driving forces hidden amongst the corners of the soul. (Bettiza 2004, 36)

9 Orientalism

The most significant influence on postcolonial critique was to be had by Edward Said’s book *Orientalism* (1978). He was drawn by those critical analyses which saw literature as a field in which political and ideological battles took place. Said analyzed the European cultural tradition which he called “orientalism”, in which, as would be consistent, the Orient is described as something else, something different and as such inferior in relation to the West. In order to identify the Orient it is not necessary to refer to the Middle East: Southeastern Europe itself,

or the part today referred to as the Western Balkans by the European Union, is more than enough to motivate prejudices of the East. The impression is gained that old Europe, or the West undertakes all measures to keep these prejudices alive, so that the Balkans may remain “a powder keg” and so strengthen European integrity itself. In other words, the West needs a so-called “wild East” in order to keep faith in itself. Bettiza, even though he himself grew up in “Southeastern Europe”, doesn’t succeed in resisting the mythologizing of the Balkans which seems to begin right behind a hill in the outskirts of Split. Try as he might to prove the existence of a certain mutual, regional coast mentality, he still proves to need the existence of those “others” across the way...

The West’s attitude towards the East was interpreted by Said as a Lacanian obsession with others, in whose image one wishes to see a reversed image of himself. In the Western spirit, the Orient appears as “some type of surrogate or even underground singularity”, it becomes a sort of projection of those aspects of one’s own personality which Westerners wouldn’t acknowledge, such as roughness, sensuality, decadence, laziness, etc. At the same time, the East is viewed as a fascinating world of the exotic, mystical and seductive. And this is precisely the basic paradox of the West’s assumption of it: The East simultaneously repels and attracts it.

In his perception of the Balkans, Bettiza truly appears to be a Westerner, forgetting for a moment that he, too, is interesting in the Westerner’s eyes because he comes from the East and writes of this mystical East. Because every country, as Claudio Magris would say, has its Orient, something which is further East and something from which one should, at least seemingly, run from or at least maintain a distance. It is worthwhile to mention that there is no room for hatred within this framework, because images of the Balkans are realized precisely because of the Lacanian paradox: in the irresistible attraction to that which one sees as other. Said, in that sense following Lacan, recognized within this contrasting image a hidden, subconscious yearning for the “other”, which in a social sense turns into a desire to rule over another.

10 Conclusion

In the postcolonial perception of literature, the questions primarily imposed are ones regarding the contact of cultures that arose due to colonization or simply independent contact and interweaving. In addition, special attention is paid to the cultural differences between the worlds in contact, with the goal of

emphasizing values through incidents of hybridism and cultural polyvalence, in which individuals or groups simultaneously belong to more than one culture.

The basic attitude of postcolonial critique today is challenging globalization which is unable to evaluate cultures, social, regional and national differences, both through life and creative experience, and in the comprehension of life and creation.

In place of Eurocentric models, differences are affirmed. In that sense, the most consistent is Homi Bhabha who, in the book *The Location of Culture*, notes that the deciding factor in a postcolonial situation is the heterogeneity of modern culture, as well as the consciousness that we are living in a certain “hybrid” and duplicitous situation, i.e. something that is neither One or the Other. Enzo Bettiza, in his books on Dalmatia and Trieste, traced the path of certain classic postcolonial writers, such as Chinua Achebe or Salman Rushdie. While the latter is characterized by an ambiguous or hybrid identity created by the postcolonial situation, in Bettiza’s case history, at least in the consciousness of certain groups and individuals, left a significant mark of that identity halfway between formally conflicted sides. In *Exile*, the main protagonist is the author, whose unique personal situation can be applied to a broad spectrum of border identities: those who are both here and there, always between cultures, at the edge of the That-sidedness Lacan wrote of.

In part thanks to Bettiza’s interpretation of history and art, the distinction between centers and margins was eradicated: the so called margin proved that it could establish itself as an equal cultural center. One of the first goals of the postcolonial approach to literature is recognized in the aspiration to disintegrate stereotypical assumptions which nationally conflicting cultures built towards other nations. Although the Balkan myth somewhat survived in Bettiza’s case, his literary work manages to, contribute to the destruction of prejudices.

As such, otherness becomes an inexhaustible source of differences and wealth within those differences. Emphasis on dualism in identity, a hybrid nature of human personality, its inconsistency, represents a special trait present in Enzo Bettiza’s literary creation, whose “Dalmatian novels” then become a part of the world’s postcolonial literature, who paid special attention to matters of language and found within lingual differences a field which provides fruitful literary inspiration.

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NIVES ZUDIČ ANTONIČ

Educazione letteraria in prospettiva interculturale: presentazione di una ricerca svolta nella zona bilingue del Litorale sloveno

1 Introduzione

Per le caratteristiche culturali che troviamo in Istria e in particolare nella zona bilingue dell'Istria in cui operiamo, risulta chiaro che l'insegnamento della lingua deve essere collegato all'insegnamento della cultura. Per raggiungere tale obiettivo bisogna che l'insegnamento della lingua e della cultura prenda in considerazione i principi della continuità, della progressione e dell'espansione della competenza. Le prospettive da proporre dovrebbero essere dinamiche e interagire con i livelli di maturità dei discenti. Inoltre dovrebbero fornire una direzione agli insegnanti aiutandoli a valutare il livello di sviluppo degli studenti e, di conseguenza, a programmare il curriculum.

Se mettiamo al centro l'apprendimento della lingua e la sensibilità interculturale, allora la vera funzione dei programmi linguistici è mettere i nostri studenti a contatto con un'ampia varietà di dimensioni umane e con le loro molteplici modalità di espressione. Né la cultura né la lingua sono entità statiche; e non lo sono nemmeno le nostre interazioni con le persone. La sensibilità linguistica e interculturale ci consentono di andar oltre alle strutture della lingua, al loro uso o ai fatti culturali presi isolatamente; ci permettono di conoscere noi stessi e di

capire, accettare, rispettare e sviluppare empatia per l'altro. In questo modo, lo sviluppo della lingua e dell'intercultura implicano una presa di responsabilità sia da parte dell'insegnante che dello studente nel porsi in relazione con l'altro, promuovendo un processo che espande la consapevolezza e la perspicacia sui mondi linguistici e culturali. Tale posizione etica pone i programmi di lingua e cultura proprio al centro delle questioni della diversità e li rende fondamentali nell'esplorare, nel comprendere e nell'interagire con il multiculturalismo nel nostro paese e con il multiculturalismo nel mondo intero.

Per raggiungere tali principi però si deve iniziare già in classe a sviluppare un reciproco rispetto tra discenti e insegnanti. Sancire questa reciprocità permette infatti di riconoscere che in fondo sia l'insegnante che lo studente apprendono in classe, lavorando insieme, pur non essendo uguali. In tale contesto, sono entrambi responsabili, lo studente per scoprire che cosa ha bisogno di imparare e l'insegnante per scoprire come l'altro apprende una volta che scopre cosa deve essere appreso. Entrambi imparano, se pure in modo diverso. Si rispettano e apprendono l'uno dall'altro. Questo rispetto reciproco è un prerequisito sia per gli insegnanti che per gli studenti in un programma di lingua e cultura.

In questo articolo si cercherà pertanto di presentare le modalità per l'impostazione di un *curriculum* adeguato di lingua e cultura.

2 Proposta didattica: sviluppo delle competenze interculturali nei corsi di lingua seconda o straniera

Si sa che per conoscere bene una lingua bisogna far integrare il suo insegnamento ad altri codici che facilitino la comunicazione. Per far sì che la comunicazione sia efficiente pertanto oltre a conoscere la lingua bisogna disporre di altri codici adeguati alla comunicazione. Per tale motivo è di fondamentale importanza conoscere la propria cultura e la cultura del popolo la cui lingua si sta apprendendo.

Nel nostro territorio dove da sempre convivono e si intrecciano culture diverse, quasi tutti hanno una buona conoscenza dell'italiano. Facilitati dall'accettazione delle diverse culture e dalla padronanza della lingua nella comunicazione non ci troviamo davanti a barriere linguistiche, ma spesso dobbiamo affrontare problemi di incomprensione interculturale.

Dalle ricerche svolte in questi anni è scaturito che uno dei problemi principali incontrati dagli studenti risiede nell'incomprensione degli aspetti culturali impliciti del messaggio, più che nella propria elaborazione e comprensione linguistica del messaggio in L2.

Nell'ambito della lingua italiana come lingua di contatto (L2) abbiamo così sviluppato un modulo di cinque unità didattiche, i cui destinatari sono studenti del 2° e del 3° anno della Facoltà di Studi Umanistici di Capodistria che studiano l'italiano come L2 e come microlingua. Il modulo è stato elaborato nell'ambito del progetto *Labicum*¹. Nelle unità didattiche, con l'apporto di materiale autentico e l'uso di testi letterari, si è cercato di affrontare vari temi di attualità in diversi campi tematici (*Ti racconto il mio paese; Istria: dove le lingue si mescolano; L'identità nazionale; La terra promessa; Le frontiere che ci portiamo dentro*) (Zudič Antonič, Malčič 2007).

L'obiettivo delle unità didattiche è acquisire nuove conoscenze e sviluppare tutte le componenti della competenza comunicativa, partendo dal saper fare lingua, saper fare con la lingua, sapere la lingua, saper integrare l'italiano con le conoscenze delle similitudini e delle differenze tra le culture per facilitare la comunicazione interculturale. Le unità didattiche inoltre offrono allo studente la possibilità di un lavoro differenziato e autonomo. Con questo intervento si cercherà di far notare l'importanza di dover superare i vecchi modelli dell'insegnamento delle lingue che prediligevano usi, costumi, storia e cultura della nazione/popolo la cui lingua veniva insegnata e si cercherà di sottolineare l'importanza di dover sviluppare unità didattiche contenenti delle componenti dell'educazione interculturale e dell'educazione civica.

Con questo modulo si è cercato di rispondere all'esigenza del ruolo che dovrebbe avere l'educazione interculturale nell'ambito della lingua italiana in questa zona di confine (Italia/Trieste, Istria), dove la lingua e la cultura italiana per le varie vicissitudini storiche hanno un ruolo molto particolare.

3 Apprendere e insegnare la comunicazione interculturale

Secondo le ricerche di vari teorici di educazione interculturale, la competenza culturale deve essere acquisita nello stesso modo in cui si acquisisce la competenza

¹ Labicum (Language as a Bridge to Intercultural Communication & Understanding: Teaching Module), Čebren coordinatrice del progetto (2005-2007).

linguistica. Tuttavia sono proprio gli aspetti culturali e il loro studio in aula, a presentare le maggiori difficoltà, in quanto è molto più difficile affrontare temi culturali che quelli linguistici. Molto spesso ci si trova di fronte a questi problemi in quanto l'insegnante fa parte della cultura che insegna e non è nemmeno consapevole delle regole di condotta della propria cultura, oppure prende come modello la cultura oggetto di studio senza analizzare i processi che la rendono peculiare. Ci sono però insegnanti che vorrebbero affrontare tale insegnamento perché coscienti del problema, ma non sanno bene come affrontarlo. Essi stessi non hanno affrontato questo tipo di studio e la maggior parte dei manuali che hanno a disposizione non affronta questo problema o lo sviluppa in modo inadeguato.

A favore dell'acquisizione interculturale esistono alcuni studi (Balboni 1999; Byram 1994; Bennet 1993) che hanno dimostrato che quanti più errori fa uno straniero (linguistici o comportamentali), più tolleranza incontra nel mondo che lo accoglie. Questa tolleranza, però, scende man mano che aumenta il livello linguistico. Nel caso dei nostri studenti con una buona (se non ottima) padronanza della lingua italiana al momento di affrontare una situazione "reale" si troveranno, per così dire, svantaggiati, in quanto le aspettative degli italiani nei loro confronti saranno più alte e il loro livello di "tolleranza" minore. Il loro comportamento non adeguato all'aspettativa potrà pertanto essere frainteso e potrebbe venir "tagliato fuori" dal mondo dei madrelingua.

Nell'affrontare il discorso dell'educazione interculturale nell'ambito della lingua italiana come L2 non dobbiamo dimenticare che gli atteggiamenti comportamentali in culture vicine sono in molti casi simili, infatti sono la conseguenza di processi storici comuni. Questa realtà va presa in considerazione e nell'insegnamento della lingua bisogna puntare sulle somiglianze delle due culture più che sulle differenze. Questo approccio favorirà senz'altro l'acquisizione interculturale.

Per sviluppare pertanto i nostri percorsi didattici abbiamo preso spunto da vari autori che hanno sviluppato delle specifiche teorie sull'educazione interculturale (Byram 1989, 1994; Byram, Morgan 1994; Kramsch 1993; Balboni 1999, 2006, 2007) e abbiamo seguito le fasi che essi considerano necessarie per l'acquisizione delle abilità di comunicazione interculturale: consapevolezza, conoscenza e abilità (Balboni 1999)², e abbiamo così segnalato nel nostro lavoro quattro momenti che abbiamo poi riproposto nel lavoro didattico:

.....
 2 Questa definizione è stata ripresa da diversi autori come Byram e Bennett e si rifà all'affermazione di Hofstede (1991), per cui "l'abilità di comunicazione tra culture deriva dalla consapevolezza, dalla conoscenza e dall'esperienza personale".

1. fase di percezione iniziale (*Osservazione*),
2. fase di generalizzazione (*Esplorazione*),
3. fase di riflessione (*Espansione*),
4. fase di concettualizzazione (*Valutazione*).

Questo processo, in cui i discenti interagiscono e interpretano fenomeni culturali può essere rappresentato graficamente, secondo quanto suggerito da Allen e Lange (2003) nello *Schema 1*:



Schema 1:
Processo di apprendimento culturale.

Partendo dalla convinzione che il processo educativo inizia con il riconoscimento che ciascuno porta con sé un particolare *software* mentale³, che ha creato in base alle sue esperienze del mondo in cui è vissuto, è importante che nella prima fase di sviluppo e acquisizione delle abilità di comunicazione interculturale lo studente sia consapevole che per capire l'altra cultura non è sufficiente la conoscenza linguistica, ma bisogna imparare pure gli atteggiamenti comporta-

³ Il termine "software" riprende quello di un celebre volume di uno dei padri fondatori delle ricerche sulla comunicazione interculturale, Hofstede (1991); il termine è stato poi ripreso pure da Balboni (1999). Secondo Hofstede (1991), ogni persona ha un "software of the mind", costituito da una serie di "file di sistemi" che costituiscono la competenza comunicativa e ai quali si ricorre per poter partecipare ad un evento comunicativo.

mentali che fanno parte dell'altra cultura (iniziando dai loro simboli, i loro eroi, le loro abitudini).

Così, nella prima fase lo studente ha un ruolo di osservatore e mette in azione un processo di assorbimento di tutto ciò che è diverso. In questa prima fase si effettua un'osservazione dei valori di entrambe le culture, mettendo in risalto soprattutto i valori fondamentali della C₁ ("così faccio nella mia lingua, così mi comporto nella mia società").

Nella seconda fase (*Esplorazione*) lo studente analizza e confronta i valori della società osservata e individua le similitudini e le differenze con la sua cultura. Nel processo di acquisizione dei nuovi valori culturali è normale che compaiano i modelli appresi con l'input culturale ricevuto. Uno dei risultati immediati di questo tipo di confronti è la comparsa di certi stereotipi. D'altro canto, l'osservazione superficiale può portare a conclusioni sbagliate. Comunque, se il confronto si fa nel contesto adatto, può avere un valore pedagogico importante, da cui nasce la necessità di contestualizzare le comparazioni, in modo tale che l'osservatore straniero possa modificare il proprio punto di vista iniziale.

Tutti noi elaboriamo mentalmente degli stereotipi in modo tale da poter catalogare la realtà che ci circonda, e questi stereotipi sebbene siano falsi o difficilmente dimostrabili, condizionano la percezione che abbiamo delle altre culture. Siccome gli stereotipi possono essere spesso anche pericolosi è bene che gli insegnanti ne siano consapevoli per poter elaborare percorsi adeguati con i loro studenti per eliminarli o per lo meno riconoscerli.

Nella terza fase (*Espansione*) l'osservatore, attraverso nuove esperienze, va riformulando i suoi schemi iniziali, per esempio sapersi adeguare al tipo d'interazione sociolinguistica. In questa fase deve intervenire negli eventi quotidiani e ampliare le proprie conoscenze, dato che a partire da queste ed altre esperienze avrà luogo l'apprendimento induttivo e l'imitazione di certi modelli e schemi. In questo modo generalizzazioni fatte nella fase anteriore verranno modificate. L'acquisizione di questa competenza è però un processo lungo e complesso che lo studente sviluppa lungo tutto il corso della sua vita e non si conclude in classe.

Nella quarta fase (*Valutazione*), i discenti analizzano attentamente e sintetizzano le informazioni sul tema per entrambe le culture e giungono a una conferma o a una smentita della loro ipotesi iniziale. Inoltre, confrontano tale conferma o smentita con le loro percezioni iniziali al fine di determinare se quelle percezioni devono essere modificate. Apprezzando e giudicando le differenze pertanto si

dovrebbe arrivare a generare un meccanismo di comprensione empatica che viene avviata grazie alla ragione e ai sentimenti⁴.

Secondo le affermazioni di Byram (1997), per riuscire a ottenere un'acquisizione culturale per empatia è necessario vivere un'esperienza diretta di C2, partecipando a determinate cerimonie sociali, ecc. Comunque l'intervenire in fenomeni di natura socioculturale non implica necessariamente la comprensione di questi fenomeni. Se invece l'individuo viene orientato, sarà più facile che di fronte a un'esperienza reale la sua comprensione e acquisizione della C2 sia molto più alta e partecipi ai modi di interagire tipici della C1 (Balboni 1999).

Naturalmente il processo di acculturazione non è universale per tutti gli studenti: alcuni possono saltare delle fasi oppure non raggiungere la quarta fase descritta. Quindi "l'acculturazione può comprendere diversi stadi a seconda delle esigenze dell'apprendente: si può passare da un livello minimo di conoscenza di base per scopi necessari (livello soglia), fino ad un livello di parlante nativo dove la pronuncia e i gesti sono molto simili se non uguali a quelli dei nativi" (Celentin, Serragiotto 2000). Tutto dipenderà dall'orientamento positivo degli studenti verso la LS e il desiderio di essere parte del gruppo che parla la lingua, per cui nuovamente facciamo capo alla motivazione e la sua importanza nella classe di LS (Celentin, Serragiotto 2000; Lobasso, Pavan, Caon 2007).

4 Presentazione dei "Percorsi di educazione interculturale per la lingua Italiana" sviluppati nell'ambito del progetto LABICUM

Il modulo che abbiamo sviluppato nell'ambito della lingua italiana come L2, i cui destinatari sono studenti del 2° e del 3° anno della Facoltà di Studi Umanistici di Capodistria (che studiano l'italiano come L2 e come microlingua), comprende l'insegnamento e lo sviluppo della competenza interculturale. Nelle unità didattiche con l'apporto di materiale autentico si è cercato di affrontare vari temi di diversi campi tematici, che permettono allo studente di acquisire nuove conoscenze, scoprire le somiglianze e le differenze delle culture, conoscere modi

4 Secondo quanto propone Balboni (1999), la competenza comunicativa può essere visualizzata come una piramide a tre lati, ciascuno dei quali indica un "sapere" o "saper fare": saper fare lingua, saper fare con la lingua e sapere i linguaggi verbali e non-verbali. Byram e Zarate (1994), per definire la competenza interculturale, utilizzano un modello che si basa su quattro lati che prevede: saper essere (abbandonando l'etnocentrismo), saper apprendere (osservando la pluralità culturale del mondo), sapere i tratti caratterizzanti della cultura con cui si ha a che fare e saper fare una sintesi di quanto osservato nei punti precedenti.

diversi di comportamento, sviluppare un atteggiamento critico e imparare a capire il diverso. I temi che vengono affrontati dalle unità didattiche sono attuali e di particolare importanza per le culture di contatto: il problema della frontiera, il ruolo della patria, l'importanza dell'identità nazionale, le migrazioni un tempo e oggi, il ruolo della lingua ecc. Per le attività di classe è stato necessario attingere da materiali autentici e da una pluralità di fonti. A questo proposito abbiamo usato testi presi da giornali e riviste (articoli, fatti di cronaca, lettere, ecc.), materiali scaricati da internet (testi giornalistici, interventi in forum, pubblicità, ecc.), programmi e pubblicità registrati dalla tv, brani tratti da film e qualunque altro tipo di materiale potesse apportare qualche informazione sul referente culturale dell'italiano. In quanto ai materiali, la cosa importante è fare sì che gli studenti siano consapevoli delle possibilità di poterli reperire anche autonomamente, aspetto questo che gli sarà utile in futuro, perché in alcuni aspetti la cultura di un Paese può variare con enorme rapidità⁵.

Le unità didattiche sono state divise in tre momenti:

1. *Una prima fase introduttiva (Entriamo nel tema)* nella quale lo studente viene introdotto nell'argomento dell'unità didattica e riflette sulla propria cultura per arrivare a nuovi concetti. Siccome l'insegnante non potrà mai insegnare tutti gli aspetti dell'altra cultura, l'enfasi del suo insegnamento andrà posta su quegli aspetti di maggior contrasto tra la C₁ e la C_s.

2. *Nella seconda fase (Approfondimento)* lo studente osserva la nuova realtà (in modo da superare gli stereotipi culturali). Qui l'insegnante deve saper fare riflettere i suoi studenti sulla figura del sociotipo e aiutarli a sviluppare abilità e competenze che gli possono servire nella gestione di incontri interculturali.

3. *Nella terza fase (Espansione)* l'obiettivo è quello di fissare le nuove percezioni. Fondamentale in questa fase, è l'apprezzamento di possibili modelli diversi e la loro eventuale assunzione, riuscendo ad avere, così, una visione più oggettiva anche nei confronti della propria cultura.

Le attività di classe proposte escludono volutamente ogni tipo di attività esplicitamente grammaticale e puntano sulla comprensione audio e alla comprensione scritta (osservazione della nuova realtà culturale), l'espressione orale (riflessione e scambio di punti di vista), esercizi di lessico (per facilitare la comprensione) e, se occorre, sull'espressione scritta (sistema di correzione via e-mail al professore-guida).

⁵ L'insegnamento e l'apprendimento delle competenze interculturali ha un ruolo molto importante pure nell'educazione del singolo studente in quanto questo tipo di educazione fa sì che l'individuo cambi atteggiamento nei confronti della cultura e di conseguenza pure la società in cui esso vive subisce un cambiamento.

Il lavoro a coppie o in piccoli gruppi contribuisce solitamente a creare una buona atmosfera di cooperazione in classe e stimola la discussione e la consapevolezza tra gli studenti.

Le attività delle unità sono intese a incoraggiare gli studenti a scoprire da soli le cose mentre leggono. Tuttavia, ci sono momenti in cui si prevede che vengano date loro indicazioni esplicite e gli insegnanti possono sempre stimolare e guidare le risposte in caso di necessità.

Il lavoro autonomo (atto soprattutto alla ricerca di nuove informazioni) invece dovrebbe sviluppare un'autonomia nella ricerca delle nuove informazioni e dare allo studente la consapevolezza del suo apprendimento.

4.1 ANALISI DEI RISULTATI DEL PRIMO MONITORAGGIO

Nell'anno accademico 2004/2005 sono state monitorate durante le lezioni di lingua italiana settoriale, secondo la metodologia elaborata nell'ambito del progetto Labicum (Čok 2004, 2006), tre unità didattiche del modulo di lingua italiana (*Ti racconto il mio paese; L'identità nazionale; Le frontiere che ci portiamo dentro*). A conclusione di ogni unità didattica i 32 studenti del 2° e del 3° anno della Facoltà di Studi Umanistici, che seguivano il corso di lingua italiana settoriale, compilavano un questionario elaborato nell'ambito del progetto. Il questionario per l'(auto)valutazione delle competenze interculturali includeva, oltre ai dati personali degli studenti, pure i dati delle singole unità didattiche (adeguatezza dei contenuti, della lingua e delle attività) e l'analisi dell'acquisizione della competenza interculturale a livello cognitivo, emozionale e dinamico. A conclusione di ogni questionario si chiedeva inoltre agli studenti di apportare un commento personale sull'unità didattica in questione.

L'analisi dei questionari ha dimostrato che tutti gli studenti sono stati concordi nel dire che i temi delle singole unità didattiche sono adeguati e molto importanti per il loro studio, che sono interessanti e approfonditi. I testi presi in considerazione secondo il loro parere erano linguisticamente adeguati, molto interessanti e favorivano un adeguato consolidamento linguistico del lessico. Gli elementi più apprezzati dagli studenti sono stati la ricca varietà di testi e la dinamicità nel modo di proporli. Sono stati molto apprezzati pure gli spezzoni audio e video presi in considerazione nello svolgere le varie attività.

Un'importanza fondamentale hanno avuto per noi le risposte alle domande riguardanti l'introduzione e lo sviluppo della competenza della comunicazione interculturale. Le risposte hanno infatti confermato completamente quelle che

erano le nostre aspettative teoriche iniziali. Quello che ha sorpreso di più gli studenti è stato capire quanto sia importante avere delle competenze comunicative per una vera intesa interculturale. Hanno avuto inoltre modo di riflettere sulla propria cultura e sui propri modelli di comportamento, presenti nella vita di ogni giorno e dei quali in precedenza non si erano resi conto. Attraverso questa riflessione hanno modificato in parte il loro modo di pensare e sono diventati più critici anche verso se stessi e l'ambiente nel quale vivono (mentre prima la tendenza era quella di essere molto più critici nel confronto degli altri).

Queste conoscenze sono state un buon punto di partenza per il lavoro successivo in quanto li hanno motivati e incentivati a svolgere un lavoro autonomo più approfondito. Durante le attività previste in classe hanno comunicato sempre in L2 anche per discutere e paragonare le opinioni, e in questo modo hanno sviluppato un linguaggio critico. In modo particolare hanno apprezzato il fatto di partire sempre da se stessi, dal proprio ambiente che veniva poi paragonato all'altro, valorizzando l'importanza dei singoli momenti.

Molti hanno espresso il desiderio di lavorare in modo simile anche in futuro, certi che tale tipo di unità didattiche potevano contribuire a farli conoscere meglio se stessi e gli altri, ad allacciare contatti nel corso degli incontri con parlanti italiani, nonché nella continuazione degli studi e del lavoro.

Si sono sentiti arricchiti anche in seguito alla visita dei rappresentanti delle due minoranze (italiana in Slovenia e slovena in Italia) in quanto hanno avuto modo di paragonare le esperienze, i modi di vedere e la visione del futuro degli ospiti. Gli studenti hanno inoltre apprezzato la visita alla Radio e alla Televisione Koper - Capodistria, dove hanno conosciuto da vicino il lavoro specifico dei giornalisti di questa emittente.

4.2 LA VALUTAZIONE

Nella nostra proposta abbiamo riservato un ruolo di particolare importanza alla valutazione e all'autovalutazione, intesa come processo di apprendimento e di crescita dello studente. La valutazione, vista in questi termini, porta automaticamente al centro dell'attenzione il bisogno del singolo discente di diventare un utilizzatore competente della lingua, in quanto ognuno arriva al processo di apprendimento di lingua e di cultura con un proprio bagaglio e un insieme di esperienze specifiche. Di conseguenza, l'insegnamento è un adattamento ai singoli discenti affinché ognuno di loro possa raggiungere degli obiettivi che sono stati predefiniti in termini generali. Nel contesto degli obiettivi della Cultura, la lingua

è lo strumento attraverso il quale si conferisce significato ai modelli di interazione sociale e agli strumenti (libri, cibo, leggi, musica, giochi) di un'altra cultura e, si creano e si comunicano le percezioni. Oltre a percepire significati, il discente si aspetta di comprendere gli atteggiamenti, i valori, le idee e i modelli di interazione sociale degli altri. Per l'insegnante, l'aspettativa è quella di guidare i discenti verso questi obiettivi e di valutarne la competenza. Nonostante abbiano entrambi un ruolo attivo, l'insegnante non è più responsabile del risultato dell'insegnamento, in quanto l'attenzione è basata sulla prestazione dello studente e di conseguenza sarà sua la responsabilità del risultato.

La responsabilità dell'insegnante è quella di guidare il discente attraverso le necessarie prestazioni tramite i suggerimenti e i compiti che vengono suggeriti dagli obiettivi. La valutazione e l'insegnamento pertanto si integrano nel momento in cui il conoscere è collegato a ricevere, rispondere, valorizzare, organizzare e caratterizzare. L'apprendimento richiede quindi applicazione, analisi, sintesi e valutazione oltre a conoscenza e a comprensione. La valutazione, nel contesto dell'apprendimento, offre così l'opportunità per *feedback* onesti e compiti autentici, al fine di condurre i discenti verso una comprensione più completa della cultura che stanno affrontando.

Come punto di riferimento per organizzare la nostra proposta ci siamo avvalsi della *pianificazione all'indietro* (Wiggins 1998) in quanto riteniamo che questa sottolinei in modo particolare la prestazione del discente. In tal modo, il curriculum, la valutazione e l'insegnamento sono basati sulla prestazione del discente in un diverso tipo di articolazione del programma: curriculum = valutazione = insegnamento.

Partendo da questo presupposto dobbiamo essere costantemente consapevoli di come questi tre siano collegati per far sì che le prestazioni degli studenti raggiungano gli obiettivi attesi.

Partendo allora dall'idea che nell'approccio all'apprendimento il discente deve avere un ruolo centrale, la nostra proposta di valutazione acquisisce lo scopo di insegnamento. Questo uso della valutazione fa sì che i discenti:

- vengano valorizzati per le loro conoscenze, per i loro processi e per i loro errori;
- conoscano e facciano pratica delle conoscenze e delle abilità che usano nelle attività di apprendimento e abbiano familiarità con le prove di valutazione;
- siano coinvolti nello sviluppo di attività e nella scelta delle strategie di apprendimento;
- ricevano *feedback* onesti, immediati e appropriati sia nelle condizioni di apprendimento che in quelle di valutazione;

- conoscano i mezzi di valutazione e le scale di punteggi ad essi applicati prima dell'istruzione e della valutazione;
- applichino individualmente sia i mezzi di valutazione che le scale di punteggi appropriate al loro apprendimento.

Queste affermazioni individuano una relazione fondamentale tra il discente e l'insegnante. Suggestiscono un ambiente in cui il discente è rispettato, valorizzato e trattato da essere umano, allo stesso modo dell'insegnante. Tale ambiente conferisce valore all'interazione tra lingua e cultura in un'atmosfera in cui può avvenire un apprendimento e un insegnamento di qualità.

Nella nostra proposta inoltre abbiamo utilizzato l'auto-valutazione dello studente considerandola la chiave per l'educazione autentica. Facendo uso dell'auto-valutazione i discenti applicano "obiettivi e criteri conosciuti, chiari, pubblici e non arbitrari" alle loro stesse prestazioni. Tale opportunità permette ai discenti di prepararsi per i giudizi su se stessi che saranno chiamati a formulare nella loro vita adulta. Essi non sono dei semplici spettatori ma sono impegnati nel campo in cui agiscono (Čok 2006).

Allo stesso tempo, usando costantemente durante le attività di classe l'auto-valutazione, i discenti sviluppano la fiducia in se stessi e la capacità di esprimersi mentre leggono, capiscono o risolvono problemi reali in un determinato campo. Mettendosi alla prova con problemi autentici, esprimendo le proprie percezioni e ricevendo feedback appropriati generano inoltre un apprendimento di tipo sofisticato.

L'auto-valutazione aiuta pure i discenti a capire che la loro comprensione di un tema viene valutata meglio quando vengono esaminate le loro risposte. Un tema non si comprende attraverso una sola domanda bensì tramite una lunga serie di domande. Le domande cominciano all'inizio dell'apprendimento in un qualsiasi campo e continuano ad essere parte del processo di apprendimento, da cui l'importanza del concetto di curriculum ciclico⁶.

6 Alcuni ricercatori europei si sono dichiarati favorevoli alla realizzazione di compiti di mediazione transculturale, i quali consentirebbero all'insegnante di valutare abilità di cultura generale come l'empatia, la tolleranza, la capacità di sospendere il giudizio e di adottare il punto di vista di qualcun altro. Al fine di valutare questi tipi di apprendimento meno tangibili (ad esempio, lo sviluppo dell'empatia), Byram e Morgan (1994) hanno proposto la seguente scala a cinque livelli: (1) rifiuto della cultura straniera; (2) spiegazione fornita ma "dall'esterno"; (3) spiegazione "dall'interno"; (4) "genuino tentativo di ricreare una visione del mondo estranea"; e (5) "riconoscimento del fatto che la visione del mondo di ciascuno è culturalmente condizionata". Gli autori indicano anche dei criteri nuovi e flessibili per valutare la conoscenza culturale, come l'accuratezza, la precisione, la rilevanza del materiale fattuale, il riconoscimento della diversità e la mancanza di stereotipi. Damen (1987) presenta quattro tipi di tecniche di valutazione per l'apprendimento culturale: la descrizione di sé; la messa in scena (come i giochi di ruolo o le simulazioni); la produzione di materiali (temi o lettere); e l'osservazione delle situazioni in cui lo studente dimostra abilità culturali specifiche, da parte dell'insegnante o di altri studenti.

I discenti apprendono anche che le idee, le teorie e i sistemi non sono entità fisse e immutabili. Possono e devono essere messe alla prova e contestate.

Attraverso la valutazione degli altri e attraverso l'auto-valutazione i discenti apprendono il valore dell'onestà intellettuale e del coraggio personale e imparano a distinguere tra quello che conoscono e quello che non conoscono⁷.

Una volta impostato il lavoro in questo modo non è più possibile proporre un insegnamento di lingua seconda con nozioni di cultura con un approccio casuale. Se il curriculum è pianificato sulla base di obiettivi e sulla base di prove di competenza presentate dai discenti, allora l'insegnamento non può essere più rivolto all'intero gruppo, ma deve essere adattato ai bisogni e ai talenti dei singoli discenti. È necessaria allora maggiore interazione con i discenti per acquisire le conoscenze e le abilità che contribuiscono alla realizzazione delle prestazioni richieste. Bisogna operare una svolta decisiva nell'insegnamento per passare da una situazione di grande gruppo controllato dall'insegnante a una situazione di ampio coinvolgimento dell'insegnante nell'apprendimento individuale controllato dai discenti.

La nuova direzione nell'apprendimento culturale si concentra sulla prestazione del discente con gli strumenti, con i modelli di interazioni sociali e le prospettive. Questa nuova direzione pone l'insegnante in un ruolo di guida dell'apprendimento e inserisce l'apprendimento all'interno delle abilità, degli atteggiamenti e delle capacità dei discenti stessi.

4.3 ESEMPIO DI AVUTO-VALUTAZIONE

Le griglie che abbiamo elaborato per le unità didattiche sono degli esempi di come poter usare l'auto-valutazione con uno scopo di insegnamento. La loro implicazione, pur fungendo nel nostro caso solo come linee guida generali per la valutazione, stabilisce un atteggiamento più etico nei confronti degli studenti, un atteggiamento che consente loro di capire *cosa* deve essere appreso e *come*, in un'atmosfera che valorizza l'apprendimento dello studente. In tale contesto, la valutazione di solito utilizza le prestazioni degli studenti come prove da giudicare sulla base di determinati obiettivi.

La nostra proposta pertanto si basa su una valutazione continua e formativa di una serie di attività. Durante le varie attività delle unità didattiche, viene più

⁷ Questi presupposti, dai quali siamo partiti, per elaborare la nostra proposta di auto-valutazione, vengono descritti in modo dettagliato da Wiggins (1993) e anzi rappresentano le questioni fondamentali trattate nel suo testo. Nel nostro progetto (Labicum) invece sono stati elaborati da Čok (2006).

volte chiesto agli studenti di fare dei rimandi all'indietro per rivedere e cambiare o riconfermare le loro opinioni. A conclusione di ogni unità didattica poi si invita il discente ad auto-valutarsi. Le verifiche tendono a valutare soprattutto in modo qualitativo gli effetti ottenuti. Per la verifica di alcune competenze linguistiche si ricorre invece a metodi di valutazione classici.

L'auto-valutazione avviene con l'aiuto del portfolio. Questo fa sì che la valutazione acquisisca un altro valore: oltre a valutare i livelli di competenza raggiunti dal singolo studente, funge pure da stimolo per capire l'importanza che può avere l'educazione interculturale nell'insegnamento e per portare all'evolversi dell'empatia.

4.4 ALTRE PROPOSTE DI INSEGNAMENTO INTERCULTURALE

Negli ultimi anni presso la nostra Università, oltre al progetto Labicum, di cui abbiamo già ampiamente parlato in questo capitolo al punto 4, sono stati portati avanti molti altri progetti che avevano come scopo, oltre all'educazione linguistica, pure quella interculturale. In particolare vorremmo però presentarne ancora sei e precisamente:

1. Progetto Europeo COMENIUS: *Promozione delle lingue minoritarie nelle aree plurilingui riguardo alla formazione dei docenti (2003-2007)*, Facoltà dell'Educazione dell'Università del Litorale.
2. Progetto Europeo COMENIUS: *INFO – Individuazione di un modello di formazione in aree plurilinguistiche (2005-2007)*, Facoltà di Studi Umanistici dell'Università del Litorale.
3. Progetto Europeo PHARE CBS Slovenia/Italia: *I giovani negli ambiti interculturali (2003)*, Facoltà di Studi Umanistici dell'Università del Litorale.
4. Progetto Europeo: *PERMIT - Promote Education and Reciprocal Understanding Through Multicultural Integrated Teaching (2008-2009)*;
5. Progetto transfrontaliero Slovenia – Italia: *JEZIK-LINGUA - Plurilinguismo quale ricchezza e valore dell'area transfrontaliera italo-slovena (2007-2014)*.
6. Progetto Operativo per la Cooperazione transfrontaliera Italia-Slovenia: *EDUKA – Educare alla diversità (2007-2014)*⁸.

8 Coordinatrice per la Slovenia dei progetti al n. 1, 2, 5 e 6 è stata l'autrice di questo articolo (Zorman, Zudič Antonič, 2005; Zudič Antonič, 2011), per il progetto al n. 3 la coordinatrice è stata Vesna Mikolič (Mikolič, Pertot, Zudič Antonič, 2006), mentre per il progetto al n. 4 la coordinatrice è stata Neva Čebon (Čebon, 2012).

Nell'ambito di tutti i progetti sono stati creati dei materiali didattici di uso scolastico e di diffusione più ampia sull'educazione interculturale.

4.4.1 I PRIMI DUE PROGETTI

Per quanto riguarda i primi due progetti, prendendo spunto dai bisogni emersi dalle ricerche svolte e dalle teorie glottodidattiche, abbiamo preparato del materiale didattico articolato in più direzioni, con più scopi e più destinatari, perché abbiamo pensato che avrebbe potuto essere utile anche ad allievi di altre aree geografiche interessati ad apprendere la lingua italiana o slovena (nel primo caso); nel secondo invece la scelta delle lingue è stata ampliata e accanto alle lingue slovena e italiana sono state aggiunte anche il tedesco e due varianti di ladino (quello della Val di Fassa e quello della Val Badia).

Nel primo caso per sviluppare il materiale didattico abbiamo scelto un libro scritto da un giovane scrittore locale Vanja Pegan e tradotto in italiano e illustrato dalla pittrice Fulvia Zudič *Giovanin e la farfalla* (*Citronček in Giovanin*).

Nel secondo caso per sviluppare il materiale didattico abbiamo scelto il libro *Arabella*, scritto da un gruppo di alunni della Scuola Elementare Vincenzo e Diego de Castro di Pirano.

I due testi, in verità molto brevi, avevano tutte le caratteristiche per poter sviluppare un discorso didattico interessante, vicino ai bambini e allo stesso tempo offrivano tanti spunti anche per sviluppare percorsi interculturali.

I bambini iniziano ad avvicinarsi alla lingua seconda (o straniera) in età in cui il gioco rappresenta ancora un momento fondamentale per l'apprendimento e la scoperta del mondo che li circonda, abbiamo pertanto pensato di sviluppare del materiale che li coinvolgesse quanto più. Con l'utilizzo del linguaggio multimediale abbiamo ritenuto di consentire inoltre un apprendimento altamente stimolante della lingua. Il mezzo interattivo rispetta infatti i ritmi e le capacità individuali del bambino, offrendogli la possibilità di esercitarsi continuamente, recuperando il materiale didattico presente nel CD-ROM, e, soprattutto, di partecipare in maniera "interattiva" alle attività linguistiche.

Genitori e insegnanti possono seguire e focalizzare il percorso di apprendimento linguistico dei bambini attraverso brevi spiegazioni e semplici esempi tratti dal testo.

Il materiale didattico interattivo che proponiamo cercherà di fornire momenti di comunicazione in diverse situazioni e contesti stimolanti, vicini alle esperienze dei bambini e dei ragazzi. Il materiale è stato elaborato principalmente allo scopo

di dare priorità alle abilità orali: ascoltare e comprendere il testo e rielaborare le strutture apprese.

Con questo materiale didattico si è inoltre voluto dare un contributo allo sviluppo della sensibilità interculturale nella classe di lingua (che si tratti di L1/ L2 o di Ls). Abbiamo pertanto voluto offrire delle linee guida sull'esempio del *comprendere la diversità, l'altro, per poter sviluppare amicizia* e se tali principi verranno applicati all'apprendimento e all'insegnamento della lingua e della cultura nel futuro, ciò andrà sicuramente a beneficio dei nostri allievi.

Il materiale didattico è composto da un libro in forma cartacea e dal CD-ROM in cui sono inserite le attività di comprensione e riflessione testuale e di educazione interculturale.

Usando il CD-ROM (bilingue nel primo caso o multilingue nel secondo) l'utente sceglie la lingua, sloveno o italiano (primo caso, o anche tedesco o ladino, nel secondo caso) e procede poi nell'avventura.

Una volta scelta la lingua gli si presenterà l'indice nella lingua scelta (qui riportiamo l'esempio dell'italiano) con le varie sezioni previste nel CD-ROM:

C'era una volta ...

Ti ricordi?

Secondo te...

Educazione interculturale

Nella sezione *C'era una volta...* viene proposto l'ascolto - lettura del testo con l'immagine del libro e la scritta sotto.

Nella sezione *Ti ricordi?* Vengono proposte attività di comprensione del testo appena ascoltato con delle domande a scelta multipla elaborate in modo che all'alunno viene data subito conferma se la risposta è esatta o meno in modo interattivo. Anche qui accanto ad ogni domanda viene riproposta l'immagine del testo.

Nella sezione *Secondo te...* vengono proposte alcune attività in cui gli alunni devono dare dei giudizi in base alle loro impressioni e conoscenze. La sezione è divisa in due parti: una prima parte con domande a scelta multipla (come nella sezione *Ti ricordi?*) e una seconda parte in cui vengono proposte agli alunni delle attività di riflessione sulle differenze tra passato e presente con illustrazioni e risposte aperte alle quali gli alunni possono rispondere in un primo momento oralmente e poi anche in forma scritta.

L'ultima sezione riguarda *l'Educazione interculturale*. Pure questa sezione propone due tipi di attività. Per quanto riguarda il primo progetto le prime attività riguardano l'uso della lingua nella nostra regione e le sue peculiarità, mentre le

seconde riguardano le caratteristiche della città (culturali, architettoniche, usi e costumi, ecc.).

Per il secondo progetto invece le prime attività riguardano le diversità che possono esistere tra culture diverse e con esse si è cercato di far riflettere i bambini sul problema dell'intolleranza e sul fattore negativo rappresentato dal pregiudizio. Il secondo gruppo di attività riguarda le caratteristiche del gioco (di oggi e di ieri, culturali, ecc.).

Questo materiale didattico (il libro interattivo) può essere usato in classe, dove l'insegnante può gestire il lavoro con gli alunni che lavorano individualmente o in piccoli gruppi al computer, oppure proponendo il lavoro in modo frontale proiettando il materiale attraverso il proiettore LCD e lavorando poi individualmente o divisi in piccoli gruppi. Il materiale può anche essere utilizzato autonomamente dall'alunno che, se più piccolo, può essere aiutato a casa dai genitori, se più grande, può fare invece tutto da solo. Abbiamo anche pensato di elaborare le attività didattiche nelle due lingue per due motivi (o in più lingue nel secondo caso): il primo è naturalmente quello di imparare l'altra lingua (o migliorare la propria madrelingua), il secondo motivo consiste nel fatto che così l'alunno ha la possibilità di andare a ricercare da solo nel testo proposto nella sua madrelingua le cose che non ha capito e giungere autonomamente alle conclusioni.

Questo materiale cartaceo e interattivo dovrebbe essere solo un esempio per gli insegnanti, che lo potranno poi integrare con ulteriori approfondimenti e materiali. Inoltre con questi due progetti si è pensato di creare un sito internet nel quale gli insegnanti potranno trovare i nostri suggerimenti e inserire i propri materiali.

4.4.2 PROGETTO PHARE

Nell'ambito di questo progetto si è cercato di elaborare un modello di educazione interculturale. Obiettivo principale era quello di elaborare degli approcci per consapevolizzare i giovani all'educazione interculturale nell'ambito dei contatti culturali della nostra zona di qua e di là dal confine (Istria slovena e Friuli Venezia Giulia).

A conclusione del progetto è stato pubblicato un libro bilingue *Tra lingue e culture/Med kulturami in jeziki* nel quale si è cercato di illustrare la realtà di questa zona di confine e di dare dei suggerimenti per avviare l'educazione interculturale.

La pubblicazione comprende cinque capitoli centrali: *Italiani e sloveni lungo il confine*, *La scuola di minoranza*, *L'educazione interculturale*, *Bambini plurilingui*,

Vivere la multiculturalità. Come è stato sottolineato dalla Čok, l'obiettivo delle autrici di questa pubblicazione è quello di "porre l'attenzione su alcuni temi che favoriranno una migliore conoscenza e comprensione della politica della convivenza, del multiculturalismo e della pluralità culturale nell'ambiente in cui operano insegnanti, genitori e in generale cittadini lungo il confine italo-sloveno".

La pubblicazione non è comunque rivolta solo a esperti oppure ai cittadini di questa zona, ma anche a coloro che affrontano il discorso interculturale per la prima volta, come ad es. a visitatori occasionali che arrivano in questa regione o agli studenti della nostra università che sempre più numerosi arrivano in questa zona dall'interno della Slovenia e da altri stati e che non conoscono la realtà linguistica e culturale di queste terre.

Visto che molti dei nostri studenti hanno ben poca consapevolezza degli aspetti della loro vita legati alla loro cultura con questo lavoro si è voluto sottolineare il fatto che attraverso lo studio e la consapevolezza della realtà linguistica e culturale, dovrebbero cominciare a cogliere aspetti della loro propria cultura e ad acquisire una conoscenza più ampia sulla visione della *cultura* come concetto. Le informazioni che propone la pubblicazione sulla minoranza italiana in Slovenia e quella slovena in Italia, le loro caratteristiche e specificità, con suggerimenti concreti su come stimolare e sviluppare l'educazione interculturale e con argomenti interessanti che riguardano le due minoranze e la popolazione di maggioranza, dovrebbero portare a quella che potrebbe essere la base vera e propria dell'educazione interculturale e, al contempo, rappresentare il culmine di tutte le esperienze dello studio di altre lingue e di altre culture.

Da quanto è stato detto si può dedurre che l'obiettivo centrale del progetto, ma anche di questo lavoro in genere, è quello di sviluppare la consapevolezza della propria cultura e il confronto interculturale facendo riferimento a tre principali processi di apprendimento:

1. l'esplorazione da parte dei discenti della loro propria cultura;
2. la scoperta della relazione tra lingua e cultura;
3. l'apprendimento degli strumenti di ricerca per analizzare e confrontare le culture.

Ciò significa offrire opportunità per l'interazione in modo che i membri della cultura oggetto di studio possano trasmettere il loro modo di vedere le cose al discente.

4.4.3 PROGETTO PERMIT

Il progetto PERMIT ha avuto come fine ultimo la migliore conoscenza e cooperazione interculturale fra ricercatori, docenti e studenti dei paesi partner (Turchia, Italia e Slovenia), in un'azione che promuova l'integrazione della Turchia nel quadro europeo; avendo come obiettivo la costruzione di una rete di collaborazione tra docenti appartenenti ai vari paesi partner tramite la sperimentazione nelle ultime due classi dell'istruzione secondaria superiore, di unità formative relative all'area scientifica, all'area umanistica e delle lingue straniere (inglese).

L'obiettivo strategico del progetto erano soprattutto quello di rinforzare il dialogo sociale attraverso l'introduzione di processi di qualità in educazione e rinforzare contatti e scambi di esperienze tra università partner sui valori culturali (soprattutto nelle scienze sociali e in storia) che influenzano l'insegnamento secondario nei paesi partner.

Nell'ambito del progetto sono pertanto stati organizzati corsi di formazione per docenti e sono stati organizzati scambi tra studenti di origine turca ed europea, dando loro la possibilità di avere contatti diretti, on line e in presenza. A conclusione del corso di formazione sono stati elaborati dei materiali didattici che sono stati pure sperimentati nelle classi delle scuole secondarie coinvolte nel progetto e sono stati poi pubblicati in un manuale per docenti per facilitarne la diffusione.

4.4.4 PROGETTO JEZIK-LINGUA

Nell'ambito di questo progetto sono state avviate alcune attività rivolte alla promozione e alla diffusione della lingua. In collaborazione con il Dipartimento di Scienze del Linguaggio dell'Università Ca' Foscari di Venezia è stato realizzato per tre anni un corso di lingua slovena e in questo modo è stata pure rafforzata la collaborazione tra i due atenei. Sempre da questa collaborazione è stata poi realizzata una ricerca tesa a individuare quegli elementi comunicativi, verbali e non verbali, che possono risultare particolarmente problematici nell'ambito comunicativo. La ricerca era finalizzata ad individuare aspetti critici nella comunicazione interculturale che avviene tra sloveni ed italiani (e viceversa) e sono poi stati sviluppati materiali validi per lo sviluppo dell'attività di supporto nell'ambito dello svolgimento della didattica dello sloveno e dell'italiano come lingua straniera.

Nell'ambito del progetto inoltre sono stati organizzati dei laboratori linguistici per docenti e per studenti nonché è stato pubblicato un volume che presenta l'impronta del ricco patrimonio culturale istro-veneto del territorio.

4.4.5 PROGETTO EDUKA

Il progetto EDUKA è finalizzato alla promozione dei valori interculturali, in quanto fondamentali per la formazione e lo sviluppo dei rapporti nella società multietnica e multilingue. L'obiettivo del progetto EDUKA è quello di creare le conoscenze e gli strumenti (materiale didattico e informativo, manuali, pubblicazioni, giochi, ecc.) per l'educazione alla diversità e all'interculturalità nell'ambiente scolastico e universitario e di trasmetterli in particolare ai giovani e ai docenti in tutti i livelli d'educazione. A tal fine sono state realizzate reti di collaborazione transfrontaliera tra scuole a tutti i livelli, enti di ricerca e università, enti pubblici ed enti che operano nel campo dell'educazione interculturale nonché organizzazioni facenti capo alle minoranze tradizionali e a quelle nuove. Tali enti hanno dato luogo ad attività educative, informative, promozionali e di ricerca. Particolare attenzione è stata rivolta alla concreta applicazione dell'educazione interculturale tenendo conto sia delle minoranze tradizionali (in particolare di quella italiana in Slovenia e quelle slovena e friulana in Italia) sia delle nuove minoranze o gruppi di migranti.

5 Conclusioni

Con questo articolo abbiamo cercato di offrire un contributo al dibattito sull'applicazione dello sviluppo della sensibilità interculturale nella classe di lingua seconda. La nostra proposta, partendo dalla necessità di conoscere prospettive teoriche di riferimento che guidino l'apprendimento, vuole offrire delle linee guida da poter usare in classe.

I motivi per cui la conoscenza dei modelli comportamentali tipici delle altre culture è insufficiente sono molteplici e non possono essere trattati unicamente nell'ambito dell'educazione linguistica in quanto essi sono in stretta connessione con la famiglia, la società in genere e le determinate circostanze storiche, ecc. Spesso è presente nelle persone una sorta di nazionalismo esagerato per cui si ritiene che tutto ciò che ci appartiene e fa parte della nostra cultura sia migliore di ciò che è nuovo, diverso. Questi atteggiamenti negativi nei confronti delle

differenze culturali non potranno scomparire fintantoché non saremo pronti ad accogliere, comprendere ed approfondire la conoscenza del diverso.

Introducendo l'educazione interculturale sin dai primi anni di insegnamento della lingua contribuiremo in larga misura all'inclusione del singolo nella società che lo circonda.

Sarà quindi compito degli insegnanti non tanto quello di fornire dei modelli definiti, ma quello di guidare gli studenti ed aiutarli nella scoperta di nuovi modelli capaci di aprire loro nuovi orizzonti e di portarli a nuove conoscenze. In questo modo sia insegnanti che studenti saranno coscienti della necessità di continuare in modo permanente ad accrescere le proprie competenze sia linguistiche che interculturali.

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KATARINA DALMATIN

Imaginary Dalmatia and its Women in the Transadriatic Mirror of Italian Writers

1 Introduction

The main impulse for analyses done in this paper has been the recent research by Croatian Italianist N. Raspudić, who in his book “Transadriatic Semiorientalism” analyses the dominant tradition in Italian literature of considering Croats as Others with regard to their own “European” and “higher” civilization. In his book he gives numerous examples how that discourse, the characteristics of which is asymmetrical relation of power between the two coasts, perpetuates and becomes stronger in the frame of continuous tradition since the 18th century. His research has isolated a few models of constructing the picture of Croats as belonging to a culture of inferior rank and pointed out to intertextual complexity of that discourse, found not only in literature and journalism but in historiography as well. With some variations, dictated by context, that discourse follows the models of general westeuropean orientalism, enriched in the twentieth century by westeuropean negative discourse about Balkan. The examples of Italian writers who in the nineties of the 20th century thematize Dalmatia and Dalmatian women from their intimal, autobiographic perspective, clearly demonstrate how some common places of that discourse can have a decisive role in the formation of autobiographical identities.

2 Orientalistic Presentation of Dalmatian Woman in the Italian 18th Century Literature

In his book “Venice and the Slavs in the Age of Enlightenment” American historian L. Woolf analyzes the phenomenon which he calls “the discovery of eastern Europe” and finds its roots in the discovery of Dalmatia by the Venetian enlightenment. According to him Venetian discovery of the Morlaks in the very heart of Europe is only a part of the wider westeuropean attitude towards that art of the continent. Woolf emphasizes the fact that the Venetian empire in Dalmatia shows all characteristics of an imperial relation and indicates how Venice produced richly elaborated imperial ideology on that small territorial basis (Woolf 2001, 6). The expression semi-colonial used by him to describe the Venetian rule over Dalmatia in the eighteenth century has been taken over from the Italian historian M. Berengo who is referred to by other younger Italian historians as well (Berengo 1954). Woolf’s analyses of the Venetian semi-orientalistic discourse does not take into consideration only the ways and forms of Venetian rule, but also the ways of presenting and articulating of Dalmatian themes within cultural perspectives of the Venetian enlightenment. In that construction of the imperial ideology, the crucial point is the mapping of the geography of backwardness in order to justify the imperatives of the economic development. In connection with this Woolf also emphasizes how the asymmetry between continental Italian and transadriatic territories of the Venetian Republic proved its identity in the ideological articulation of the diversity of Dalmatia, emphasizing either its economic backwardness, anthropological barbarism or foreign nationality. He lays special stress on the fact that Dalmatia was a mixture of Italian and Slav elements with different social and economic levels from the towns on the sea shore to the mountains in the inland (Woolf 2001, 8). That complex composition of national, social, territorial and linguistic-cultural elements (since the nineteenth century nationally coloured as well) is in the semi-orientalistic discourse simplified and reduced to an axis, on one pole of which stands the Venetian urban centre and on the other the Morlacs from the mountains of the Dalmatian inland. Such discursive practice is found in the works of two Italian authors of the 18th century: A. Fortis’s itinerary “Travels into Dalmatia” and C. Gozzi’s “Futile Memories”, in which a presentation of Dalmatian women takes a significant part. All researchers of Croato-Italian connections up to the present agree that Fortis’s work represents a turning-point in Italian presentation of the eastern coast of the Adriatic. Croatian romanist Mirko

Tomasović writes how the “Travel into Dalmatia” “was for the West of Europe for a long time the main information about the whole Slavic South, by which we were measured and recognized” (Tomasović 1993, 138). Vito Morpurgo sees in Fortis a researcher that “opened the door of the Balkan Peninsula to the scientists of his generation, as well as to those of the future one” (Morpurgo 1970-71). Fortis’s Croatian reception, with rare exceptions, is mainly directed to give due appreciation to the author who was the first in enlightened Europe to turn attention to Croatian land and people. That same horizon is followed by Žarko Muljačić, the Croatian Italianist that dealt most extensively with Fortis, and who saw in him exclusively a great friend of “our people”, emphasizing the fact that he, in distinction of his Venetian predecessors, speaks of the Slavic population with personal likeness (Muljačić 1976, 385). Nino Raspudić emphasizes that affective partiality in Fortis’s orientalist presentations of the Morlaks should not be blurred by the fact that they are presented in the typical orientalist manner, through the complex system of binary contrasts. As an *a priori* axis he considers the valutary- temporal axis progressive (we) – backward (they), within which the proper identity is confirmed as central and referential through the Morlak Other (Raspudić 2010). Fortis has basically an ambivalent relation with regard to the Morlak Other, that is clearly separated from the civilized, modern European. The world of the Morlaks is for Fortis the arcadian world of the good savage, hospitality, fidelity, moral purity, honesty, but it is at the same time presented as the world of backwardness, barbarism, irrationality, non-economy and dirtiness. Fortis’s presentation of the Morlaks lays special stress on the inborn quality of their nature, which justifies the introduction of the binary contrast between Morlak corporality and western spirituality. The body of Morlak men and women is thus presented as stronger, more resistant and closer to nature than the body of the civilized man. Fortis thus writes about the habit of bathing the newborn babies in cold water and dressing them very lightly (Fortis 1974, 80). Specific metonymy of fertility and animality of Morlak women are their breasts, which in Fortis’s presentation assume incredible dimensions, and upon which size Fortis was later vehemently disputing with Ante Lovrić who considered his presentation as gross exaggeration. In his answer to Fortis Lovrić emphasizes that the breasts of Morlak women “are never so long that they could feed their babies over their shoulders or under the armpit” and concludes that this description, as well as many others in Fortis’s book is a tale, invented by foreigners (Lovrić 1948, 69). Such obvious exaggerations have in any case the function of essentialization of otherness of the Morlak woman with regard to the woman from the West, whose body is not in such measure subordinated to

the function of biological reproduction. Onedimensional presentation of the Slavic feminine body is thus most clearly shown in such metonymic simplification by which anthropological prerogative for placing the Morlaks/Croats in the area of less paid jobs is created. The figure of the vet nurse present in the Italian literature from Saba and Ungaretti up to Bettiza, becomes the substitute for vacant functions arisen by the disintegration of the traditional family model by which the Dalmatian woman long after Fortis remains inscribed in the field of pre-modern, traditional world. Here it should never be forgotten that the imaginary constructs of the colonial discourse often reveal more of the European fancy than of the real situation of the eastern Other. Civilizationally inferior the eastern country is such experienced as the metaphor of the childhood, primeval purity and primordial times, in other words something vanished, that the western world is longing for. The object of Fortis's longing are without doubt the values like pure, unselfish human relations as well as moral consistence, hospitality and simplicity that is not specific only of the Morlak culture, but of any traditional society, not caught by modern economic relations. The main problem of Fortis's discourse is thus revealed in the implacability of his enlightenment and scientific aspirations for introducing economic relations into the Morlak society with the wish to maintain their "natural state". This difference in attitudes can also be seen in his reflections upon male/female relations in the Morlak society, which show an implicit critic of the patriarchal relations. Namely, as physical is subordinated to spiritual in the western optic, so in the frames of mere physical principle within the Morlak culture a relation of marked subordination of the female nature to male one is established. What is Fortis most surprised by in Morlak woman is their extreme dirtiness and neglect of themselves after marriage as well as high degree of subordination with regard to males by whom they are treated with marked contempt. That contempt goes so far that women do not share the bed with their husbands – if there is any bed in their house – but sleep on the floor, and they generally show a high degree of tolerance toward the males violence. Fortis finds such behaviour towards women not only in the inland of Dalmatia, but mentions it in the context of describing some wedding customs from the islands of Zlarin and Pag, which leads him to the conclusion about the omnipresent patriarchal model of living in the area of the whole Venetian Dalmatia with the exception of towns. It is significant that Fortis does not succeed in finding the reasons of such neglect but leaves open the possibility about Morlak women not being dirty and neglected by their nature, but having gradually developed the affinity towards physical neglect as reaction to masculine humiliations, because of which they experience themselves as inferior form of

life with regard to males, so they confirm their subordinate position by denying all feminine attributes. In the framework of such reflection patriarchal society is not longer experienced as innocent and natural, primordial and archaic, but as the historical model of the pre-modern society with both positive and negative aspects that as such is not petrified and unchangeable, but subjected to historical development. Fortis's picture of the Morlaks, through European echoes of his work and later reproduction of the same discourse, will metonymically be spread not only to all Dalmatians and Croats but to all South Slavs as shows the case of Bettiza as well.

3 Orientalistic Presentation of the Dalmatian Woman in Gozzi's Futile Memories

In his book Woolf points out how that discourse has dominantly shaped the presentation of Dalmatian land and people even in authors who had direct experience with Dalmatia as in the example of C. Gozzi. That Venetian author describes in his memoirs the population of Venetian Dalmatia in a markedly negative and pessimistic tone. This attitude is very far from Rousseau's faith into the goodness of natural state and he does not share with Fortis his enthusiasm about the Morlaks and their culture at all. For him they are "violent animals, without any education" and he even compares them in one of his descriptions to the Lestrigons, the giant cannibals from *Odyssey* (Gozzi 1928, 679). With the early Fortis he shares only the common attitude that the degree of civilization of some Dalmatian territories depends on their distance from the center of Venetian government in Zadar. According to that criterion he makes a gradation of barbaric habits: the more distant from the center, the rougher and more barbaric they are and giving the example of a couple of Montenegrin habits, he concludes that the population of Montenegro is even more primitive than the Morlak population of the Dalmatian inland. In his presentation of Montenegrin women, who are true slaves of their husbands, Gozzi expresses open nostalgia for lost patriarchal relations in Venice: "Sono mogli e vere schiave degli uomini. S'inginocchiano e baciano loro la mano ogni volta che gli incontrano, e tuttavia mostrano contentezza del loro stato. Sarebbe necessario che alcuni Montenegrini venissero a temperare alquanto il costume tra noi un po' troppo differente" (Gozzi 1928, 70). While Fortis was enthusiastic about moral purity and childlike innocence of the Morlaks, Gozzi considers both men and women from Dalmatia as very

libidinous and apt to infidelity (Gozzi, 1928, 70–71), but he explains that as the influence of the climate. He agrees with Fortis only in the question of already proverbial dirtiness of Morlak women, to whom he, in spite of their general neglected aspect can not deny natural beauty. (Gozzi 1928, 70). But the fact that characterises Gozzi's discourse about Dalmatia is that, in spite of the prevailing negative attitude, it continues to represent for him the place of better and privileged land of sensual and easily available women. So after coming back to Italy he still dreams for a long time of the return to Dalmatia. In his memoirs Gozzi describes two adventures with Dalmatian girls that resemble one another in many details and in which Woolf sees the imperial model of seduction, constraint and exploitation (Woolf 2001, 36). In both cases namely the girls are presented as weak, poor and without protection. They offer themselves to the surprised Gozzi after bitter confession that they lost their virginity with men much older than them. In spite of that Gozzi both times starts a secret sexual relation with the girls, which he breaks after discovering that the girls parallelly maintained such relation with other men as well (Gozzi 1928, 116–118). His leaving Zadar is accompanied by hypocritical moral abhorrence (Gozzi 1928, 119). In his review of the mentioned episodes Woolf points out that Gozzi could easily have recognized himself in the picture of Venetian seducer if he was not so strongly focused on his being seduced (Woolf 2001, 36), and how he does not attribute his loss of innocence to the character of military service but to the low moral of Dalmatian girls. He also emphasizes Gozzi's being horrified at the discovery that his 13-year old lover has other lovers as well, because he abuses of her immorality while simultaneously commiserating her in the morally and imperially assymetric context of the Venetian Dalmatia (Woolf 2001, 37). Woolf finds the roots of strong aversion between Venetians and Dalmatians just in that frequent phenomenon of sexual adventures between Venetian males and Dalmatian women, caused according to him by great poverty of the latters. Such asymmetrical relation of power produces that hypocritical moral of simultaneous abuse and commiseration, even of moral abhorrence, from the position of the subject that scandalizes himself over a situation he himself is partly responsible for. Such hypocritical model is typical for Gozzi's discourse about Dalmatia but is totally absent from the presentation of his last love adventure in Venice, although that one ends in a way very similar to his Dalmatian adventures. Civilizational difference between the young, married Venetian woman and her Dalmatian predecessors lies in her intellectual and cultural superiority that makes her an ideal friend to his "metaphysical, sensitive and delicate heart" (Gozzi 1928, 121). In spite of the fact that his beloved was married to a much older man, Gozzi

does not consider their relation as inconvenient, as she was forced to marry him because of familial debts. In order to stress the difference between their mature platonic relation from his frustrating youthful experiences, Gozzi uses exaggerated metaphors in her presentation and he compares his beloved even with the ideal of fidelity from antique times Penelope. But, after she betrays him with an acquaintance of his, an unscrupulous seducer, that love, like the two previous ones, ends with his contempt and abandon of the woman, by which in mature Gozzi the youthful contempt towards oriental woman is transformed into extreme misogynine attitude towards women in general. But what should be particularly noticed here is that such end does not bring into question the apriori established civilizational relation of inferiority and superiority between the Dalmatian and the Italian woman, but only leads to a simplified reproduction of previously established dichotomies: Dalmatia/Venice, East/West, primitiveness/civilization, body/spirit on the discourse of intersexual relation in general in which women are attributed the characteristics of the civilizational inferior beings with regard to men.

4 Reproduction of Gozzi's Discourse About Dalmatia and Dalmatian Women in Tomizza's "Dalmatian Dream"

In Tomizza's Dalmatian dream the Dalmatian space is described as the space of the longed for primeval times and mysterious place of distant familial roots. Although this novel deals with the problems of the national separation of the Istrian village and the exodus of the Italian population after the Second World War, they are as well inscribed in a wider temporal and geographical context, which attempts to establish the permanent destiny of the Istrian man in the metaphor of the eternal exile. The novel thus opens with the narration about Tomizza's ancestors coming to Istria around the middle of the 17th century, which in that way becomes "the unknown continuation of the land they left" and ends with the descriptions of the new wave of exiles of the population of the inland, that flooded Istria during the nineties of the 20th century. In his imaginary Dalmatia as well as in Fortis's, can be seen the projection of Dalmatia as the place of lost primeval times and privileged life. Tomizza's story about Milena, the young 22-year old student from Zadar, with whom he falls in love at the end of the eighties becomes the metaphor of his longing for the

return to his Dalmatian roots and prolongation of his faded away youth. Specific elaboration of the typically Gozzian vision of Dalmatia as the place of easily available and sensual girls in the Dalmatian dream is mostly connected with the figure of the Italian lector Danilo Radin through whom Tomizza comes into contact with Zadar everyday life and the relations on the faculty of languages where he has been invited to deliver a lecture. That son of Istrian peasants, hedonist and pleasant fellow traveller during the travels and stays in Zadar, becomes the narrator's friend, guardian, temptation, victim, enjoyment, point of orientation (Tomizza 2002, 62). Although his novel is as a whole focalized in the first person, Radin's perspective influences and directs the narrator's attitudes and expectations in such measure that it is frequently hard to distinguish his voice from the narrator's one, what should be taken into consideration in the interpretation of the novel. In Dalmatian dream one gesture of Milena during supper incites Tomizza to experience that girl in the light of Radin's mischievous allusions of the availability of young Dalmatian girls although he would never come to that idea by mere Milena's behaviour. In Radin's presentations of Zadar female students can be read the nostalgia towards the remnants of the patriarchal society and the privileges it was offering to men on a certain position as is the figure of the faculty head Jerko (Tomizza 2002, 81). In the base of the narrator's expectations can be seen the distant echo of the Gozzian model of the simultaneous commiseration and abuse, since Milena's position of poor and unprotected student enables the well-off man from the west to present himself in the role of her rescuer. Since the functions of Milena's figure are greatly instrumentalized by the narrator's projections of himself and his future, characteristic for her figure is her non-autonomous status, shown on the formal level of the text by the marked incongruity between Milena's direct presence in the text and the narrator's reflection of her. The same procedure is repeated in the characterization of her figure limited to those sociological and ideological elements that give support to the narrator's subject in imaginig their future living together in Istria. Milena, as a girl brought up in patriarchal Dalmatian rural environment becomes in the author's projections the figure that connects in herself in an ideal way all elements of his broken identity. Differently from his Italian wife who did not like rural life, Milena "would bring her youth and the love for the land" (Tomizza 2002, 100), while her potential role in the author's better assimilation in the local Istrian environment is emphasized as well. With her, he would not longer feel an exile. It is interesting to notice the expansion of the semantic field of the feeling of eradication that is not associated any more exclusively to space, but to the existential feeling of loneliness as well (Tomizza

2002, 101). In such context Tomizza's attempt of conquering Milena can be understood in the wider context of the search for interior integrality. In that way the interpretation of her figure can be brought in connection even with C. G. Jung's archetypal constructions. In the period of expecting Milena's decision, Radin's perspective increasingly influences the narrator's reflections that can be seen in the more intensive reproduction of old Gozzian models. Characteristic for Tomizza's discourse about Dalmatia and its women from the end of the novel is his hypocritical moralising in spite of the fact that the relation between the narrator and Milena, because of her refusal, does not end with consummation. Radin's attempt to save his friend's dignity reveals most clearly the reproduction of the imperial discourse about oriental women as primitive, non autonomous and easily available beings. In Milena's refusal, namely, the narrator does not see the expression of her own will, but a foreign male voice to whom she submits (Tomizza 2002, 111). In Milena's denying to give as the reason of her refusal the argument of age, the narrator sees the interference of an older and stronger rival, which in Gozzi's work was one of the basic structural elements of his Dalmatian erotic adventures. The crucial difference lies in the age difference between the two male subjects. While to Gozzi his Dalmatian adventures represented a kind of frustrating erotic initiation that later gave the base for developing negative stereotypes towards women from the east in general, Milena appears in Tomizza's novel at the very end of his sexual life, determining thus greatly the different functions of her figure with regard to Gozzi's model. Since in Tomizza's novel the subject is an already formed personality, they should primarily be looked for in the context of projecting the author's longing for the prolongation of his youth and virility and nostalgia for the lost and privileged Dalmatian life, whose distant heir is the narrator himself. In the "Dalmatian dream" the Dalmatian space is presented in the typically orientalist manner, as the space of primeval pleasures and more natural life, the land where one can experience numerous dimensions of life that have been neglected in the West. Barbecue in the open with the sight of the islands awakes in Tomizza the association with the ancient homeric world, which is another commonplace of the transadriatic discourse on Dalmatia since Fortis's time. Great attention is paid in the novel to Dalmatian enjoyment in food which cannot be separated from the enjoyment in the company of beautiful young women, what makes Tomizza's imaginary vision of Dalmatia very similar to Bettiza's vision in "The Exile". But characteristic for the "Dalmatian Dream" is the absence of any more systematic elaboration of the most important conditions of such imaginary constructions of Dalmatia until the end of the novel, when they are finally looked for in the patriarchal

environment of the Dalmatian society. Tomizza's alter ego participates in the privileged male play of power in the macrocosmos of Zadar Department of Italian Language, led by the head Jerko, as long as it suits him and while he can draw profit for himself. The collapse of his illusions about seducing Milena is followed by bitter feeling of being defeated by his Croatian rival and therefore his later moral scandalization on general Dalmatian immorality is experienced more as a hypocritical satisfaction for the lost masculine pride than as the expression of sincere condemnation of such society. Characteristic for Tomizza's orientalist discourse in this novel is the systematic transfer of responsibility for his explicit use on the figure of the lector Radin. Since he in his interpretation of Milena's refusal partly reproduces Fortis's stereotype of the primitive Morlak woman submitted to paternal will, such procedure excludes the attribution of his attitudes to the author himself. The only thing the author "signs" is the common nostalgia for the lost patriarchal privileges in projecting his imaginary Dalmatia and Milena as its ideal feminine metaphor. The end of the novel speaks of the impossibility of maintaining those illusions without conscious participation in the same immoral play led by Jerko and of the necessity of choice. Refusal of an attractive dish at one of their last suppers together marks the break of narrator's active participation in the reproduction of orientalist discourse on the symbolic level of the novel. Libidinous powers awaken during Tomizza's brief "Dalmatian dream", compared to metaphorical pictures of indifferent gods, are thus finally put to sleep, but their suppression does not bring the narrator the so eagerly expected peace. The loss of another illusion brings back into Tomizza's novel the thematics of the split identity and subject permanently marked by longing for another space which is in the last chapter shown as oscillation between traditional rural life in Istria and urban life in Italy. The autobiographical perspective is finally prevailed in the figure of the Istrian as the eternal exile, rounded off by the figure of expatriate Jerko who seeks salvation and new life in Istria with Milena and their little daughter after breaking out of the war in Croatia in 1991.

5 Orientalized Presentation of Maternal Figures in the *Exile* of Enzo Bettiza

Enzo Bettiza, eminent Italian journalist and writer, born in Split, is considered to be one of the best experts of transadriatic problems and shares with Tomizza

the common theme of the split identity which he obsessively deals with in his essayistic and literary texts from the times of "The Phantom of Trieste" from 1958. In his book "Arrembaggi e pensieri" D. Fertilio speaks of him as the model of Dalmatian and middleeuropean intellectual, free from all kinds of nationalisms, who was always able to accept and assimilate contradictory components of his literary, political and cultural being into a coherent whole (Fertilio 2001, 247). His growing up in the multinational familial environment Bettiza describes as a kind of ethnic somnambulism in which his Slavic side was fed on his mother's blood and his wet nurse's milk, while the Italian side was educated on his father and his male relatives' culture. In such identity formation he shows quite obviously the reproduction of old Fortis's dichotomies where West meant the overcoming of spiritual while physical principle prevailed in the East. In Bettiza's initial education the crucial role is played by the figure of the Serbian wet nurse Mara Vujnić, from the village Kričke near Drniš, who accepted little Enzo maternally and gave him "her milk and her language" (Bettiza 1996, 20). She brought him up in a way not habitual for Italian children of that time, and introduced him into the world of epics and Serbian heroic myths (Bettiza 1996, 10–11). The initial establishment of the autobiographical symbolic subject in "The exile" is thus closely associated with the discursive forms/models typical for the East, with the mythical and physical, which from autobiographical reasons are in Bettiza predominantly connected with the feminine principle. Bettiza thus reproduces on personal level the old dichotomy West/East, maturity/childhood, which is further given additional geographical and ethnic attribution: "La prima cosa che la mia memoria, appena entrata nello scantinato, riscopre e rivede, è sempre la stessa. Puntualmente essa torna a rivelarmi che io non sono venuto alla luce in occidente, ma che sono nato piuttosto all'ombra dell'oriente, cioè all'ombra del mito Serbo dei miti Montenegrini che, tramite mia madre e il nonno Vušković, prolungavano e rafforzavano la primordiale serbità già inculcatami dalla balia morlacca in una dimensione più fiabesca e più popolare" (Bettiza 1996, 27). Bettiza's initial ethnic doubleness (Italian/Slav) is additionally complicated by introducing the figure of the nursing mother, by whom the maternal figure of his youth is doubled on several levels as well. Bettiza's nursing mother can be said to reproduce the model of Fortis's good savage woman with marked maternal and natural instincts. Presented as "the reasonable peasant woman" and "exuberant thirty-year old", markedly traditional and religious, she presents a complete antithesis to the cold and distant Bettiza's mother. His mother's nature, cold, passive, showing few emotions, in which even some mysterious, suicidal traits can be seen is presented in the markedly

orientalistic manner. The dichotomy line which emphasizes her being different from the Italian members of the family begins with laying special stress on her oriental beauty as the base “of her concentrated personality” and her neglect of intellectual life is explained by her pretended obsession with her physical aspect (Bettiza 1996, 41). Her passivity and liking of closed and intimate spaces is also justified not by her temperament, or other reasons, but exclusively by mysterious oriental genetic heritage (Bettiza, 1996, 42-43). Contrasting her figure with that of aunt Tina has therefore primarily the function of creating stereotypical models of the Slav and Italian woman through a series of binary oppositions within Split urban population between the two world wars. The two models are further built through a series of binary oppositions light/darkness, active/passive, spirit/body, rational/irrational, where the former parts of the dichotomies are associated with Italian cultural identity, and the latter with the Slavic one. For “The Exile” is characteristic that the identity of the Italian woman does not exceed the mentioned coordinates, while the Slav model shows the division according to the social key. The roots of Bettiza’s mother aversion towards the nursing mother can be sought only in their class diversity, as they both share a similar civilizational and cultural code: “Fatto sta che anche mia madre, montenegrina per ascendenza, ma pur sempre cittadina per formazione e altoborghese per promozione, finì col giudicare nociva tutta quella slavit  cirillica, di fondo contadino, inoculatami dall’estranea plebea nel sangue e nella passione per le bestie di campagna (Bettiza 1996, 166). Regardless of their class belonging both Slavic women share the same indifference towards intellectual values, irrational view of the world and passive attitude towards life, their positive or negative denotation in the novel depends exclusively on intimate, but also irrational factors of the narrator himself. Certain parallels on this matter can be drawn between “The Exile” and “The Phantom of Trieste” as the figure of the Morlak nursing mother from that novel is connected with Bettiza’s nursing mother from “The Exile” by the motive of being predestinated by fate to suffering and silent sorrow in which they both retire after tragic events. As specific symbolic place of that retirement appears in “The Exile” the silent piano, which shows mother’s interruption of participation in the social rituals of the Italian part of the family. Having all this in sight, the example of aversion between mother and nursing mother points to a high degree of mobility of orientalistic discourse which can easily be reproduced on different levels and transferred from the ethnic level to the social one, and which is still present in the urban racism of Split citizens towards the Morlaks (Vlaji).

6 Conclusion

Comparative analysis of the manner of presenting feminine figures in Tomizza's "Dalmatian dream" and Bettiza's "The Exile" points out to the presence of some divisions between Italian and Slavic world that are typical of transadriatic semiorientalistic tradition. Although their imaginary construction of Dalmatia and its women show nostalgia for a better and primeval world, it is characteristic for both Tomizza and Bettiza's discourse that such desires do not bring into danger some apriori civilizational coordinates of those worlds, what can be seen in the reproduction of some traditional methods of Dalmatian Slavic woman. Bettiza's figure of the Morlak nursing mother strongly resembles Fortis's model of good savage woman, while Tomizza's projections of imaginary Dalmatia as a place of extraordinary erotic possibilities follows the development line that has its roots in Gozzi's "Futile Memories".

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IVANIA PETRIN

Italian as a Language of Culture in Dalmatia in the First Half of 19th Century

1 Historical – Political - Cultural Context

In order to fully and more easily understand the linguistic situation in Dalmatia in the first half of 19th century, one should use prismatic spectrum of historical, cultural and literary context of the time.

Well, Dalmatia was continually ennobled by many nations and cultures, but the most significant was the Italian influence.

Roman, Germanic and Slavic ethnic waves were pulsing throughout the whole territory of Dalmatia and under the Byzantine government Dalmatian towns became the focus of Roman culture. But in the Middle Ages Dalmatian towns were gradually croatized. At the end of 11th century Venetian Republic got an opportunity when Croatia lost its power (because of disputes over the dynasty in Croatian - Hungarian kingdom) and Dalmatia fell to the government of the Winged Lion whose patronage, with occasional breaks, enjoyed till 1797.

After Francis II succeeded to his father Leopold II on the Austrian throne, France declared war to Austria on 20 April 1792. The cause of war was Austrian interference with the French Revolution in favour of Royalists. From the very beginning the war was going on at the expense of Austria so Francis II was forced to sign a peace treaty with France on 18 April 1797 in a small Styrian

town called Leoben. French delegation was led by general Napoleon Bonaparte. According to the treaty Austria should have renounced Lombardy and its rights to the Netherlands, and in return Istria, Dalmatia, Boka Kotorska along with some other parts of Venetian Republic should have been given to Austria. France attacked Venetian Republic at the end of April 1797 trying to fulfil its part of the treaty, and on 12 May Austrian army was marching into the town of Venice. Final peace between France and Austria was signed in the night of 17 October 1797 in Campoformi. According to the peace treaty Austria gained all of Venetian Dalmatia, and Venetian Republic ceased to exist on 10 August 1804. Austria was declared the Empire and Francis II got himself the title of the Emperor. At that time Napoleon wars were raging all over Europe, so France and Austria started a new war in 1805. The final battle in this third war took place near Austerlitz where Austrian and Russian army was defeated by France. The peace treaties were concluded in Požun on 26 Decembre 1805 and Austria lost all the territories gained by the peace treaty in Campoformi (Peace in Požun) (Vučetić “n.d.”). It meant the end of the first Austrian government in Dalmatia which lasted only for seven years. But after Napoleon’s defeat in Russia in 1813 the period of French government finished and our region got again under Austrian rule and the mandate was gained at the Conference in Vienna in 1815 when the famous Holy Alliance of *European winning forces* was formed (Puljiz “n.d.”). This was the time when Dalmatia was still at the crossroads of the worlds: from one side tradesmen, actors, professors, civil servants, etc. are arriving and from the other side i.e. Turkish Bosnia, fugitives, plague and the news about bloody uprisings of peasants against feudal lords; citizens are exploiting peasantry, etc. All these contrasts were reflected in the mentality of intellectuals in Dalmatia where we can trace the complexity of cultural influences on one side and underdeveloped economy on the other side. It is important to emphasize yet another contrasting characteristic of the people of Dalmatia at that time: enthusiasm for Italian civilization but jealously pointing out Dalmatian as well as Slavic uniqueness even with those who were not of Slavic origins (Zorić 1992).

2 Cultural and Literary Context

In the first half of 19th century literature and science were under the foreign influence, especially in the framework of Italian language. It can be easily seen from the following example: over the period of 30 years of Austrian government printing offices in Dalmatia published more than 500 Italian and only 67 Croatian

publications which were mostly books and brochures of religious character, a few occasional poems, and Martecchini's issues of the classics from Dubrovnik printed in the local spelling. Italian language and literature were in the focus of interest of many educated Dalmatians regardless their background or strongly expressed Slavic feelings. Authors like Kreljanović (one of 19th century Croatian intellectuals of great reputation as well as one of the editors of the bilingual newspaper *Kraglski Dalmatin*), Katalinić and Kažotić considered Slovinc speech the original language of the nationality, and Italian was the language of culture. Niccolò Tommaseo, Italian poet, novelist, philologist, born in Šibenik, who wrote in Latin, new Greek and Croatian, follower of the idea of Dalmatian autonomy, condemned severely those who neglected or didn't speak the language of the common people, and a few were those who were against *Illyrian* language. It is quite interesting to see in the same way the situation in Dalmatia: our people, conscious of their own ethnic and historical uniqueness communicate in Italian nevertheless. New ideas, common sense and material progress in many discussions, mostly about agriculture, but also about many other aspects of life, written by J. Bajamonti (polyhistorian, writer and composer; he wrote poems, historical, linguistic, economic and medical reports like *History of plague raging in Dalmatia in 1783-84*, and also composed the first Croatian oratory *Carrying St. Dujam*), then, R.A. Michieli Vitturi (a nobleman from Trogir of Croatian origin and the founder of School for Agriculture in Lukšić) and G. D. Stratico (theologist and writer, bishop in Novigrad and Hvar), as well as many others who participated in Italian periodicals, were evidently prevailing. On the other hand, national colourism and tradition were put aside although the interest for national language, customs and literature of philosophical, ethnographical and philological aspects were growing stronger.

In other words, social and literary life of Dalmatia is completely marked by Metternich's regime. The severe control was obvious in the repression of those who looked nostalgically at traditional relationships with other south Slavic provinces (Zorić 1992, 351-353). It is important to underline the publication of the first newspaper in Dalmatia. The newspapers and literary magazines as well as other periodicals of different contents were published in Italian like *Gazzetta di Zara*, *Il Nazionale*, *Il Dalmata* etc. and bilingual newspapers like *Il Regio Dalmata-Kraljski Dalmatin*, *Osservatore Dalmato-Dalmatinski smotritelj*.

3 Linguistic Situation in Dalmatia in the First Half of 19th Century

After the political, cultural and literary overview of the situation in Dalmatia we are going to look briefly into the linguistic situation in Dalmatia in the first half of 19th century. In order to show the real picture of the language we are going to make a linguistic analysis on the example of Kažotić's *Le coste e isole dell'Istria e della Dalmazia - (La parte della Dalmazia)*.

Unlike the later Metternich's repression, Serenissima allowed the use of Croatian in diplomacy because any kind of an official language was completely unknown to Venetian Republic. During the first Austrian government Croatian was spoken all over the province (except for a small number of citizens, nobility and higher clerical ranks). But the situation changed over the period of French government thanks to reforms of Vincenzo Dandolo (1756 - 1819) who administered Dalmatia and was of Venetian background. Dandolo was a general administrator for Dalmatia where he settled in 1806. Before his arrival, the viceroy Eugene Beauharnais promoted publication of bilingual official newspaper *Il Regio Dalmata-Kraglski Dalmatin* predominantly in Italian and Croatian edition. In 1806 in one of his reports to Napoleon Dandolo points up that Croatian should be abolished in seminaries, and that all school subjects should be taught in Italian so it can be spread out expelling more popular and to educated people closer Croatian. He was the first to introduce the term of an official language and gives that role to Italian. It was the beginning of Italianization of Dalmatia. It is important to point out that at the beginning of 19th century the largest trilingual dictionary of the time was published and the author was Franciscan friar Joakim Stulli. The dictionary had three parts and each part had two volumes (*Lexicon latino-illyrico, Rjecosloðnje slovinsko-italijansko-latinsko, Vocabulario italiano-illyrico-latino*). When Napoleon founded Illyrian provinces in 1809 the governor was Marshal Marmont who wanted, apart from French language, to introduce the spoken languages of all the region (Croatian should have become official language of internal affairs in Dalmatia while the correspondence with central government in Paris should have been in French).

After Napoleon's defeat in 1814 Austria regained its government but Italian remained the official language because it was used both in written and colloquial form, but also because Croatian wasn't codified by grammar or spelling. This kind of language situation prevailed until Croatian national revival. The oversight of that system was that it did not take care of the fact that most of the population spoke only Croatian so there were many difficulties, e.g. elders could

hardly understand texts of decrees written in Italian. The demand for interpreters increased which required higher financial expenses, so in 1834 the government ordered by the Imperial Decree that all civil servants had to speak the language of nation and region where they served. Despite this, intellectuals in Dalmatia were completely integrated into Italian culture, even more than in the time of Serenissima. Italian was the language of their education and culture so they considered it their own, so Italian prevailed in their conversation and correspondence. Moreover, in 1849 in Dalmatia there were 157 elementary schools, yet only in 12 of them Croatian was educational language while in the others it was Italian or they were combined (Šimunković 2009, 42). Besides, Italian language enabled them to involve more easily into circles of higher prestige. In casinos and reading saloons Italian was the language of communication or discussions, and those who graduated in Italian could get employed in civil service. Croatian national revival did not have any influence till 1840.

In this place we have to mention two prominent figures, one is Niccolò Tommaseo, who was of Slavic origin and Italian education and cultural background, and the other is Ante Kuzmanić (1807 -1879), a doctor, born in Split, who thought it was of great necessity to replace Italian with Croatian (mother tongue). He decided to start a newspaper *Zora Dalmatinska* (1844 - 1849), the first newspaper written entirely in Croatian. In many ways the year 1848 is revolutionary, but not as much in a political sense (Dalmatia turned down the Venetian offer to restore its government and remained loyal to Austria) as in terms of national revival. That year Ministry of Education introduced Croatian into elementary schools in Dalmatia. It could not be done easily in secondary schools, offices or in courts because the terminology was not well elaborated and were no qualified staff. So the fifth decade of 19th century was known by the effort to create judicial and administrative terminology in Croatian language, especially because town councillors, educated in Italian in state schools in Dalmatia, were all admirers of Italian prose and poetry. They considered Italian the language of high morals and cultural prestige while Croatian was used by peasants and workers and it was of minor quality.

After the brief review of linguistic situation in Dalmatia in the first half of 19th century we are going to use a few examples to describe some characteristic features of Italian language of 19th century that was used by Croatian author Marko Kažotić (Marco de Casotti).

4 Example of Kažotić

He was born in Trogir in an old Dalmatian family and was educated in a well known seminary in Split where Foscolo and Tommaseo got education too. He continued his education in lyceum in Zadar and in Theresian academy in Vienna. He visited Venice where in cafés and saloons he gained many acquaintances among journalists and artists. After he returned from Venice he spent a lot of years in Trogir, but when his father died he moved to Zadar. There he married a beautiful Tereza Gelina (Jelina ili Gialinà) and he worked as an editor in the newspaper *Gazzeta di Zara*. He published a great number of articles, feuilletons, reviews, literary and theatre critics. He wrote five books and a few occasional poems. His most famous novels are *Milienco and Dobrilla*, *Romanzo storico dalmata del XVII secolo* (Zara, 1833), *Il bano Horvath*, *Storia del XIV secolo in two volumes* (Venezia, 1888), *Il Berretto rosso-Scene della vita morlacca* (Venezia, 1843), and *Le coste e isole dell'Istria e della Dalmazia* (Zadar, 1840). He died of tuberculosis in Zadar in 1842 (Zorić 1999, 208).

In order to be more precise when presenting the linguistic situation in Dalmatia in the first half of 19th century, the author of the article will provide some extra data regarding the analysis of the Marko Kažotić's language. All the examples are taken from his novel *Le coste e isole dell'Istria e della Dalmazia* (Zadar, 1840) – *La parte della Dalmazia*.

4. 1 MORPHOLOGY

PRONOUN:

Use of the form *ei* instead of *egli*:

le ricchezze che ei porta; ei porta dai paesi

PREPOSITION:

Use of the forms of *preposizioni articolate* with no apostrophy that indicate plural of nouns:

negl' interni; de' romani; agl' imperatori; gl' imperatori; de' cereali; a' tempi; de' laghi; co' nuovi sistemi...

Use of *forme articolate* of prepositions *per*, *con* e *fra*:

col; colle; fralle; pel; sulli; colla; tralle; pei...

NOUN:

Use of the forms *non-dittongate* as in the example *mele per miele*

Use of the *j* in intervocalic and final position:

giogaje; territorj; serbatojo; feudatarj; iscorciatoje; ghiacciaja; Trajano...

Use of double *ii* in final position:

temporarii; preludii; olii; varii; rosolii; desiderii...

Use of *i* in initial position:

istato; iscorcatoje; istrade; isforzo; istoria...

VERB:

Use of reflexive *si* with a verb:

devonsi; trovasi; mostransi; siasi; governavansi; vuolsi; erasi; aveasi...

Use of the diphthong in the third person plural in *imperfetto*: *rendeano; faceano; sosteneano; viveano...*

Use of conditional in the form as follows: *potria; potriano*

CONJUNCTION:

Use of the old conjunctions:

oggidi; ognora; dappoichè; locchè; indi; comechè...

4. 2 SYNTAX

Use of the inversion: *esser potrebbe; formar devono; esser deve; esser non doveva; Vogliono alcuni...; Ma sotto a quelle quercie secolari che ricoprono le loro vette...; Piantata sotto un cielo dolcissimo...*

Use of long sentences

4. 3 LEXICOLOGY

Use of the scientific lexemes typical for the first half of 19th century:

statistica; geognetiche

4. 4 GRAPHICS

Use of the forms of *preposizioni articolate* with no apostrophy that indicate plural of nouns: *negl' interni; de' romani; agl' imperatori; gl' imperatori; de' cereali; a' tempi; de' laghi; co' nuovi sistemi...*

Use of the *j* in intervocalic and final position:

giogaje; territorj; serbatojo; feudatarj; iscorciatoje; ghiacciaja; Trajano...

Use of double *ii* in final position:

temporarii; preludii; olii; varii; rosolii; desiderii...

Use of *i* in initial position:

istato; iscorcatoje; istrade; isforzo; istoria...

4. 5 OTHER CHARACTERISTICS

Furthermore we are presenting some more characteristics of the language of the first half of 19th century, the language used by Marko Kažotić. He was using Italian names of toponyms which were used in the first half of 19th century. Actually, it is difficult to recognize which toponyms exactly, considering the fact that their modern names differ from their past names. Here are some examples: porto Pedocchio today *port Uš*; Portosecco - today *Prižba*. Kažotić also uses antique names to emphasize ancient tradition of his country: mar liburnico (from Krka to Raša) - today *the Adriatic sea*; il canale della Morlacca - today *Velebit channel*; Titius - today *Krka*; Tillurium - today *Cetina*; monte Tacie - today *Dinara*. But it needs emphasizing that precision is not one of the characteristics of writers of that time. So Kažotić does certain errors: *Križni rat* is not a little island but a cape near the town of Hvar on the island of Hvar, the little island is called *Gališnik*. The lack of precision can also be noticed in vocabulary, e.g.:

- *terra* can mean *country, territory, countryside, region, town*
- *punto* can mean *position, specific place, cape*

As far as syntax of text is concerned, it is more Latin than Italian, i.e. more syntactic than analytic: Italian word order is not obeyed (subject, verb, object); sometimes a sentence starts with a verb (*Vogliano alcuni...*), sometimes with complemento di luogo (*Ma sotto a quelle quercie secolari che ricoprono le loro vette...*), with past participle used as adjective (*Piantata sotto un cielo dolcissimo...*). Inversion is also apparent in the following examples: *esser potrebbe; formar devono; esser deve; esser non doveva*.

All this makes Kažotić a typical example of a writer of the first half of 19th century, a period of scientific works written in Latin. Consequently, Kažotić, as a highly educated person, was inevitably influenced by Latin, but as it was said his syntax was syntactic, Latin and at the same time Croatian (characteristic for Croatian language) and closer to the author.

5 Conclusion

In various forms Italian language was very early interwoven with both written and oral communication in Dalmatia. Also one should not neglect the fact that, considering the linguistic history of Dalmatia, four languages existed in that territory: Latin, Dalmatian, Croatian and different versions of Italian. The very same term plurilinguism existed in the first half of 19th century. Although the works of highly scientific and moral character were written in Latin, novels, historical works and other pieces of simple thematic were in Italian, while Croatian was language of poetry.

Political and historical situation in Dalmatia did definitely have influence on the emergence and survival of plurilinguism, but it is inevitable not to notice the predominance of Italian language and culture despite French government. Taking in consideration the bonds we share: the sea and the presence of Serenissima over the centuries, it is obvious that the Mediterranean/Adriatic spirit of resemblance connected us and enriched every aspect of life on both sides of the sea.

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JADRANKA CERGOL

L'immagine dello sloveno nella letteratura triestina italiana e l'immagine dell'italiano nella letteratura slovena nel periodo fascista: confronto tra due stereotipi

1 Introduzione metodologica

Il notevole sviluppo della ricerca interdisciplinare nel campo della storia culturale è stato determinato in larga misura dall'introduzione di un nuovo metodo, elaborato alcuni decenni fa e in seguito ampiamente applicato allo studio sulla percezione del mondo e delle nazioni in determinati periodi della storia. Si tratta del metodo imagologico, incentrato sullo studio delle immagini, dei pregiudizi, dei cliché e degli stereotipi di una determinata cultura vista dalla prospettiva *dell'altro*. Moura sottolinea che gli studi imagologici si inseriscono tra la storia della letteratura, la storia politica e la psicologia (Moura 1992, 273), ma è indubbiamente la storia la disciplina più consona all'imagologia (Smolej 2002, 21). Secondo Pageaux, fondatore di questo metodo, l'applicazione dei metodi imagologici permette agli storici letterari di rivelare le immagini di nazioni diverse, soprattutto nella storia di quei popoli dove una nazione entra in contatto con un'altra. Pageaux, infatti, sostiene che l'immagine dell'altro nasce nel momento in cui l'Io percepisce il proprio rapporto con l'Altro e contemporaneamente

l'immagine dell'Altro racchiude in sé anche l'immagine del Me stesso (Pageaux 1989, 135).

Gli studi imagologici si sono sviluppati negli ultimi decenni soprattutto in Francia e Germania, dove i critici letterari studiano la percezione delle immagini delle diverse nazioni (in particolare quella tedesca) nella letteratura francese: l'immagine dell'Altro occupa un ruolo importante, per esempio, nelle opere letterarie della resistenza francese durante la seconda guerra mondiale. Nella ricerca sulle immagini delle nazioni rientrano anche le immagini stereotipate delle singole nazioni, che vengono classificate ed interpretate dagli storici letterari e poi confrontate con gli stereotipi di altre nazioni nella letteratura stessa.

Dalle ricerche svolte in tal senso, sia nell'ambito della storia della letteratura slovena che in quella italiana, emerge l'assenza di un'analisi approfondita dell'immagine della nazione slovena nella letteratura italiana e, in parte, anche della nazione italiana nella letteratura slovena. Questo tipo di ricerca si rivela particolarmente interessante per quanto riguarda l'epoca dell'irredentismo italiano a Trieste e in seguito di quello fascista, epoca in cui nel filone della letteratura italiana triestina si è innescato lo stereotipo dello "sloveno, uomo della campagna", un'immagine che è stata talmente assimilata dalla popolazione triestina da perdurare nel tempo fino ai giorni nostri.

Lo scopo del presente contributo è quello di mettere a confronto le due diverse immagini che i popoli limitrofi avevano un dell'altro e dimostrare che spesso anche nazioni che coabitano in stretto contatto, possono avere un'immagine molto diversa del vicino-lontano.

2 Trieste: due stereotipi a confronto

A cavallo tra il XIX e XX secolo si assiste a un cambiamento radicale nei contenuti della letteratura italiana triestina, dovuto per lo più all'istituzione di un gruppo di poeti, scrittori e saggisti che, per merito della loro ampiezza intellettuale, cominciano ad osservare con curiosità gli eventi letterari centroeuropei. Parliamo di Umberto Saba, Scipio Slataper, Italo Svevo e altri. Ma ce n'erano degli altri, pure di provenienza triestina, che si riunirono intorno alla rivista fiorentina *La voce*. La rilevanza di questo evento consiste nel fatto che per questi intellettuali non era di primaria importanza la bellezza estetica o la perfezione stilistica, bensì la dimensione etica, l'umanità e la verità. Alcuni di essi volsero lo sguardo al mondo slavo, prediligendo quello geograficamente più lontano (ad esempio la Russia), mentre altri esprimevano (salvo rare eccezioni, come per esempio

Angelo Vivante) un atteggiamento spesso negativo o quantomeno indifferente verso gli sloveni e i croati, che erano loro più vicini. È interessante notare che tale atteggiamento cominciò a manifestarsi all'epoca dell'irredentismo, nella Trieste ancora asburgica, e ancor prima dell'avvento del fascismo.

Il primo ad aver chiaramente posto alla luce la questione etnica a Trieste è stato Angelo Vivante nella pubblicazione *Irredentismo Adriatico* (pubblicato a Firenze nel 1912), in cui ha presentato l'immagine della città di Trieste etnicamente mista e ha indicato possibili soluzioni per una fruttuosa convivenza di nazionalità multiple nella stessa città. L' *Irredentismo Adriatico* è stato scritto nel periodo in cui la Venezia Giulia e tutto l'Adriatico orientale facevano parte dell'impero austro-ungarico, ma già allora il Vivante era cosciente che le nazionalità, che si sarebbero disputate il predominio nella zona, sarebbero state l'italiana e la slava. L'autore pone il problema senza pretendere di risolverlo a qualunque costo, quello che egli auspica è una convivenza pacifica fra uomini etnicamente diversi, insediati a ridosso di un confine disegnato più volte e non sempre pacificamente. Il Vivante spiega come con la terza guerra d'indipendenza (1866) nasce, prima in Istria e poi a Trieste, l'idea nazionale italiana e, di conseguenza, si assiste a un primo risveglio degli slavi. Il Vivante infatti sostiene che fu l'impegno italofilo a far nascere il nazionalismo slavo. I tentativi germanificatori, messi in atto dall'Austria, erano falliti per la mancanza di un sostrato locale. Restavano le due culture, quella slava e quella italiana. Le popolazioni slave, a seconda di Vivante prevalentemente incolte, in un primo periodo furono assimilate dalla cultura italiana, tradizionalmente superiore, ma poi l'ascesa economica di numerosi esponenti sloveni, comportò in queste genti un'accresciuta coscienza nazionale, per cui nacquero le lotte per la scuola in lingua rispettivamente italiana o slovena. Nacquero così la Lega Nazionale e la Cirillo e Metodio, la prima, secondo l'autore, per continuare l'opera di assimilazione, la seconda per impedirla. Il Vivante, che per le sue idee politiche ha sempre considerato la questione economica più importante di quella nazionale, passa ad esaminare gli aspetti economici del problema, sottolinea l'importanza del protezionismo statale nei traffici triestini e giunge alla conclusione che l'Italia non potrà giovare allo sviluppo di quel porto. La situazione attuale dimostra che le deduzioni del Vivante sull'importanza dei privilegi erano fondate. Molte affermazioni del Vivante sono discutibili (infatti il suo scritto provocò molte polemiche), ma il suo scopo era quello di dimostrare che, poiché nella Venezia Giulia vi erano due irredentismi, un'annessione all'Italia non sarebbe stata priva di problemi e che, inoltre, tale annessione sarebbe stata economicamente dannosa. Citando l'opera del Vivante faccio già notare l'atteggiamento dell'autore nei confronti del popolo sloveno: Vivante, che viene

comunque considerato un moderato, è la riprova che la parte italiana della città considerava il popolo sloveno come prevalentemente contadino e rurale, seppure ammette che nella seconda metà del XIX secolo è stato già possibile percepire nella città una crescita della coscienza nazionale slovena:

“In realtà, non era solo la campagna a parlare un dialetto slavo; nel tessuto urbano si era ormai inserito un consistente strato borghese sloveno, organizzato anche a livello economico. Non è un caso che in quegli anni gli sloveni guardassero proprio a Trieste e non a Lubiana come la loro capitale; del resto, era la città adriatica ad ospitare la popolazione di lingua slava più numerosa” (Toderò 1998, 45).

A proporre la conciliazione tra le due anime di Trieste fu anche il poeta italiano Umberto Saba, per esempio nella poesia *Caffè Tergeste*:

*Caffè Tergeste, ai tuoi tavoli bianchi
ripete l'ubriaco il suo delirio;
ed io ci scrivo i miei più allegri canti.*

*Caffè di ladri, di baldracche covo,
io soffermi ai tuoi tavoli il martirio,
io soffermi a formarmi un cuore nuovo.*

*Pensavo: quando bene avrò goduto
la morte, il nulla che in lei mi predico,
che mi ripagherà d'esser vissuto?
Di vantarmi magnanimo non oso;
ma, se il nascere è un fallo, io al mio nemico
sarei, per maggior colpa, più pietoso.*

*Caffè di plebe, dove un dì celavo
la mia faccia, con gioia oggi ti guardo.
e tu concili l'italo e lo slavo,
a tarda notte, lungo il tuo bigliardo.*

La più famosa confessione poetica di questo periodo è stata invece scritta da Scipio Slataper ne *Il mio Carso*. Durante le sue passeggiate sul Carso sloveno l'autore incontra un contadino sloveno, sopra il quale si pone l'intellettuale con

la sua magnifica cultura italiana e vuole prenderlo con sé in città e trasmettergli le proprie conoscenze:

S' ciavo, vuoi venire con me? Io ti faccio padrone delle grandi campagne sul mare. Lontana è la nostra pianura, ma il mare è ricco e bello. E tu devi esserne il padrone. Perché tu sei slavo, figliolo della nuova razza. (Slataper 2008, 37)

Questo passo suggerisce un rapporto estremamente emblematico che gli intellettuali italiani di Trieste avevano nei confronti del mondo sloveno già prima dell'avvento del fascismo. Questo rapporto problematico può essere notato sempre nello stesso Slataper che da una parte cantava la pacifica convivenza tra i due popoli, la multietnicità della città e la sua collocazione strategica all'interno dell'impero asburgico, dall'altra invece voleva rintanare il popolo sloveno sul Carso, nelle campagne, senza permettergli di prendere in mano il dominio politico della città, come si può evincere dai passi:

bisogna permettere tutte le manifestazioni colturali slave e tedesche, magari favorendole. Ma impedire fin dal primo giorno con decisa serietà, ogni moto politico. (Slataper 1931, 40)

e ancora:

L'urbanesimo pertanto avrebbe dovuto essere prevalentemente italiano (veneto-friulano, romagnolo, pugliese soprattutto) e la borghesia slava dovrà dileguarsi a poco a poco, non per costrizione legale ma perché i posti governativi e in parte comunali non saranno più soltanto per lei, e i medici e gli avvocati slavi avranno sempre meno da fare, mancando via via i clienti della Carinzia e della Carniola. I pochi agricoltori slavi che resteranno sarà facile sorvegliarli e tenerli a freno." (Slataper 1931, 41)

Anche in Scipio Slataper, come già prima in Angelo Vivante, si nota una certa tendenza a considerare lo sloveno come un contadino, facente parte del mondo rurale, che non ha e non deve avere niente a che fare con il mondo urbano triestino. Possiamo dedurre che il mondo sloveno viene quindi percepito come un mondo rurale, verso il quale però gli intellettuali di città devono avere un rapporto di protezionismo, salvaguardandolo e mantenendo la multietnicità del territorio. Il fascismo di confine ha in parte mantenuto questo rapporto verso gli sloveni, in parte lo ha ancora accentuato, come si nota nel romanzo di Gianni

Stuparich *Ritorneranno*, dove viene descritta l'inserviente slovena Berti, che è abbronzata, senza eleganza nella parola e nelle gesta, rozza: “*bestia selvatica che si lascia difficilmente avvicinare*” (Stuparich 1991, 17). Un atteggiamento simile può essere notato anche in Pier Antonio Quarantotti Gambini (Tremul 2008), che attribuisce agli sloveni addirittura una fisionomia diversa da quella degli italiani:

Questi sloveni della campagna [...]: uniformemente bassi e ossuti, biondicci e scabri – sembrano non cresciuti qui vicino ma di tutt'altri paesi, a paragone dei triestini che sono alti e biondi. (Quarantotti Gambini 1985, 125)

La seconda parte di questo contributo propone l'immagine speculare di quanto finora osservato, e cerca di capire, quindi, quale fosse stata la percezione degli italiani nella letteratura slovena sia agli inizi del XX secolo che durante il periodo fascista. È possibile rinvenire nella letteratura slovena degli stereotipi sul vicino popolo italiano già nel XIX secolo. L'italiano è lo stereotipo di un personaggio che parla velocemente e che nel parlare gesticola vivamente. Oltre a questo, agli italiani viene attribuita una certa ignoranza (da notare che gli italiani consideravano gli sloveni incolti) o addirittura maleducazione. Negli scritti sulle guerre e sulle battaglie gli italiani vengono presentati come codardi o anche come una nazione che si mette sempre dalla parte del più forte, rinnegando l'impegno iniziale. Questo stereotipo risale alla prima guerra mondiale, quando l'Italia è passata dalla parte dell'Antanta, ed è presente sia nelle opere degli autori sloveni sia in quelle degli autori ungheresi (Šabec 2006). In linea di massima si potrebbe dedurre che nella storia della letteratura slovena del XIX secolo gli italiani (come pure i tedeschi) assumono generalmente un ruolo negativo (Hladnik 2002, 65).

Nel XX secolo l'immagine dell'italiano diventa più moderata negli autori della Carniola centrale, essendo stati questi meno a contatto diretto con il popolo latino e perciò in minor misura oberati dal peso degli stereotipi nazionali. Ne è un esempio la figura di Birbantino nel romanzo di Fran Levstik *Za svobodo in ljubezen* (1913, *Per la libertà e l'amore*), che viene presentato come un personaggio dalla carnagione alquanto scura e bramoso di guadagni immediati. Degli stereotipi sugli italiani si sono formati anche nei momenti storici, in cui il contatto tra gli appartenenti alle due nazioni è stato determinato dagli eventi bellici. In questo contesto è un esempio eloquente il ricordo del nemico nei soldati sloveni che hanno combattuto contro i soldati italiani sulla penisola appenninica (Stergar 2002, 91): in questi ricordi sono fissate principalmente la timidezza e l'incapacità

dei soldati italiani a combattere valorosamente. Porto ad esempio la descrizione che ne fa lo scrittore Janez Trdina:

*Cucinavano da soli e mangiavano orrendamente una polenta piena di ogni schifezza; bestemmiavano come carrettieri sulle grandi vie. (...) E si gettavano sulle donne come il lupo sugli agnelli, molte bruttezze si raccontavano su di loro a tal riguardo.*¹ (Trdina 1947, 40)

In maniera alquanto diversa venivano trattati gli italiani nella letteratura slovena triestina. I contatti tra l'etnia slovena e quella italiana nella città di Trieste erano in gran parte di natura commerciale, in quanto i pescatori e gli agricoltori sloveni con i propri prodotti approvvigionavano la cittadinanza italiana. Per questo motivo gli sloveni non avevano un atteggiamento eccessivamente negativo verso la cultura italiana e gli autori sloveni triestini dell'epoca nelle loro opere si soffermavano prevalentemente sugli aspetti sociali degli agricoltori sloveni o sugli aspetti intimistici della poesia, con un'enfasi particolare sul tema dell'amore, tralasciando quasi del tutto le questioni etniche, come ad esempio il poeta sloveno Aškerc nella sua raccolta *Jadranski biseri* (*Le perle dell'Adriatico*) del 1908 o Kette nella poesia *Na molu S. Carlo* (*Sul molo S. Carlo*). Ma già in imminenza dello scoppio della Grande Guerra si assiste alla presenza di una certa intolleranza sociale e nazionale, principalmente come una reazione negativa all'atteggiamento degli italiani verso gli sloveni, quando a quest'ultimi attribuirono l'epiteto di "ščavi" (come testimoniato dal poeta Aškerc nella ballata *Balada o Čozotih* (*Ballata sui Chioggiani*)) (Toroš 2011, 364).

Come già menzionato all'inizio, le immagini stereotipate delle nazioni limitrofe si intensificano in concomitanza dei conflitti, il che, nel nostro caso, si verificò in occasione dell'avvento del fascismo sull'area di confine. Gli autori sloveni, nati nelle zone del Litorale e che hanno subito la politica di assimilazione forzata, hanno creato l'immagine dell'italiano coincidente a quella del fascista crudele, che vuole sradicare la nazione slovena dalla propria terra. Se prima dell'avvento del fascismo l'atteggiamento degli sloveni verso gli italiani era neutrale o perlomeno sarcastico, durante questo periodo assunse un aspetto del tutto negativo, in quanto gli autori sloveni nelle loro opere denunciavano e si contrapponevano alla politica fascista. Sulla base teoretica tutto ciò è possibile intendere come un processo naturale di una popolo che vuole distanziarsi dall'immagine attribuitagli

1 Kuhali so si sami in jedli ostudno, z vsako nesnago namešano polento; preklinjali so kakor vozniki po veliki cesti. (...) Na ženske so bili pa kakor volk na ovce, marsikaka grdobija se je pripovedovala o njih v tem ozirju.

dal popolo accanto (Moll 1996, 221). La produzione letteraria slovena tende in tal senso a registrare gli atti violenti degli italiani amorali, ma politicamente più forti. Al contempo va aggiunto che gli autori sloveni in prevalenza accettano la propria situazione di sottomessi, esprimendo nelle opere il senso d'impotenza e dolore per l'ingiustizia subita. Igo Gruden a tal riguardo parla di "*temačni dnevi*" (*giorni bui*), "*mrki tujci v temačni dobi*" (*estranei sinistri nell'era buia*), Ljubka Šorli usa per i fascisti la locuzione "*črna tolpa*" (*banda nera*), l'anonima autrice Rodoljubka (Patriota) definisce il popolo italiano "*Neronovi potomci*" (*discendenti di Nerone*) e li identifica con le azioni negative dell'imperatore romano (Toroš 2011, 365). Come già notato da Miran Košuta, nel romanzo di Vladimir Bartol *Alamut* il principale protagonista morale Hasan Ibn Saba diventa una vera e propria metafora per il capo fascista Benito Mussolini, il che, secondo Košuta, si spiega col fatto che la prima originale dedica del romanzo riportava le seguenti parole: "*Al mandatario criminale del "fedai", affinché uccida il re Alessandro*"; in seguito alla censura di questa dedica, ne seguì una seconda dedicata a: "*Ad un dittatore*" (Košuta 1996, 82). Ed è appunto la figura di Hasn Ibn Saba nel romanzo *Alamut*, nato sotto la penna di Vladimir Bartol nella metà degli anni '30, a rappresentare nella storia della letteratura slovena il culmine dell'immagine negativa che il popolo sloveno deteneva nei confronti di quello italiano, rappresentato, in quegli anni, dall'Altro che vuole sopprimere l'Io.

A conclusione di questo contributo, che assolutamente non vuole essere definitivo nella ricerca sull'immagine dell'Io e dell'Altro nelle varie letterature di confine, vorrei trarre le somme di questa breve ricerca. Come si è potuto notare gli stereotipi delle due nazioni sono alquanto diversi. Se da una parte gli italiani vedevano negli sloveni soprattutto un popolo di contadini, un'immagine molto ricorrente nella letteratura italiana del tempo e che in seguito si rafforzò al punto da assumere durante il fascismo una connotazione ancora più marcata, dall'altra, invece, si può desumere che gli sloveni inizialmente non nutrivano stereotipi molto negativi nei confronti dei propri vicini: si trattava per lo più di frecciate satiriche. Con l'avvento del fascismo invece le cose cambiarono, il che si rispecchiò anche nella letteratura slovena del litorale. Il popolo sloveno assunse una posizione di difesa, pur accettando la propria situazione di sottomesso. Spero, quindi, di aver dimostrato che anche i popoli di diversa nazionalità, che si trovano a condividere lo stesso territorio e a coabitare in stretto contatto l'un con l'altro, possono avere un'immagine molto diversa del vicino-lontano.

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IRENA GRAOVAC

Women and History; Two Mothers' War Stories (Elsa Morante's *La Storia* and Ester Sardoz Barlessi's *Una famiglia istriana*)

1 Introduction

The archetype of mother has been the subject matter of lively discussions between American and European feminist theoreticians and critics and their opponents for a long period of time. The feminist critics insisted on assigning women a new voice and giving them a new language which could distinguish the voice of women bound by the traditional centuries-old shackles. In this way they wanted to transform them from the *Angels in the House* into new liberated women able to express themselves freely. One of the strong advocates of feminist thought is the French feminist Hélène Cixous who claims that the literature is, in fact, gendered, and hence, she asks that women write of women and she wants to give them their place in text and in history. Cixous approaches women as subjects not as objects, who strive constantly to overpower the traditional patriarchal society. This type of universal woman should enable all women to discover the essence of their own senses and of their own history (Cixous 1997).

Elsa Morante hated being associated with the feminists of her own time. She states in an interview dating from 1960 that:

Basterebbe la distinzione – che ancora si usa fare dovunque, – fra scrittori e scrittrici: come se le categorie culturali fossero determinate dalle categorie fisiologiche (sarebbe lo stesso che dividere gli autori, per esempio, in autori biondi e bruni, grassi e magri). In realtà, il concetto generico di scrittrici come di una categoria a parte, risente ancora della società degli harem. (Garboli e Cecchi 1988, XLIV)

However, there are many feminist readings of Morante's work today. For example, Lucia Re (1993) suggests a feminist prospective of the novel *La Storia*, According to her, Morante speaks in "voce femminile", the term borrowed from Gargnani to denote narrator's point of view of the story, gender and narration (Re 1993). On the other hand Robin Pickering-Iazzi (1989) and Margherita Ganeri (1996) detect only few elements of feminist reading, while Anna Nozzoli (1978) is firmly convinced that the novel is antifeminist.

In this paper, we will confront and compare two novels that deal with the motives of war and history; *La Storia* (1974) – the masterpiece written by Elsa Morante and *Una famiglia istriana* (1999) by Ester Sardoz Barlessi, the Croatian author belonging to the Italian speaking minority from Istria. The heroines of these two novels seem to be the voiceless protagonists, the female castaways in men's history without any significant role assigned to them besides the one which they inherited by their traditional background and that is to become mothers and wives. Therefore, analysis of the woman's/mother's perception of her own body and the way she places herself within the historical events that occur in their time is going to be proposed. Also, the focus will be on the narrator, since the narrator's voice (who is obviously female in both novels) is a significant character in both novels. Both characters, Ida from *La Storia* and Angela from *Una famiglia istriana* show women trapped by their gender and by history. It seems that the voice that Cixous wanted to give to women is given in these two cases to the narrators. In fact, it seems that they are the ones who actually speak and act as the heroines' spokesperson. It will also be suggested that the history and historiographic facts are shaped from female standpoint, depicting the women's perspective of history and the way it influences them and their identity. Cixous insists that:

Bisogna che la donna si scriva, perché è l'invenzione di una scrittura nuova, insorta che le permetterà di effettuare, venuto il momento della sua liberazione, le rotture e le trasformazioni indispensabili nella sua storia. (Cixous 1997, 226)

It is extremely important to give finally women their place in history and in historical novels not only as the heroines but also as the writers of the historical events allowing them a benefit of the doubt and not questioning their way of perceiving the facts and their coming to terms with the historical truth.

Having in common certain narrative and thematic elements, *Una famiglia istriana* and *La Storia* permit an overlapping analysis. Angela is an illiterate peasant woman, traditionally raised mother from rural Istria, while Ida is a petit bourgeois mother from Rome. Both of them are simple women, physically and mentally very strong in their furious fight against the *scandals* (the term Morante uses to draw attention to the horrors of the war) of the history.

Eppure, attualmente la sua resistenza fisica sorpassava nella mole il gigante Golia che era alto sei cubiti e un palmo e indossava una corazza di cinquemila sicli di rame. (Morante 2005, 327)

Ida and Angela will not change their debatably innate role of mother; therefore, we can immediately discard the possibility of a potential *Bildungsroman* which could generate a brand new woman. This is what, for example, Sibilla Aleramo managed to do at the beginning of the 20th century with her novel *Una donna* (1906) when she *gave birth* to a whole new mother who chose her lover over her own child.

Since it was written in Italian, *Una famiglia istriana* is mostly intended for readers of Italian speaking minority from Istria. On the other hand, Morante's novel still has a huge success among readers and since its publication almost twenty years after her achievement with *L'isola di Arturo* (1957), it still provokes various disputes. Barlessi also sets the plot in the World War II as well as World War I on the threshold of the new Millennium, only several years after the war in Croatia was over and Croatian writers started writing about the events that took place from 1990 to 1995.

The first part of the analysis deals with heroine's perception of their own body, the sexual violence they both endure and the way it afflicts their identity, while the second part deals with narrative voice and its role in the novels.

2 The Post-Rape Trauma and the Archetype of the Mother's Body

Una famiglia istriana tells the story about the saga of an Istrian family, a big family with many children born in Angela and Nicola's marriage. Nicola is the patriarch father and husband whose role is to provide for the family. He is one of many husbands and fathers who belong to rural community, in a small region that borders with two different nations (Italy and Slovenia), in a country, which for centuries has been the victim of foreign occupations, politics, slaughters, nationalism and exiles. However, the true pivot of the story is Angela Viscovich, whose story begins in the far away 1905 with the birth of her second daughter Rina, born with mental and physical deformation. This birth stigmatizes Angela as the only responsible for the sick child as she was also the only one to blame when she gave birth to a stillborn male since "solo una come lei aveva potuto fare ai Viscovich una cosa così" (Barlessi 1999, 21). The incipit "Nicola era all'Arsenale e Angela stava lavando i suoi abiti da lavoro piegata sul mastello, quando perse improvvisamente le acque." (Barlessi 1999, 13) makes it clear that *pater familias* is supposed to provide for the family and the mother is associated with housework. Right from the start she is assigned to the domestic *locus* and the narrator, deliberately or unknowingly, introduces her character as if it is of lesser value. She is aware of what is expected from her in marriage and in the family. Like all the other Istrian girls, she expects to get married and to have children.

Il corteggiamento non era andato per le lunghe. In casa c'era bisogno delle mani di una donna e benché Angela non fosse abituata a oziare si rese ben presto conto che in famiglia la sua vita sarebbe stata tutt'altro che facile. (Barlessi 1999, 19)

She and her brother were orphans raised by the grandmother and this is where her personal history ends. There was no mention of the sex and the body in her family nor in any other Istrian family so the grandmother teaches her right from the beginning that everything that has to do with the menstrual cycle, sex and body is to be considered as "una cosa sporca di cui non si doveva far parola" (Barlessi 1999, 41). In her marriage she followed the rules that granted the complete asexuality.

Angela aveva venticinque anni e a Nicola voleva veramente bene, aveva accettato la sua vita di moglie come uno dei doveri imposti dal matrimonio, ma

non sapeva che cosa fosse il desiderio fisico. D'altra parte le donne della sua condizione erano tutte allo stesso livello. Subivano e basta. Così si facevano i figli e così doveva essere. Di quelle cose non si parlava, sarebbe stata una vergogna farlo. Quando una ragazza andava sposa si facevano dei risolini di sottinteso, perché si sapeva quello che l'aspettava. Le più anziane, qualche volta, si lasciavano andare e dicevano sospirando che bisognava sopportare, perché agli uomini quelle porcate piacevano, perché la natura li aveva fatti così, con istinti da bestie. (Barlessi 1999, 18)

The rules that the tradition dictated were the only stronghold which the women could hold on to and therefore, the matrimonial duties were to be performed without feelings and interest because:

l'iniziativa spettava solo a lui e dimostrare anche solo un minimo di desiderio di tenerezza, sarebbe stato sconveniente. (Barlessi 1999, 39–40)

Angela, as well as Ida, represses her emotions, which ultimately causes complete frigidity and alienation from her proper body.

Voleva bene a Nicola e non aveva mai provato fastidio ma nemmeno piacere. Si era adattata come certamente prima di lei aveva fatto sua madre e come supponova facessero tutte le donne. (Barlessi 1999, 40)

She perceived her body only as the instrument with which she would bring children to the world and all the knowledge she gathered from tradition and word of mouth collapsed when her body responded to the pleasure of “porcate” in the moment of sexual act of violence performed by her drunken husband Nicola. In that extreme moment of her life her body acted contrary to her mind and up to that particular moment the sexual intercourse was considered “una cosa scontata, stabilita e sancita il giorno del matrimonio” (Barlessi 1999, 39).

The other female characters from the novel are often regarded in a sympathetic way by the narrator as a group of unnamed women who are wise and experienced and know all the practical answers how to act and respond in certain situations in marital life. They are the voice, which teaches Angela how to tolerate sexual violence and therefore, she immediately justifies the act as one of the things that all the women from the village suffered so she was no exception and it was one of those things that shouldn't be mentioned at all.

D'altra parte le donne della sua condizione erano tutte allo stesso livello. Subivano e basta. (Barlessi 1999, 18)

Capì che anche per lei era venuto il momento di trovarsi nella situazione in cui prima o poi si erano venute a trovare quasi tutte le donne che conosceva. (Barlessi 1999, 30)

The concept of rebellion was unknown to Angela and the only time she disobeyed the harsh traditional rules was when she secretly wished not to have more children. Consequently, “rabbia, dolore, umiliazione e piacere le erano estranei” (Barlessi 1999, 41). During the rape, she felt overwhelmed with emotions, which her simple logic couldn't explain in any other way than to justify Nicola for “la quasi violenza subita” (Barlessi 1999, 41) because of his drunkenness and to blame herself for “quella anormalità” (Barlessi 1999, 40). She became afraid that the *shameful* reaction of her body meant that something was wrong with it and that “anche gli altri avrebbero potuto notare” (Barlessi 1999, 41).

Non si capacitava che il suo corpo avesse così vergognosamente reagito e più che l'oltraggio subito l'offendeva la coscienza di sentirsi diversa. (Barlessi 1999, 40)

Ida Ramundo, the heroine of *La Storia* shares the same traditional education. Consequently, their understanding of the body and its purpose is identical. She comes from a family from southern Italy (as most of other Morantian female characters do. In fact, only few characters break this pattern, like for example, Patrizia from *La Storia*, Aracoeli from the homonymous novel, Rosaria from *Menzogna e sortilegio*). Her disinterest for her proper body can be ascribed to a culture with strong ties to its traditional heirloom.

The narrator describes Ida in the following way:

Essa non aveva mai avuto confidenza col proprio corpo, al punto che non lo guardava nemmeno quando si lavava. Il suo corpo era cresciuto con lei come un estraneo; e neppure nella sua prima giovinezza non era mai stato bello, grosso alle caviglie, con le spalle esili e il petto precocemente sfiorito. L'unica gravidanza sofferta era bastata, come una malattia, a deformarlo per sempre; e in seguito, con la vedovanza, lei non aveva pensato più che qualcuno potesse usarlo come un corpo di donna, per farci amore. Con quella sua eccessiva gravezza dei fianchi, e patito nel resto delle membra, esso le era diventato, oramai, solo un peso di fatica. (Morante 2005, 83)

Just like Angela, Ida “non comprendeva il godimento sessuale, che le rimase per sempre un mistero” (Morante 2005, 37) and she felt only “una specie di commozione indulgente per lo sposo” (Morante 2005, 37) during the intimate moments with her husband who died at a very young age leaving her young widow with a child. A part from strict traditional educational heritage, the two heroines share the same awful experience of being subjected to furious ravishments. Ida was raped by a young German soldier Günther after which she became pregnant with Useppe. The act of violence transports Ida to an unconscious state of mind in which “l’istinto aggressivo dell’uno e le fobie paranoiche dell’altra si sciolgono nella percezione inconscia di una comunione preumana” (Rosa 1995, 228).

Però, anche tutta l’epoca anteriore, non soltanto l’ora paurosa che aveva preceduto il suo accesso, ma tutto quanto il passato, all’indietro, le si presentava al ricordo come un punto in arrivo, tuttora confuso da un’immensa lontananza. Lei s’era staccata dal continente affollato e vociferante della sua memoria, su una barca che in questo intervallo aveva fatto il giro del mondo; e adesso, risalendo allo stesso scalo della partenza, lo ritrovava silenzioso e quieto. Non c’erano più urla di folla, nessun linciaggio. Gli oggetti familiari, spogliati da ogni affetto, non erano più strumenti; ma creature vegetali o acquatiche, alghe coralli stelle marine, che respiravano nel riposo del mare, senza appartenere a nessuno. (Morante 2005, 71)

The trauma that she had suffered with this unfortunate act switches Ida to a sphere without space-time context where she “annulla il confine dell’io e le misure della realtà per ricongiungersi oceanicamente alle cose ormai trasformate in creature naturali” (Rosa 1995, 228) and her “*corpo totale della femmina* si consuma il ricongiungimento fra i due sessi, e si annulla l’estraneità nemica che sempre li separa” (Rosa 1995, 228).

The literary critic, Giovanna Rosa refers to Ida’s particular state of mind of unusual partition of her body and memory as “*l’immaginario acquatico*”. This expression evokes the beginning of *Una famiglia istriana* and the episode of long and traumatic delivery, when Angela, at the end of her physical strength, releases her mind to wander back to Carpano, the village where she was born, where she sees herself “annaspire, tutta bagnata e con le vesti pesanti, nel canale” (Barlessi 1999, 14) and she feels that she is being immersed into water where her feet no longer touch the bottom and she feels that she cannot swim any more.

In the state of trauma, Ida’s mind transforms familiar objects into “creature vegetali o acquatiche, alghe coralli stelle marine” (Morante 2005, 71) while, Angela,

during a traumatic childbirth, also feels being immersed into water among “le tenaglia di qualche mostruoso granchio”, “una bestia enorme con tenaglie e tentacoli” (Barlessi 1999, 15).

Lydia M. Oram (2003) suggests an interesting analysis of Ida’s rape, totally different from traditional feminist readings. Oram’s analysis of the visual imagery in the rape episode suggests a parallel between the rape and erotic revival, a certain metaphysical rapture. She also analyses the water imagery and its implications aiming at the idea of Luce Irigaray’s *woman as a fluid* suggesting that Ida, in her epileptic vision experiences *jouissance* and *becoming* (Oram 2003, 424).

3 The Narrator as the Protagonist of the Story/History?

It has been said in the introduction that the history and the way the authors presented it to the readers play a very important part in both novels. The novel *Una famiglia istriana* depicts the events of the Viskovich family throughout the First and the Second World War from 1905 to 1984. Besides personal tragedies that the family suffers throughout the years, the author also deals with the tragedy that had struck the entire nation. This historical novel brings closer to the reader the complex political situation in Istria as well as in the entire county (which still had no clear national boundaries). The author records the horrors of fascistic and communist legacy, exodus, concentration camps, emigration of the local population, existential problems of the poor, the identity crisis (Croatian, Yugoslav and Italian) and language barriers.

In a certain way, Morante plays with the presentation of historical facts in the novel. Every chapter of the novel introduces a list of major historical events that marked that particular year. The events are listed in a detached and impersonal way, while the chapter deals mostly with the life of Ida Ramundo. Each chapter is dedicated to a single war year starting from 1941 to 1947. The only exceptions are the first and the last chapter, which are marked as 19**. In the first chapter she presents the happenings from 1900 to 1940 while in the second the occurrences that took place from 1948 to 1967. Morante finishes this chapter with the sentence “e la Storia continua” (Morante 2005, 656) denoting, in fact, cyclical conception of time and never-ending tragedy of the merciless history.

As it was mentioned both novels highlight the relationship: the narrator – protagonists – the reader. Morante dedicates the novel to all illiterate readers

automatically discarding in such a way the literate, educated readers wanting instead for her novel to be read by the poor, by the insignificant by minorities, by women and finally by those who cannot read the official historiographic facts but can understand “unofficial version” of the facts of life which cannot be found in the history books but among the true stories of true survivors of the Holocaust.

In the novel the narrator claims to be the witnesses of the events that *she* (the narrator states clearly in several occasions her gender, see for example pp. 40 and 106) is retelling even though it is evident that in some occasions the narrator is inconclusive since she's *unsure* or she only *heard but cannot confirm*. Therefore, the question is who retells *La Storia*? Who is actually the narrator? What is her function and is she really the witness/protagonist of the events or merely sympathetic and unreliable narrator?

Giovanna Rosa suggests that “l'adozione di un punto di vista eterodiegetico” is “capace di dominare ogni evento e personaggio con potenza onnisciente e intrusiva” (Rosa 1995, 238). Cesare Garboli on the other hand, is convinced that “*La Storia* è il solo romanzo della Morante a essere raccontato da Elsa Morante ipse, proprio da lei, con l'intonazione e il timbro della sua voce e non con una voce imprestata ad altri” (Garboli 1994, 188). The third opinion is offered by Polish critic Hanna Serkowska who distinguishes two narrators: *una narratrice sapienziale* “che peccava di superbia” (Serkowska 2002, 187) and the other, incompetent “testimone rigorosamente omodiegetico” (Serkowska 2002, 185), “quasi una meticolosa cronista” (Serkowska 2002, 186).

However, this analysis suggests that the solution to the questions previously mentioned lies somewhere in between. As a useful analytical instrument by which to clearly make a distinction between the author and the narrator and the so called the narrate, it is possible to use Gérard Genette's (2003) terminology. The author's part in the text restricted to the historiographic introductions at the beginning of each chapter. Hanna Serkowska claims that the chronicler's role of the narrator in the novel is the result of “sfiducia morantiana nella storia intesa come storiografia” and because of “netta preferenza per la trasmissione orale che presuppone un narratore diverso da quello estraneo al narrato” (Serkowska 2002, 183). The issue of the narrator, however, creates certain ambiguities. Every now and then she appears in the text and declares openly that her information might not be true because it was passed on to her by the others or simply because she doesn't remember or she isn't able to give more information.

Non saprei come né dove, aveva scovato certi testi di Proudhon, Bakunin, Malatesta, e altri anarchici. (Morante 2005, 22)

Io non conosco abbastanza la Calabria. (Morante 2005, 28)

Non ho potuto controllare l'ubicazione precisa di quell'osteria. (Morante 2005, 40)

Questa, naturalmente, non è che una ricostruzione parziale dei misteriosi vagabondaggi di Ninnarieddu in quelle notti; né io saprei darne altre notizie. (Morante 2005, 134)

([...] non so ristabilire la data esatta, ma di certo fu prima del 10 ottobre [...]) (Morante 2005, 209)

Io, quanto a me, le rare e frammentarie notizie che ho potuto raccoglierne, le ho avute in gran parte da Ninnuzzo, [...] E così la mia presente rievocazione del fatto rimane piuttosto vacante, e approssimativa. (Morante 2005, 412)

These examples confirm the intradiegetic-heterodiegetic paradigm proposed by Gérard Genette (2003, 296). The level of the story is intradiegetic; the narrator is somehow connected to the events she is talking about (since she claims to be a part of the story of Ida Ramundo) but she is a heterodiegetic narrator (she is not an actual protagonist and she doesn't participate in the events; we do not know her name but she clearly claims to be the witness). The probable reason for this type of a narrator is that the protagonists seem to have the problem with communication. The dialogues are rare and the characters are unable to express themselves. Therefore, there is the need to insert a character who would be a kind of a spokesperson. That is why Morante creates this narrator-phantasm (term used by Capozzi (1995) who claims to be connected to the characters. Giovanna Rosa (1995) explains the lack of communicability among the protagonists by claiming that they are all struck by *aphasia* (Rosa 1995, 243) (with the exception of little Useppe). According to her, the reason for incongruity in the dialogues is due to "diffidenza del autore a concedere autonomia elocutiva alle sue creature" (Rosa 1995, 243).

The function of this type of a narrator can again be explained with Genette's definitions of functions of Proustian narrator: "funzione testimoniale" (Genette 2003, 304). A good example of this would be the last scenes of the novel when the narrator shows affection and compassion for Ida and for her "bastarduccio". Genette also makes difference between the reader and the naratee. He claims that the intradiegetic narrator can speak only to intradiegetic naratee (also present in the story, while the extradiegetic narrator can speak only to extradiegetic naratee

(often considered as virtual reader or even as the real reader) (Genette 2003, 308). In Morantean example it cannot be confirmed that the naratees are actually in the novel so they are addressed in this paper as the readers. The reader is warned in advance that Useppe is going to die and she demands pity and empathic compassion for two *poor* protagonists. The narrator demands from the reader time, patience and space to finish the story of the weak, of the illiterate of the voiceless characters and she accuses the History for the conspiracy against all the nations of the world whose last victim is “bambinello Useppe” (Morante 2005, 647):

E allora a qualcuno parrà inutile raccontare la restante vita di Useppe, durata ancora poco più di due giorni, e già sapendone la fine. Ma a me non pare inutile. Tutte le vite, invero, hanno la medesima fine: e due giorni, nella piccola passione di un pischelluccio come Useppe, non valgono meno di anni. Che mi si lasci, dunque, restare ancora un poco in compagnia del mio pischelluccio, prima di tornarmene sola al secolo degli altri. (Morante 2005, 625)

As far as the narrator of *Una famiglia istriana* is concerned, we can say that she is extradiegetic. Although, in this novel we do not know with certainty that the narrator is a female, we are inclined to believe that she is a woman because of her clear sympathy and her identification with the character. She doesn't claim to be a part of the events that she is telling about. She clearly demonstrates her omniscience when she anticipates the events emphasising that the characters are unaware of what is about to happen, or when she states some facts that are supposed to be generally known or simply when talking about historical facts:

Ma nessuno di loro immaginava quanto brutta sarebbe stata una storia che avrebbe cambiato l'Europa e le loro insignificanti esistenze, sradicandoli dalle loro case per sballottarli in terre sconosciute e lontane. Nessuno ancora immaginava che l'assassinio di Sarajevo sarebbe stato il preteso per il primo grande conflitto mondiale. (Barlessi 1999, 54).

Wagna era a pochi chilometri da Leibnitz, Pottendorf nei pressi di Vienna e Gmünd, nell'Austria Inferiore, ma come seppero poi, c'erano due Gmünd, l'altra era situata nell'Alta Austria e confinava con la Selva Boema. Qui sarebbe finita Angela molto tempo dopo. Per il primo momento si trovò nel primo scaglione, quello per il lager di Wagna. (Barlessi 1999, 63)

Ma una ben più terribile sciagura doveva entrare da padrona, imbracciando la falce, in quell'anno a Gmünd. (Barlessi 1999, 89)

Lucia, la cognata, che come si sa, non godeva della simpatia di Giovanni Viscovich [...] (Barlessi 1999, 22)

E poi, vedi, il giornale è listato di nero. (In quell'occasione il giornale uscì listato a lutto per quattro giorni). (Barlessi 1999, 53)

Once again the narrator shows sympathy towards the weak character by euphemistically characterizing Angela as an ignorant unable to comprehend some basic everyday things. For example, when Angela visits the midwife when she got pregnant, the midwife reprehends her for getting pregnant again by pointing out her license and telling her that she should have known better. Here Angela becomes confused by not understanding how one can prevent getting oneself pregnant by using that piece of paper:

Angela soffermò lo sguardo sul quadretto [the midwife's license], con riverenza ma senza capire come un foglietto con una scritta potesse essere in grado di fare avere i figli solo quando uno li voleva. (Barlessi 1999, 44)

Era l'unico in famiglia [Angela's brother-in-law] a non essere analfabeta e Angela pensava che avesse trovato il modo di non far figli leggendo ciò che stava scritto sulla licenza dell'ostetrica Giovannina. (Barlessi 1999, 48)

The narrator frequently uses free indirect discourse which makes it difficult to comprehend whether the comments are those of the narrator or simply Angela's thoughts. Also, dialectal expressions and phrases are used (at the end of the novel there is a glossary of the words in Istrian dialect) as if the narrator, the protagonists and the reader are connected by the same cultural background.

4 Conclusion

The main theses of this paper were based on Hélène Cixous's (1997) premises that there is, in fact, a "*scrittura distintiva*" (Cixous 1997, 226). The aim was to identify the features of woman's way of writing about history and to find woman's voice in two historical novels: *La Storia* by Elsa Morante and *Una famiglia istriana*

by Ester Sardoz Barlessi. Maria Ornella Marotti (1996) distinguishes two types of women's historical fiction: subjective historicism (novels with historical protagonists in which authors through fiction offer re-reading of history in which the protagonists are mostly female figures (Marotti 1996, 152) and marginal historicism (novels in which protagonists are placed at the margins of the history (Marotti 1996, 152) in which she places also Morante's *La Storia*. The two heroines, Angela and Ida, are indeed on the margins of the history. However, it is obvious that their *microstory* takes over the *macrohistory* which becomes obvious by the fact that it is their heroic behaviour and the genuine ways of defending their children from the injustices of the war that move the reader, and not the historiographic truth. They are not moved by any ideology, but nonetheless their stories, retold by the narrators bring out the main issue and that is the universal wrong that was brought upon the small people such as Ida, Angela and their unprotected children.

Although there is no clear connection between the authors and feminist *écriture*, we have tried to propose a feminist reading of the stories based on the intimate and subjective relationship between the narrator and the protagonists. Therefore, we have analyzed a number of parallel examples of heroines' perception of their own bodies. Ida and Angela share the same traditional education which teaches them how to repress their sexuality. Both women have suffered the horrifying experience of sexual abuse the result of which are their children, both born with certain malformations. Also, a parallel was drawn between Ida's traumatic rape and Angela's agonizing delivery which led us to a homonymous reading of aquatic imagery as their way of relief of the suffering.

The narrators of the two novels have no problem with the general history and the truth of historical events is not put into question. What is presented instead is a deconstruction of truth (Marotti 1996). Morante places known historical facts as an introduction to each chapter (written all in italics), while private historical recordings occupy the entire story. The title of the novel itself identifies the history with the story since the author capitalizes the noun, which in the Italian language has a homonymous meaning – it can mean both things. The truth in *La Storia* is being told by a heterodiegetic narrator who is absent from the plot but claims to be a witness. The narrator is obviously female since she, in several occasions, distinctly points out her gender. Her story of the events is personal and the emotional and emphatic connection to the character is overly emphasised. The narration in *Una famiglia istriana* (flash-back techniques, digressions, free indirect discourse, dialectal and idiomatic expressions, in dialect etc.) demonstrates in a slightly different way the closeness and sympathy of the narrator toward the protagonists.

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An Intertextual Reading of Brumec's *Francesca da Rimini* and Dante's *Divine Comedy*

1 Introduction

The intertextual reading of Mislav Brumec's tragicomedy *Francesca da Rimini* and Dante's 5th Canto of Hell, proposed in this article, focuses on the one-sided intertextual intertwining of the two discourses. The intertextual procedure to be undertaken could be defined as a mode of perception of both texts and an act of decoding the tragicomedy. *Francesca da Rimini* was published and produced at the &TD Theatre in Zagreb in 1991. What is of particular importance, Mislav Brumec (1969-), a Croatian playwright, was awarded the Ministry of Culture's annual Marin Držić Prize for the same play in 1991 (Šesto 1997). The action of *Francesca da Rimini*, a four-act play, takes place in a medieval castle. The characters, initially identified by their age, are: Francesca (17), Paolo (19), Gianciotto (32) and Angela (18). The master of the castle, the mighty warrior Gianciotto, cares only for hunting and the glory he could win for himself in the upcoming crusade. Feeling neglected, his wife Francesca manipulates his brother, the painter Paolo, in order to make Gianciotto jealous. Francesca's maid Angela, who is in love with Gianciotto, skillfully takes advantage of this situation and, defeating her rivals by her intrigues, leaves Gianciotto at the mercy of her cruel love.

In order to obtain some theoretical insight into Brumec's tragicomedy, the identification of the literary group and poetics he belongs to is essential. At the beginning of the 1990s, a particular stream of dramatic writing appears in the Croatian literature; a stream denominated Young Croatian Drama, which finds its origin and foundation in the collection *Young Croatian Drama*, published and edited by Miro Gavran, a contemporary Croatian author of short stories, fiction and drama, in Zagreb in 1991. Although frequently the subject of certain disputes, the authors identified in this new dramatic stream, such as Ivan Vidić, Asja Srnec-Todorović, Pave Marinković and Mislav Brumec are held together firstly by the fact that their plays were performed in the same theatre season of 1990/1991 at the Theatre &TD in Zagreb, and secondly by the common poetics they share. Even though their poetics do not generally depart from the post-modern epoch, it is worth noting here that it presents certain properties that separate their dramatic productions from the postmodern convention initiated in Croatia in the 1970s. Abolishing the ideological framework established by earlier Croatian postmodern writers, the authors of *Young Croatian Drama* do away with the polemical attitude towards the social reality (Car Mihec 2006). Instead of ideological principles, dramatic aggression, dialogic accusations, polemic tones, principles of the politic theatre and the space, which had been dedicated for decades to the dramatization of the enemy in Croatian post-war drama, they opt for the aestheticism of the absent, which disperses and destabilizes the centre and eliminates the subject (Vrgoč 2000). Consequently, their production is often seen as hermetic, incommunicative, politically insensitive and pessimistic, but on the other hand, it presents enhanced affinity to the intertextual relation of the dramatic discourse, a continual reliance on the traditional literary templates, a reinterpretation of traditional dramatic characters and themes, actantial relations and their new contextualization, interpretation of Greek myths, parody, farce, travesty, grotesque, mixtures of disparate styles, social escapism and the utilization of flat characters instead of round ones (Car Mihec 2006). The mythical and non-mythical, the past and the history are equalized. Their interpretation of the myth is seen as a degradation of characters and the parody of tragic impression (Zlataar 1996). The illusion of their autonomy is dispersed, whereas their historicity and contextuality is emphasized. Furthermore, in the postmodern epoch, the recycling of the past narrative material becomes an evident sign of an anxious conscience that the artist cannot express other than with what has already been said. The art becomes a process of re-reading, revising, composition and collage (Fortunati 2002). In order to avoid false conclusions about unilateral influences due to the deceptive nature of contacts in the course of analysis, we should dedicate

ourselves primarily to the analysis of two texts and answer the question as to what elements of the Brumec's text can the presence of another literature or another author, in this case Italian literature and Dante, be seen, or, more precisely, in what way the dialogue is established between them. Intertextuality is a literary and semiotic phenomenon which has undergone changes in form and function throughout its history. The fact that attitudes and consciousness of it have varied from epoch to epoch, from poetics to poetics, the fact that there are several different terms which refer to the phenomenon of intertextuality and its methodology, we opt for the intertextual framework provided by the Croatian theoreticians of literature; primarily Dubravka Oraić Tolić's centripetal and centrifugal textual analysis. At the same time we will try to analyze the duality of the intertextual process which is evident both in Brumec's dialectic relationship with the tradition and in his mechanism of invention.

2 Dante as an Authoritative Intertextual Source

Dante's *Divine Comedy*, especially the 5th *Canto* entitled *Paolo and Francesca* is highly exposed to intertextual perspective. Consequently, there are so many retellings and adaptations of Francesca's tale that our cultural imagery has been for so long overstocked with commentaries, paintings, dramas, tragedies, poems and musical responses to Francesca's story. It is rather difficult to prevent the contamination of our vision and recreate the relative emptiness in which Dante wrote the 5th *Canto* and identify Brumec's elements that fill Dante's information vacuum. According to Paul Van Tieghem's conceptions, Dante's influence over Brumec can be defined as a moral, spiritual and technical one (Beker 1995). The moral and the spiritual influence is exerted by the importance of Dante's personality in literary history, whereas the technical one derives from Dante's literary skill and literary work, precisely, the *Divine Comedy*.

Under the influence of Dante's 5th *Canto* Mislav Brumec composes the tragedy *Francesca da Rimini* adopting a series of intertextual procedures. The usefulness of intertextuality, a hermeneutic and formalist theoretical framework, comes out in dealing with historiographic metafiction. Firstly, the reader is involved both in the recognition of textualized traces of the literary and historical past, and secondly, he should be aware of what has been done to those traces. Furthermore, the reader is forced to acknowledge not only the inevitable textuality of our knowledge of the past but also the value and the limitation of what inescapably discursive form of knowledge situates as it is between presence and absence (Hutcheon, <s.a.>).

Dante's 5th *Canto* is unutterably historically crucial because it was the first to give Francesca a name and a voice and save her from oblivion (Barolini 2000). He gives her a historical life, but also condemns her to eternal death. The case of Francesca da Rimini is rather different from the norm of Dante's appropriations and revisions of history that we are accustomed to, since in her case no trace remains of the historical record that the poet could have appropriated. Marco Battagli, medieval chronicler of Rimini, was the first to give the first historical information about Francesca da Rimini in 1352. Yet, we have to take into consideration that at that time he was familiar with Dante's *Divine Comedy*. Brumec not only chooses a historical personality but with this choice he includes in his work intentionally or spontaneously, implicitly or explicitly all historical records that exist around the figure of Francesca da Rimini, due to which Francesca da Rimini becomes a hidden citation (Franzini 2002). In other words, the title of the tragicomedy, which tends to centre Francesca's character, immediately anticipates certain intertextual procedures. Francesca da Rimini enters also in the category of the original citation (Oraić Tolić 1990). Next to Francesca, other characters of the play; Gianciotto and Paolo enter into the category of the hidden citation.

The inclusion of the historical data about these characters into a new text can be seen through the prism of metahistorical influence (Peričić 2008). How otherwise would Brumec have information about the agents of the tragicomedy *Francesca da Rimini*? Dante gives very little information about Francesca, such as Francesca's birthplace: "Siede la terra dove nata fui / su la marina dove 'l Po discende / per avere pace con seguaci suoi [...]" (Alighieri 1991, 156), her Christian name: "Francesca i tuoi martiri [...]" (Alighieri 1991, 160), the fact that she and her lover were killed by a kinsman: "Caina attende chi a vita ci spense [...]" (Alighieri 1991, 160) and that the lovers are related by marriage: "[...] dinanzi a la pietà d'i due cognate [...]" (Alighieri 1991, 175). Obviously, Brumec consulted other sources *borrowing* not only the characters, but also some elements of the plot what we will see later on. Brumec's tragicomedy intertextually relates to Dante's 5th *Canto* and to historical sources. In the play the Malatesta family is explicitly nominated: "Gianciotto: That kind of villainy is unimaginable in the Malatesta family." (Brumec 1991, 16) or "Gianciotto: The Malatestas never married for dowries." (Brumec 1991, 19)

This is a paradoxically doubled discourse of postmodernist intertextuality because the story recounted by Brumec's tragicomedy is of literature (Dante's *Divine Comedy*, Boccaccio's commentaries of a *Comedy*) and that of history (different historical sources). This three-membered citation relation; *Francesca da Rimini* as a text which cites (phenotext), the explicit intext or citation of Dante's

^{5th} *Canto* and other non-cited but alluded to texts of different historical sources constitute the citation triangle (Oraić Tolić 1990) with no established hierarchy among them. Brumec's tragicomedy enters into the postmodern paradigm of an adaptive relation to canonical texts (Gjurgjan). Moreover, we have to bear in mind that this play does not find its plot structure purely in the historical record and Dante's *Canto* but in the experimentation with and manipulation thereof. In this perspective, Brumec's tragicomedy is considered a revocation of an authoritative word, and at the same time a rewriting of the original, which is essential for the creation of a new literary work (Baroncini 2002). Brumec re-animates and revalorizes history; he comments and enters into dialogue with it.

3 Intertextual Elements in the Drama Structure

The action of *Francesca da Rimini* takes place in a medieval castle. The word *medieval* directly alludes to the Middle Age, to Dante's epoch. A medieval castle stands for a claustrophobic space announcing in such a manner the characters' motivation that leads to the evil happenings and tragic destinies, and the finding of its equivalent in the second circle of Dante's Hell; "Io venni in loco d'ogni luce muto [...]" (Alighieri 1991, 141). Brumec takes Dante's dark atmosphere to reinforce the tragic elements of the play. The indications about the dramatic space given by Brumec help the reader/spectator to determine the development of the plot and the characters. The category of the dramatic space belongs to the recipient who visualizes it through his imaginary construction (Pavis 2004). Brumec assigns to the enclosed space and time a thematic function. Not only is the semantization of space and time verified, but also that of props in reference to the central theme. A continuity in the place of action helps to achieve isolation from an external world that evokes the feeling of anxiety and disaster, which suits the deterministic conception of the figures. Furthermore, the usage of cyclical time is archetypal; the action starts in the morning, the indication of the night suggests something evil and foreboding, whereas the next morning brings sobriety and disillusion; "Angela: You killed them that is good. People will understand, and God will forgive. Better blood-stained hands than a stain on your honour [...] Gianciotto: I must forget [...] I'm hungry [...]" (Brumec 1991, 26).

In order to describe the spatial dimension of the tragicomedy Brumec uses binary oppositions. Moreover, the transposition of the medieval culture of symbols is evident in the play. A medieval castle stands for security/protection, but also for a common wish. A tub in which Francesca takes a bath symbolizes the

unquenchable nature of human desire. The image of a black spider contributes to a dark atmosphere by representing the frailty of the deceptive reality of ostensibility symbolizing the fall of the creature who dared to compete with God. On the other hand, the mirror stands for the truth, and finally the candlestick symbolizes spiritual life and salvation (Chevalier and Gheerbrant 2007).

Furthermore, the intertexts inevitably call forth other contexts: social and political, among others (Hutcheon, <s.a.>). Brumec places Francesca in her original temporal dimension. Next to spatial indications, Brumec alludes to the Middle Ages also by mentioning the crusade which Gianciotto wants to join, which explicitly collocates the action in that historical period: "Gianciotto: It's a holy war, for the Holy Land, by the will of the Holy Father, and to please God." (Brumec 1991, 17) The chivalrous life to which Gianciotto aspires and the monastic life or asceticism to which Gianciotto condemns Francesca before killing her in the end, were highly idealized in the Middle Ages, as was religious devotion: "Gianciotto: When did you last go to confession? Francesca: I don't remember. Gianciotto: Go as soon as possible...Don't forget the holy sacraments, Francesca..." (Brumec 1991, 19-20). Or "Gianciotto: When did you last go to confession? Angela: This morning. Gianciotto: That's good. You're a good girl." (Brumec 1991, 21). Taking into consideration that the Christian religion was the moral backbone of that age, it is quite obvious that Brumec, ironically, plays with its supposed value by assigning to devotional believers and religious practitioners such as Gianciotto the role of a murderer and to Angela the role of a mischief-maker.

The centrality of characters is omitted because the central position belongs to an absent character, which is usually also the object of some desire, such as to Gianciotto in the first act, to Gianciotto and Francesca in the second act, and to Paolo in the third act. Despite the fact that there is no real hero, the central position in the intertextual procedures is occupied by Francesca. Brumec takes the character from Dante's *Canto* in her entirety; takes her position of a wife, of an adulteress, her social status and her tragic end. Due to diachronic repetition of her story, Francesca belongs to the tradition of transformed stock figures (Pfister 1998). In the dialogue with Dante, Francesca reveals her biographic and genetic dimension. If necessary, she can be excepted from the context as a departure from Brumec's Francesca, whose figure is artificially constructed. Dante's Francesca is seen as a real person, a true character as opposed to Brumec's constructed and fictive Francesca. The autonomy of Dante's Francesca is the functionality of Brumec's Francesca. Although a flat character, Brumec's Francesca is dynamic in comparison with Dante's character, whose function is allegoric. Her multi-layered presentation stands for a specific idea. Brumec depicts Francesca as a

person who likes to be flattered and pandered to in a way that he provides an image of a selfish woman who stands between two men, Gianciotto and Paolo:

Gianciotto: To be jealous of you would mean to insult you. Francesca: Only a dog loves without jealousy...an insult or two wouldn't hurt me. Gianciotto: I don't know who to be jealous of. Francesca: You're not the only man around. Gianciotto: Surely you don't mean the servants and the peasants? Francesca: No. Gianciotto: Who, then? Francesca: Well...Say your brother, Paolo. Gianciotto: Paolo? But he's my brother...He is my brother. That kind of villainy is unimaginable in Malatesta family. Francesca: Of course. Gianciotto: Has he been pestering you? Francesca: No. Gianciotto: Courting you? Francesca: No. Gianciotto: But? Francesca: Nothing... He pays me a lot of attention, unlike some others. (Brumec 1991, 16)

Furthermore, Francesca finds it hard to give up one of them when Gianciotto mentions Paolo's eventual wedding with Angela: "Francesca: I can see how he treats her. He doesn't notice her at all, doesn't talk to her...With me, for instance, he is always courteous, friendly, gallant...A real gentleman." (Brumec 1991, 18) Francesca is self-centred, egoistic and narcissistic all through the plot to the final scene when her narcissism reaches its climax in being in love with her own image:

Francesca: (without taking her eyes off the painting) I don't understand...I never...But that painting, that painting, it is wonderful...beautiful...perfect...Is that how you see me? Someone sees me like this? This is me? But, it's all here... How did you know, with such precision...and something else...is floating over the painting...It is a lovely picture, you ennobled me, your love is sacred...I believe in your love...you, your painting, it is a miracle...God, forgive me... (Francesca embraces Paolo around the waist and clings to him). (Brumec 1991, 26)

Dante's Francesca dies out of the passion she feels for Paolo, Brumec's Francesca dies out of her own narcissism. The framework of her death is provided by the image of the spider in the bottom of the web on Francesca's thigh, which psychoanalysts define as a symbol of the introversion and narcissism of the creature that was absorbed by her own centre:

Angela: A perfect spider's web. Every thread can be seen and seems to glitter in the light. You seem to be able to see drops of dew gathering on it and you can just imagine the spider lying in wait at the bottom...Perfection. (Brumec 1991, 16)

The author of the image is Paolo but the vision of Francesca is through Angela's eyes, who in the second act, after seeing Francesca having a bath and taking a close look at her scar, describes her body to Paolo. It means that Francesca failed to recognize that she had fallen in love with Angela's and not Paolo's vision. She falls in love with Angela's vision of herself, and it is Angela who later on reveals herself to be Francesca's half-sister: "Angela: The prophecy has come true, now I am in her place, which was taken from me...Francesca was my half-sister, but she did not live long enough to find out..." (Brumec 1991, 26) Brumec neither takes Angela as a figure from Dante nor other historical sources, but he semantizes her position by incorporating different thematic takings. Immediately, from the last citation we can analyze the theme of birth intertextually. Francesca's tragic end is in a certain way provoked by her birth, because it drew Angela's anger for not having the same social position as Francesca although she was her half-sister. Dante alludes to the birth phenomenon in the following lines: "Dico che quando l'anima *mal nata*/ li vien dinanzi, tutta si confessa;/ e quel conoscitor de la peccata/ vede qual loco d'inferno è da essa [...]" (Alighieri 1991, 138-139) This quotation leads us to a new role assigned to Angela and that is the role of Minos. In several instances she judges and reasons about human destinies, precisely those of Francesca's, Paolo's and Gianciotto's destinies:

Angela: I'll take care of you from now on. I have always taken care of you, but you didn't know...You will belong to me, only me...You always belonged only to me, but you didn't know that, either...There are forces that are stronger even than you, my dear Gianciotto, and I am under their protection. (Brumec 1991, 26)

Furthermore, Brumec introduces Angela's figure in order to create a love quadrangle to differ from Dante's love triangle (Senker 2000). Dante creates the relationship between two brothers but Brumec doubles it and it also becomes the relationship between two brothers and two sisters. The first one is hard to reconstruct because the only moment in the play when the two brothers dialogise is in the last scene just before the murder. The final conflict in its basis does not have the conflict of two or more realities, but it originates in the duality of each character. This duality is best depicted in the masculine figures of Paolo and Gianciotto. The first information we have about Paolo is from Francesca's and Angela's dialogue in the first act. He is presented as an artist, a painter and, in one moment, Francesca compares him to the crucified Jesus Christ: "Francesca: You should see him work. His forehead gets all damp and he looks like Jesus on that cross above my bed." (Brumec 1991, 13) Intertextually, the nomination of

Jesus Christ is a hidden citation because it evokes the whole story regarding Jesus Christ. However, the first impression about Paolo changes in the second act when he dialogues with Angela, who discloses to him the details about Francesca's body and the fatal scar. In their dialogue there are parodist insinuations about Francesca's and Angela's body which enter into the postmodern category and stress the duality of intertextual procedures. Paolo's atrocious aims are visible from the following lines: "Paolo: A man who has a beautiful wife doesn't have a brother...Let's go on." (Brumec 1991, 16) Brumec takes his figure from Dante but the information offered by Dante is scarce such that Brumec needs to develop his character. Paolo is not even denominated in the Canto just indicated with the following lines: "Mentre che l'uno spirto questo disse, /l'altro piangëa; sì che di pietade..." (Alighieri 1991, 165) meaning that Brumec takes his name from other historical sources and the sense of a passive character Brumec turns into a more or less dynamic figure, which helps Angela achieve her aims (Mihanović 1997). Brumec's vision of Paolo seems oversentimentalized in reference to Dante's vision of the same character. Brumec's Paolo incorporates Dante's vision of those who subordinate reason to instinct; "Intesi ch'a così fatto tormento/ enno dannati i peccator carnali,/ che la ragion sommettono al talento." (Mihanović 1997, 143) which is visible in the following lines:

Paolo: I see a perfect model, the kind I have always searched for. She is my inspiration for a masterpiece [...] Angela: I don't understand...But one thing is clear to me, you don't love her at all. Paolo: Of course I do...This painting makes her part of me...Paolo: (QUICKLY) it would be wrong to divide your body and your figure and analyze it. It's true that a perfect whole is made up of perfect components, but an understanding of details stems from a perception of the whole. Perception creates a masterpiece. And it is passion that generates perception...Passion...! (Brumec 1991, 22)

In the play Paolo is depicted as a fragile artist whose true expression comes only at the end, when Francesca's reaction to the portrait makes him strong and manly, unlike Gianciotto, who abolishes his virility by killing Francesca and Paolo. Angela and Paolo prove that Brumec rewrites history taking considerable liberty by inventing characters and events and offering connections where gaps occur in the historical record.

Gianciotto is transferred from the historical sources into a play. In the 5th Canto, there is only one allusion to Gianciotto as the person who is expected by Cain: "Caina attende chi a vita ci spense [...]" (Alighieri 1991, 158). The use

of Cain as a hidden citation marks family relations implicitly. In the first part of the tragicomedy, Gianciotto is presented as a virtuous, strong and mature man: "Gianciotto: I'm different. First I wanted to be ordained. Later I went to war and travelled, gained a reputation, wealth and experience..." (Brumec 1991, 17) From the moment he assigns Angela to keep an eye of his wife, he becomes full of suspicion and doubt and pronounces: "Gianciotto: Don't worry. A snake would be too good for him...Suspicious, suspicions. Suspicion will kill me. I won't stand it for much longer...What should I do?" (Brumec 1991, 19) His harmony is broken when he starts the collaboration with Angela, who justifies her evil aim as a search for truth:

Angela: The truth is the most important. Only the truth can bring again the piece under this roof. Gianciotto: Yes, the truth...I can't wait to sit on my horse and go to Holy Land to fight against the infidels. On war field there are no lies...I will swallow a lot of sand before I suffocate my pain, and lot of Saracen blood will be necessary to wash the name of Malatesta...Frailty, your name is woman... (Brumec 1991, 21)

The last sentence is the original quotation from Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, the quotation that may already belong to archetypal vaults of quotations. Oraić Tolić (1990) identifies original quotations also by the outer signs such as quotation marks. Such quotations are verified in Brumec's version of the radio-drama *Francesca da Rimini* (Brumec 1999), when Francesca in one moment pronounces: "Nessun maggior dolore/ che ricordarsi del tempo/ felice ne la miseria [...]" (Brumec 1999, 14) which corresponds explicitly to Dante's verses 121st and 122nd of the 5th *Canto*. Brumec's dialogue with Shakespeare also consists of the incorporation of some of Hamlet's features in Gianciotto's figure. At the beginning he is seen as stable, and then he is full of suspicion and unsure of what to do, finally his deceptive desire for the truth leads him to stabbing Francesca and Paolo. The pyramid of a strong patriarchal power collapses. The established patriarchal context is ironically trivialized. The maid, Angela, outsmarts her master with the simple idea of hunger and breakfast: "Gianciotto: I must forget...I'm hungry..." (Brumec 1991, 26)

The deaths of Paolo and Francesca call for a new intertextual inquiry. The relation established with Dante consists in the fact that Francesca and Paolo were punished together. Furthermore, Brumec adopts the idea of the eyes: "Per più fiare li occhi ci sospinse/ quella lettura, e scolorocci il viso [...]" (Alighieri 1991, 163) in didascalies after Gianciotto's stabbing: "(They remained dead, hugged looking at

themselves with dead eyes.) “ (Brumec 1991, 26). The crucial kiss that Paolo gives to Francesca in the 5th *Canto*; “Quando leggemmo il disiato riso/ esser baciato da cotanto amante,/questi, che mai da me non fia diviso, /la bocca mi basciò tutto tremante [...]”. (Alighieri 1991, 164) loses its dramatic charge in Brumec’s play:

Francesca: I’m going before it becomes too late. What do you think of me? You are insulting me. And I liked you, I honoured you. Paolo: You’ll honour me even more. Francesca: Leave me alone. (She’s trying to pull herself out but Paolo holds her tight, he goes on his knees and kisses her hand. Angela and Gianciotto enter). (Brumec 1991, 24)

In Dante’s *Canto*, the kiss represents the point of culmination, yet in the play the culminating point is triggered when Gianciotto sees the painting of his nude wife. Moreover, he sees Francesca’s scar and according to the prophecy every man other than her husband who sees the scar is to die together with Francesca. Why does Brumec substitute the reading of the novel from Dante’s *Canto* with painting? Francesca’s scar and the prophecy related to it function as a framework for the whole play: it sets in motion the action, it is the main means of reaching Angela’s aim, it intensifies the moment of the revelation and it is a referential nucleus of the play. The painting presents both the personality of the creator and the representative. The visual aspect, having a dramatizing effect, is more easily related to the content of the play. Brumec supplies a persuasive illustration of actants’ functions to the spectators just as Dante does to the readers of that age who were more than familiar with the novels of Chrétien de Troyes whose work on Arthurian subjects represents some of the best regarded medieval literature. The spatiality of the painting allows a dramatic representation of the tragic end. This is the crucial moment when genre differences come into light. Brumec utilizes a more expressive and adequate medium for the stage. The image has the quality of finality because its nature constitutes an intermediary between perception and sense, and it contributes to the sense of the whole (Švacov 130). Furthermore, Brumec uses other means in order to renovate an already known situation and a conflict. This proves that the citation introduces a conflicted relationship consisting of the mechanisms of invention and a dialogue with the tradition. Mislav Brumec evokes the image from his own experience and memory. The idea of composing the play came to him after having read the Croatian translation of the *Hell* from 1919, which was illustrated by the Croatian painter Mirko Rački. Brumec was particularly inspired by the first illustration from which he adopted

the tragic end of Paolo and Francesca where they are presented while hanging on the wall (M. Brumec, personal communication, September 7, 2007).

4 Conclusions

Intertextuality, one of the central ideas in contemporary literary theory, is not a transparent term. Despite its confident utilization by many theorists and critics, it cannot be invoked in an uncomplicated manner. Intertextuality promotes a new vision of meaning, and thus of authorship and reading: a vision resistant to ingrained notions of originality, uniqueness, singularity and autonomy (Allen 2000). Furthermore, the theory of intertextuality insists that a text cannot be hermetic and isolated. Firstly, the writer is the reader of texts and before he is a creator of texts, and therefore the work of art is shot through with references, quotations and influences of every kind (Worton and Still 1991). The theory of intertextuality we opted for is that of a Croatian theoretician of literature Dubravka Oraić Tolić together with some notions of Ljiljana Ina Gjurgjan, Pavao Pavličić and Helena Peričić, who in their writings directly theorize the intertextual procedures within Croatian literature in the Postmodern age. The two types of text analysis that we applied are centripetal and centrifugal. The centripetal text analysis relates to Brumec's borrowing from other literary texts such as Dante's 5th *Canto* and Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, while Brumec's adoption of some motive fragments from Rački's illustration is subject to centrifugal text analysis. The pretext citations used by Brumec are intrasemiotic or interliterary because the pretext is a literary text, and on the other hand, they are intersemiotic because pretext belongs to other arts. In this theoretical framework, the original and coded citations are distinguished in *Francesca da Rimini*. The originals are marked by quotation marks, while the coded ones, partially matching the pretext, primarily refer to the borrowing of common motives such as love, passion, jealousy, lust and murder. The higher and conclusive instance of analysis is to be carried out on the basis of the quotation quadrangle where each of four sides presents different functions: semantic, syntactic, pragmatic and a global, cultural function (Oraić Tolić 1990). Dante's 5th *Canto* represents for Brumec a semantic model so that the quotation sense is reached on the basis of mimesis and analogy and thus defined as quotation imitation. This kind of a postmodern quotation process is also defined as illustrative (Oraić Tolić 1991) or conventional (Pavličić 1989). However, we cannot exclude the fact that Brumec reinforces the semantic of the play by using also contrast especially in depicting characters, thus we cannot exclude the illuminative (Oraić Tolić 1990)

or unconventional (Pavličić 1989) postmodern quotation process. Syntactically, Brumec uses the open montage construction principle in a way that neither the number of quotations is limited nor is their position determined. Pragmatically, Brumec's mode of quotation is defined as static pragmatic because his work is oriented towards the recipient who should possess certain knowledge in order to decode the new text, primarily of the pretext. Because of this he chooses a pretext with which a recipient has had an earlier opportunity to become familiar during his education. Postmodern writers are oriented towards their readers and their need for the recognition of the text, thus they offer already known significations from the traditional vaults and usually put themselves in a subordinate position when referring to their models. Yet, the global cultural function cannot be considered without rethinking poetics Brumec's work belongs to. In the 1990s, The Young Croatian Drama put a stop to the linear development of Croatian dramatic literature. Brumec creates a cynical subversive drama in which pure kindness and benevolence are totally helpless in the face of evil. Regardless of thematic and formal echoes, the ideological aspect is omitted. The distance taken from the earlier dramatic stream proves that *Francesca da Rimini* breaks away from the existing canon and it has a representative function of its own.

Finally, Mislav Brumec converts literary and historical facts into the experiential reality connecting the Croatian literary dramatic space with medieval Italian environment. He takes literary and historical personalities and converts them into dramatic figures who from objects become the subjects, proving that fictionalizing makes historical material ahistorical. One of the effects of this discursive pluralizing is that the centre of both fictive and historical narrative is dispersed. Margins and edges gain new value. The *ex-centric* as both off-centre and de-centred gets attention. Brumec dialogises with tradition but also applies certain mechanisms of invention. This study once more proves that a text is not a self-sufficient whole and that it does not function as a closed system.

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BEATRICE NICKEL

Concrete Poetry as an Intercultural and a Medial Phenomenon

1 Introduction

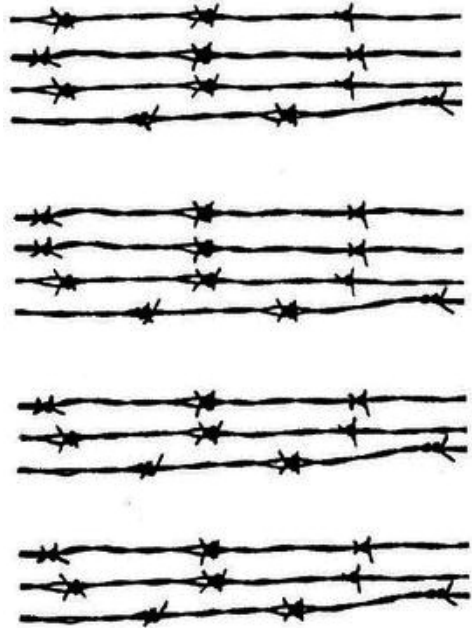
Concrete Poetry is an intrinsically international phenomenon, and that essentially for two reasons: Firstly, Concrete Poetry is produced almost all over the globe. Its naming can be described as a “transatlantic baptism” (Clüver 2000, 33) celebrated by Eugen Gomringer and Décio Pignatari in the famous *Hochschule für Gestaltung* in Ulm in 1955. The most famous anthologies of Concrete Poetry are highly international, which is sometimes already made clear in the title, e.g. *Concrete Poetry: An International Anthology* (1967), edited by Emmett Williams and *Concrete Poetry: A World View* (1970), edited by Mary Ellen Solt.

Secondly, Concrete Poetry is meant to be received and understood internationally. Therefore, it could be interpreted as one possible positive answer to the question whether poetry can be free from any links to a particular national linguistic code. But how can this aim be achieved? First of all and most importantly, concrete poems are marked by the search for an international language. This language is largely marked by the reduction or even renunciation of verbal signs. These are largely replaced by pictorial or – in the realm of Concrete Sound Poetry – by asemantic phonetic ones.

2 Intercultural visual concrete poetry

Visual Concrete Poetry is *per se* an intermedial phenomenon that connects poetry and visual arts. This intermediality is closely linked to the international status of these poems. My first example illustrates this international status:

Figure 1:
Avelino de Araújo, Apartheid Soneto
(1988).



Here we are confronted with a visual sonnet containing no verbal signs – except for the title that guides the interpretation in a certain direction:

Temáticamente el título en relación con la imagen gráfica del poema denuncia el apartheid y visualmente se denuncia cualquier forma de represión de las libertades del individuo. (López Fernández 2006, 108)

By the way, visual poems – socially as well as politically engaged – are quite typical of the concrete poets in Brasil. This applies particularly to the group *Noigandres*:

The Brazilian Noigandres group never put aside its concern with social commitment (political engagé poems) [...]. (Campos 2005, 9)

Without the verbal indication provided by the title the interpretation of the pieces of barbed wire composing the sonnet would be entirely free. One might argue that this title demands a certain linguistic competence, but this does not derogate the international status of the poem. Since the title consists of only two terms it is enough to look these terms up in a convenient dictionary. To make things even easier for the readers a glossary is annexed in some anthologies.

The *Apartheid Soneto* implicates a general statement that is true for all examples of Concrete Poetry: Since the pieces of barbed wire are arranged according to the formal standards of the sonnet – at least according to the formal standards of the romanian types – they are meant to be visual equivalents of written verbal signs. Their disposition on the page imitates the gesture of writing. Therefore, we have to apply a new conception of text that is not restricted to verbal signs but could consist of any sign from any sign system. Hence, Concrete Poetry stands for an extension of the terms ‘text’ and ‘language’. According to the Italian poet Ugo Carrega

*1 tutto è linguaggio
2 non vedo quindi per
ché la poesia debba
continuare a servirsi
soltanto di parole*

(as cited in Accame 1977, 111; see also Weiss, 1984)

Concrete Poetry is marked not only by the search for an international language but also by an extreme awareness of the important role the medial presentation of a poem plays. Its conception is McLuhan’s well-known thesis: “The Medium is the Message”. As the poet Pierre Garnier has put it in *Spatialisme et poésie concrète* (1968): “le moyen technique employé crée la poésie autant que le poète. Le magnétophone, le disque, la télévision doivent créer leur propre forme de poésie.” (Garnier 1968, 134)

Not surprisingly, the poets in question used to employ technical innovations (i.e. new printing and recording techniques, holography, computer programmes etc.) to produce their poems.

The importance of the medial presentation could be illustrated best by so-called remediated poems, meaning that a poem was transposed from one medium into another. In the following example a visual – and therefore an international – sonnet was ‘translated’ into a three-dimensional object. Since

the poet did not include any verbal sign the sonnet is meant to be received and understood – at least hypothetically – all over the world.

Let us first of all consider the printed version of the poem (Aguiar 1985).

In his *Soneto Ecológico* Fernando Aguiar presents us pictograms of different tree species instead of verbal signs. It is a non-verbal sonnet. As announced earlier, this printed sonnet was taken as a guideline for a three-dimensional poem (see Espinosa, 2007).

This tree-sonnet can be found in Matosinhos (Portugal). The planting was performed in 2005 and the project was completed in 2007.

In an interview (in November 2007) Fernando Aguiar described his remediated sonnet as follows:

Éste es un poema ambiental constituido por 70 árboles dispuestos en 14 filas de cinco árboles cada una, configurando la estructura de un soneto. Y con la 'rima' dada por el género de los árboles. El SONETO ECOLÓGICO, que es también un parque junto a un nuevo barrio residencial, en Matosinhos, una ciudad en el norte de Portugal, tiene 110 metros de fondo por 36 metros de ancho, y es un soneto vivo, que respira y crece permanentemente, y que se va modificando visualmente de acuerdo a las estaciones del año. (Espinosa, 2007)

Both the printed and the three-dimensional sonnet are meant to be internationally understood. Therefore, the poet has not included any verbal sign material. Hence, it is absolutely impossible to translate the two sonnets.

Finally, I would like to present the virtual poem *Legible City* to you, produced by Jeffrey Shaw and Dirk Groeneveld. The reception of this poem is not at all possible without using the computer. Besides, the reception necessitates a high degree of interactivity on the reader's side. In *Legible City* the concept of interactivity is not restricted to the mental realm but it also includes the physical dimension: In front of a huge screen the reader sits on a bicycle. This screen shows a city that is exclusively constituted by oversized letters instead of houses etc. There are three different versions of *Legible City* being based on three different cities as models, namely Manhattan (USA), Amsterdam (Netherlands) and Karlsruhe (Germany). Once more a poem is presented on a global scale.

By using the pedals and the handle-bar the reader is able to navigate through the virtual city and that by varying his speed. In doing so, he is able to generate any text. Therefore the reception is marked by an extremely high degree of subjectivity. It implies the fact that "das vormal's statische Material der Signifikanten... beweglich [wird], und seine Bewegung... in Abhängigkeit von der physischen Präsenz des

Rezipienten [erfolgt]. Der Körper wird daher selbst zu einem Signifikanten des Werkes neben anderen, die ihn mitqualifizieren” (Block 1997, 196).

Since the reader can navigate through a virtual city while he is riding a static bicycle the boundary between the virtual and the physical space is undermined (Block 1997, 198). Besides, there is no difference between poetry and play. This connection can already be found within the writings of the so-called ‘father’ of the Concrete Poetry after 1945, namely the Swiss-Bolivian poet Eugen Gomringer. According to him, his constellations can be described as a “geistiges spielfeld” (Gomringer 1969, 61). Once more it is important to note that the playful character of *Legible City* manifests itself not only in the intellectual field but in concrete actions performed by its readers.

The following screenshot is meant to illustrate my previous explanations:

Figure 2:
Jeffrey Shaw/Dirk Groeneveld, *Legible City* (1989-1991) (stills)



The city in *Legible City* is exclusively built of letters – a method which alludes to the long tradition of the so-called loci-method as an important part of the antique mnemotechnics as well as to the common metaphor of a text being a city (cf. for example Wittgenstein 1984, 245). Besides, the poem reminds us of the fact that nowadays we are permanently surrounded by written signs – at least in large cities. In this respect, *Legible City* is comparable to Davis Knoebel’s collection *Click Poetry: Words in Space* (2001). In his preface the poet explicitly pointed out this aspect:

We live surrounded by words. They lie discarded on wrappers beneath our feet. They adhere to windows at eye level and to billboards high above. We perceive these words in no particular order. They are part of life’s jumble, unlikely to yield beauty or truth. But what if they did? What if we could walk among the words of novels and poems? What if we wrote with words in space? (Knoebel, 2001)

There is a concrete precursor of *Legible City*, namely *Cybernetic Landscapes* (1971-73), produced by Aaron Marcus. In a commentary given in 1975 he described the technological preconditions of his *Cybernetic Landscapes* in the following way:

At the Computer Graphics Laboratory at Princeton University, I have developed a series of cybernetic landscapes utilizing programs in Fortran for a PDP-10 digital computer and an Evans and Southerland LDS-1 interactive computer graphics display system. The cathode ray tube device permits images in stereo and color as well as two-dimensional pictures which can be altered smoothly and instantaneously. (Marcus, 1985)

3 Intercultural Concrete Sound Poetry

Sound poetry originates from the linking of poetry and music. Therefore, sound poetry is also a highly intermedial phenomenon. In contrast to other sound poets Bob Cobbing used to fix his poems on paper by producing a kind of notation. These poetical scores were meant to function as animations or – using the poet’s terminology – “Song Signals” (Lentz 2000, 877). The poet himself explained his conception in the preface to *Three Poems for Voice and Movement* (1974) as follows:

They were the first of my poems in which the notation was directly conceived as a signal to the body as well as to the voice. The poems have been danced from the score as well as being performed by a choir of voices, or by a single voice and instruments (flute, percussion, etc.). (Cobbing 1974, 33)

In the score I will focus on the fact that Cobbing substituted letters by lip-prints. Their arrangement on the paper is suggestive of imitating the gesture of writing. In contrast to conventional written texts these poems can be understood by an international circle of readers. Here is the example (as cited in Lentz 2000, 882) taken from *The Five Vowels* (1974).

As the title suggests, the poem is reserved to the twenty-first letter of the Latin alphabet, whose visuality constitutes the whole poem. At the same time the lip-prints in the shape of this letter allude to the phonetic dimension of letters and – in a larger perspective – also of writing: “This text is built up from the imprint of lips on a page, the physical impressions of the sound being made.” (Sheppard 2005, 222)



Figure 3:
Bob Cobbing, details from U (1974)

The following example (Lemaître, 1965, without paging) was produced by one of the chief Lettrist poets, namely Maurice Lemaître. Like the previous poems, it illustrates the international status of Concrete Poetry:

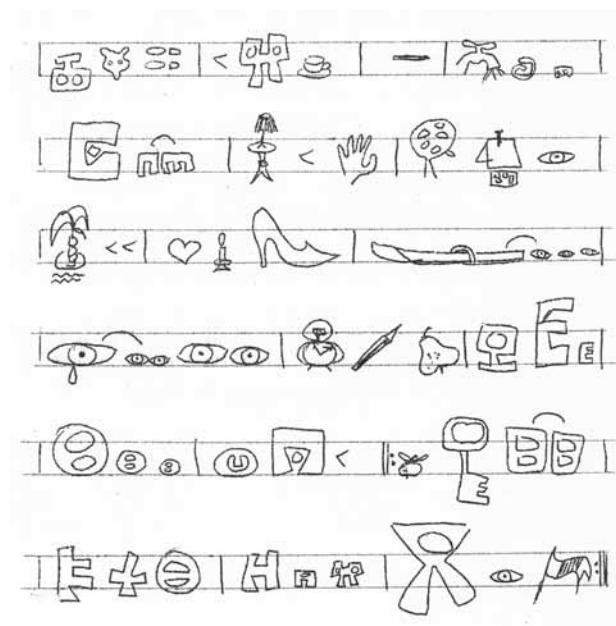


Figure 4:
Maurice Lemaître, Valse hypérgraphique (1965)

As one might notice, we are again confronted with an international poem that is composed exclusively of pictorial signs. This is already announced in the title by the adjective ‘hypérgraphique’. Here, the interrelationship between image and poem and hence the grade of intermediality is comparatively high. This goes along with the fact that this sound poem cannot be performed acoustically. This is even more surprising taking into account that Lemaître has arranged the signs on lines that resemble staves. Furthermore, he has chosen the term ‘valse’ which belongs to the realm of music and dance. Summing up, the poet raises certain expectations by using a terminology whose connotations are not fulfilled by the poem.

The next poem, which will be my last example, belongs to Pierre Garnier’s *Prototypes / Textes pour une architecture*. The first part of the title indicates that the poems are produced to be reproduced whereas the second part indicates that these poems were explicitly meant to be written on buildings. Therefore, one might describe them as architectural texts or poems. For this reason, they are a matter of poetic intermediality. In the following quotation Pierre Garnier described this type of intermediality as follows: “Collaboration poète-architecte rendue possible par la suppression de l’inscription qui sollicitait la lecture et rompait l’espace.” (Garnier 2008, 209)

Figure 5:
Ilse and Pierre Garnier,
cinema (1965).



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Cinema is one of the few examples in Pierre Garnier’s poetry that were written in English. Considering the fact that in the 20th century English was the lingua franca this poem at least to some degree meets Pierre Garnier’s conception of a supranational poetry. Above all, *cinema* is characterized by the kinetic impression it gives: written signs seem to transform themselves in a dynamic picture. The

poet achieves this by repeating the term ‘cinema’ in such a way that the product is a rectangle consisting of diagonal lines. These lines resemble the flickering during black-and-white films whereas the rectangle resembles the big screen. Therefore, the visual arrangement reproduces the semantic content of the poem. The highly regular alternation of bright lines and dark ones creates a kinetic impression. In creating this impression, the white space between the black written signs of the typewriter is as important as they are. This reminds us of Mallarmé’s dictum: “Les ‘blancs’ en effet, assument l’importance, frappent d’abord....” (Mallarmé 2003, 442) Not surprisingly, Pierre Garnier calls Mallarmé as one of the forerunners of his spatial poetry.

In *cinema* the graphical arrangement of the text has become an important means of communicating the aesthetic message. In the context of Concrete Poetry this phenomenon has been described as the iconization of the relationship between the signifier and its corresponding signified: “the relation of verbal signifier and its signified, ordinarily considered to be conventional and thus, in Peircean terms, symbolic, has become iconic.” (Clüver 1998, 22) According to Charles Sanders Peirce, the term ‘cinema’ is a symbolic sign but the shape of the poem has by contrast to be classified as an iconic sign. Hence the poem undermines the arbitrariness of languages.

cinema lacks the conventional syntax, which is replaced by a spatial or topological syntax: “On perçoit immédiatement l’enjeu de ce remplacement de la chronosyntaxe (celle qui s’exerce au fil du temps de la lecture linéaire) par des syntaxes spatiales.” (Edeline 1981, 8) For this reason Pierre Garnier’s spatial poems require a special kind of reception that Garnier describes as follows: “Le poème visuel ne se “lit” pas. On se laisse “impressionner” par la figure générale du poème, puis par chaque mot perçu globalement au hasard.” (Garnier 1968, 136)

4 Conclusions

The global or international status of Concrete Poetry manifests itself not only in the variety of the countries of origin of the participating poets, but also – and more importantly – in the poetic manifestations themselves. The poems are meant to be internationally read and understood. This theoretical aim could be achieved by producing poems that are composed of signs that do not belong to any nationally restricted linguistic code.

Besides, the aspect of the reduction of the signs employed to a minimum of aesthetic information enforces the international status of Concrete Poetry. This

applies to all different kinds of Concrete Poetry (visual, acoustic, three-dimensional etc.). Nevertheless, the present paper is focused on visual Concrete Poetry and Concrete Sound Poetry.

The international character of Concrete Poetry is closely linked to its intermedial nature. Concrete Poetry could be properly described as a media-poetry and therefore as a ratification of Marshall McLuhan's well-known thesis "The Medium is the Message". According to Philippe Bootz, these poems are "technotextes [...], c'est-à-dire des textes qui se penchent sur leurs conditions techniques d'existence" (Bootz, 2005). Since the media are largely free from linguistic codes, the importance that must be ascribed to the medial production, presentation and reception of Concrete Poetry fortifies its international as well as intercultural status.

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ALESSANDRA KORNER

Literature for a Social and Cultural Integration

1 Introduction

The ambition of this study is to reflect on the importance of a substantial and precocious literary teaching element to students who are learning Italian as a Second Language.

Literature has the great power of enchanting people and catching their attention, but unfortunately at school we are usually too worried about didactic demands and grammatical constrictions, to fully enhance those characteristics.

The main aim of learning a language should be the internalization of the culture and the world view of the native speakers, with a consequent enrichment of the interior process of culturization; and since the literary product has been defined as the expression of a society, it becomes essential for the cultural knowledge of the country we are learning the language of. (De Staël 1800; Culler 1999)

In fact, if it is true that literature is to society as words are to man, there would not be a better way to know the culture and the reality around us, than doing it through the study of its literature and its writers, witnesses of their time and their world.

2 Literature Within the Outline of Linguistic Education

In supporting of this thesis, the ultimate didactic techniques have assigned more importance to the development of the communicative competences that enable students to interact with other people, using not only intellectual faculties but even emotional ones.

Indeed, for the importance assigned to the development of the emotional and affective dimension of the communication and to the enlargement of the learning experience, the use of literary texts has known, in the last years, a new valorization in the didactics of Italian as a Second Language / Foreign Language and even the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* mentions the importance of the national and the local literatures within the European cultural inheritance and defines them as precious resources that have to be enhanced. (Ardissino and Stroppa 2009)

Literary texts enrich students as people, develop their beings and, interacting with their culture, make them more open-minded, strengthening their abilities to relate to the global world.

They provide students a superb way to the culture of the population they are studying the language about and they have a wide educational function; literature, in fact, induces a deep emotional growth of the students' soul and allows them to develop the knowledge of the sociocultural context in which the communicative acts of the new language take place. By doing this, literature becomes vital for developing a series of links between the two cultures and for the achievement of a more complex cultural integration.

For those students who have previous experience in the literary field, studying literature could give a grounding for interesting and provocative comparisons. Similarly, literature could be leveraged with students coming from cultures with a rich oral tradition, where the written literary corpus is quite limited; in these cases, asking students to tell short stories coming from their culture, maybe before reading a text about the same theme, could be highly motivating for them.

However there is always the risk that students erroneously believe that a novel represents the whole of a social context when in reality it is just the representation of a limited sector of the society and above all in a very precise historical period. The teacher's task will be to present Italian culture in its variety of forms and in its regional proveniences, preventing that students think that all Italy behaves and

talks in the same way, since, as we know, the Italian culture is extremely variable and it is made up of a mixture of the regional components.

3 Which Material to Use

The selection of the material is extremely important; some times the best choice is to select texts which do not belong to the traditional literary canon, but are able to reflect our students' lives and interests. To the texts generally presented in class, infact, is generally assigned a high prestige, but most of the time they appear too far from our students' interests and totally irrelevant for them; consequently, being obliged to read texts so distant from their experiences and from their social background risks rising their frustration and inferiority complex.

Teaching literature should become a sort of existential experience, a mirror in which every student can see reflected not only texts full of words but himself as a human being.

But as we know students' involvement largely depends on psychological factors correlated with the motivation to learning in general and to the specific didactic context; if students are not involved and stimulated by the learning situation, the neurogenesis phenomenon, through which they acquire new knowledge, does not activate. (Daloiso 2009)

Choosing texts for the classes though is very important and it becomes determinant in the didactic process to motivate students and to capture their attention. A material that is not stimulating or not suitable for students' abilities, and that means too difficult or too easy, risks undermining the achievement of the set goals.

Moreover, it is even essential that students do not judge the texts by their appearance; for this reason foot notes, paratextual elements and short periods are perfect to simplify the students' approach to literary texts.

The differences between texts structured for an elementary linguistic competence and those created for advanced students are remarkable. The number of pages that an advanced student can face is definitely higher compared to the number we can propose to a beginner who is approaching literary texts for the first time; we do not have to threaten him with pages and pages full of words, but we have to feed his love for reading with short stories, well organized in the pages, that would be even more eased with images and paratextual elements.

Generally it is good to start from a twenty page simple story with few characters and with a linear plot, to get to a well articulated story full of events that could be presented at a higher level of linguistic competence.

Furthermore, if the text is aimed at young students we suggest to use songs and nursery rhymes that would sound motivating thanks to their rhythm and musicality; at the same time it is important, while teaching to kids and teenagers to respect the general principle according to which young students learn “playing and doing”. (Beraldo and Celentin 2007) The activities and the techniques should enthrall and amuse them and the teacher could even use ludic and activities such as dramatization, transcodification, matching and joining images and paragraphs.

4 The Introduction of Literature in the Language Courses

For a long time the insertion of texts from Italian literary tradition has been introduced in schools in the latest stages of learning, when students had already obtained a successful linguistic knowledge and had all the abilities to understand the deviances typical of literary texts. (Lavinio 1990)

The reason is that, even today, literary texts, especially the poetic ones, are considered as a category of highly elaborated texts unsuitable for those who are not familiar with the richness and the variety of the Italian literature and in particular to those who still have not reached a good knowledge of the target language.

The idea would be to create a kind of osmosis between language and literature and introduce literary texts gradually even from an elementary stage, involving in this way students’ whole personality and setting off an interaction with the culture of the language they are learning. (Ardissino and Stroppa 2009)

Besides, sometimes these texts contain new terms that are perfect to facilitate the students’ lexical enrichment and they could include unknown grammatical structures, whose decoding could just be gathered without a full understand of their functions, on the base of inferences from the verbal context.

And since every student who is learning a language likes practicing not only what he has learned but also what is inside his cultural background and his personal experience, presenting literary texts, even when they are not simplified, could be introduced quite early with a high percentage of success.

Therefore, at the end of the first year of an Italian language course we could think of presenting texts of contemporary authors on which we could develop reading, comprehension and writing activities.

Though it would be fundamental to adopt some devices to prompt students to the literary practice; as for example: presenting short texts which will not be rejected at first sight, easing students with paratextual elements and illustrations which allow cultural observations and footnotes which facilitate the first approach to the text, choosing texts which could be psychologically relevant for adolescents even if by doing so we ignore important texts of the literary canon.

If they study more they would have the chance to plug a gap, at the very least they would have nourished an interest for literature.

5 Reading a Literary Text

To avoid a pointless reading of texts, it would be fundamental to motivate students to a critical analysis of the texts and give them precise objectives to get during the first phases of analysis; in fact, if they do not know why they are reading, they do not even know how to read.

At the beginning the text has to be examined in a global way, through a quick reading for a first verification of the hypothesis students have made up, or with the aim of picking out single elements.

This first phase is correlated by activities to do before, during and after the text listening or reading; doing this students will enter the text through a guided comprehension way and reading will not stay without an immediate aim.

The global approach to the text is usually more effective in a cooperative learning perspective, where two or three students look together for the sense of the text; in this phase it is very important not to reduce their self-esteem and demotivate them in their linguistic and hermeneutic abilities, and for this the activities have to be simple and without any possibilities of making mistakes.

The passage from a global perception to an analytic one, indeed from a superficial comprehension to a deeper one, has to be originally done under the teacher's guidance; some activities, on the contrary, could be assigned as homework to be done individually.

The analysis should not have to be done by the teacher, since it should be guided by him with questions whose aim is not verifying the comprehension but indeed stimulating reflection; the answers should be discussed in class to clarify the different interpretations and possible misunderstandings.

In the final phase of the synthesis is important to spur the emotional and the existential dimension of the students, through discussions about their personal appreciation of the text, to evaluate if the texts we have been working on had provoked reactions in the students' mind.

Then we have the interpretation phase, a critical moment of the psychological experience towards which every literary teaching should aim to.

The hermeneutic moment is critical for training young people. Texts, in fact, are not read to be described, but to enucleate the meaning and enrich ourselves through them; the description is necessary to learn how a text works and how to listen to it; but it is just an instrument which can help the interpretation and it cannot be considered as its substitute.

Unfortunately, however, while it is not difficult to teach students to describe a text, it is much more difficult to teach them the art of interpretation.

But once the process is in progress, students will learn how to reason their hermeneutic hypothesis, how to persuade the interlocutors and how to respect their opinions, stating at the same time their own ideas.

It is always positive then to connect the texts themes with real life episodes or real events which happened in their own countries and promote the comparison between cultures, furthering class discussions upon a touching theme connected with the text.

Besides, since the analyzed text is always part of a bigger opera, it would be good, to explore the world around our text and that could obviously allow us a better comprehension of it. For this reason some biographical information about the poem or the text's author are extremely useful, as the circumstances that induce the literary production or the life-time in which the text has been produced, the author's psychology, his social and political choices and his cultural dimension.

Moreover it is very stimulating for students to look for similar themes in the poetics of other European authors which differ both in language and native culture and try to find parallels between the culture to which the examined text belongs and his native language literature.

We are then convinced that practical activities, in which students could and should face themselves and with the difficulties of living in a foreign country are essential; extremely useful are theatrical representation of the texts, project work activities which, coherent with the learning by doing methods, spark the interest of the students more than any other mechanical exercises, helping them learning a second language.

6 Conclusions

We could finally state that literary education is a fundamental subcomponent of linguistic education, since only within linguistic education it is possible to acquire the instruments to get to a good literary education and this one ends by enforcing itself the linguistic one, thereby completing a positive circle.

Literary texts, in fact, both narrative or poetic, involve all the human faculties (language, thoughts, fantasy and feelings) activated in that special communicative act which is reading and discussing a text, and they seem perfect in developing and consolidating the linguistic-communicative competences within a wider intercultural competence.

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VERUSCA COSTENARO

The Importance of Being Intercultural: Introducing Multicultural Literature in Italian Secondary Education

1 Introduction

The present paper draws the teaching/learning community's attention to crucial topics in today's world; such as the emergence of pluricultural societies in which groups of people of different cultural origins live together. This proposal is aimed at increasing the use of contemporary multicultural literature in the language curriculum in general and in the curriculum of EFL and Italian as an L1 in particular, and is addressed to teachers and learners of Italian high schools.

The main goal is to guide learners into a process of intercultural sensitivity (Tway 1989), openness and appreciation of cultural diversity. This paper illustrates the theory of, and the rationale for, the use of multicultural literature. Samples of contemporary multicultural literature in the form of poetry which could be introduced in the classrooms of EFL and Italian as an L1 are also included (cf. Appendix).

2 Multicultural Literature and Education in Today's Societies

The context for expanding the multicultural curriculum is all around us, and this did not escape the European Union's (EU) notice, back in May 2008. The EU's Council of European Ministers of Foreign Affairs published a White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue, entitled "Living Together as Equals in Dignity." (*Libro bianco sul dialogo interculturale. "Vivere insieme in pari dignità" 2008*).

This document mainly focuses on the increasing cultural diversity spreading in the countries of the European Union, a diversity which on the one hand is embedded in the history of Europe, and on the other hand is boosted by the phenomenon of globalization. The White Paper proposes to manage this cultural diversity in a democratic manner, i.e., by fostering the emergence of societies based on inclusion, solidarity, awareness and mutual understanding, intercultural dialogue and full respect of all residents' human rights and dignity. The White Paper states that, in such increasingly varied and fluid societies, we need to find a common ground including all ethnic, linguistic, cultural or religious differences, in order to secure social cohesion and prevent all cases of intolerance, racism and conflicts.

The launch of the White Paper has some important implications for educational institutions: it implies that one of our educational system's tasks and duties is to assist young learners in becoming not only aware of their own cultural background and the extent to which it can influence the way they think and interact with others (Weigl 2002), but also intercultural citizens open to diversity and intercultural dialogue.

This educational proposal intends to guide Italian young adults into a process of intercultural awareness and appreciation by means of a tool that is well-known by learners, i.e., literature, and in particular contemporary multicultural literature. There are many definitions of multicultural literature. The classic definition refers to the body of literary writings by people who are members of groups considered to be outside the socio-political mainstream of the white Anglo-Saxon majority currently residing in the United States – mainly African Americans, Asian Americans, Native Americans, and Hispanics (Bishop 1993). This term is usually applied to books for children and young adults. In the context of multicultural learning, however, a more precise description is necessary.

"Multicultural literature" is literature which portrays the history, customs, values, language, and other features of the members of a specific cultural group

(Sims 1982) who resides in a geographical place different from the one it comes from. This cultural group is normally considered as a “minority group” living in the same geographical space of a “mainstream” cultural group. In particular, this paper considers multicultural literature in the EFL curriculum the works by authors who were born in a country where English is not the native language but has an important role as an official language (e.g., Hong Kong and India), who are now residing in countries where English is a native language (e.g., U.S.) and write in English. From a *genre* perspective, this type of literature is related to what is normally termed “postcolonial literature.” There is still no agreement as to what this term clearly denotes. However, in general postcolonial literature is referred to that body of literary writings by people living or coming from countries formerly colonized by other nations (e.g., India, a former British colony), the literature emerging from the historical encounter between culturally distinct and geographically separated societies, where for some extended period one society controlled the other politically and economically (Hogan 2000). In this paper, the broader term “multicultural literature,” which can include the works by authors who do not come from places that were colonized by other nations, is preferable. “Multicultural” implies “cross-cultural” or “transnational,” which presupposes displacements, crossing traditional national boundaries, and transitions from one site to another.

The appendix includes two poems for the EFL curriculum. One is by Marilyn Chin (1994), who was born in Hong Kong in 1955, moved to the United States as a child and is now living in California. The latter is by Meena Alexander (2002), who was born in India in 1951, was raised in Sudan, studied in England, moved to the United States in 1979 and is now living in New York City. With reference to the Italian L2 curriculum, multicultural literature is considered as works by non-Italian-born authors who are now residing in Italy and write in Italian. The appendix includes two poems, one by Barbara Serdakowski (2006), who was born in Poland in 1964, moved to Italy in 1996 and is now living in Florence, and one by Melita Richter, who was born in Croatia, moved to Italy in 1979 and is now living in Trieste. The choice of these specific authors may also allow for interdisciplinary links with other disciplines, such as history (e.g., The Yugoslav wars).

The use of multicultural literature in the secondary school curriculum may remind of the notion of “multicultural education,” which originated in the United States in the late 1960s in the wake of the civil rights movement as a field of study and a discipline whose major goal was to create equal educational opportunities for students from non-American racial, ethnic, social-class, and cultural groups. Multicultural programs were aimed at developing multicultural

content throughout the disciplines; to incorporate a variety of different viewpoints and perspectives in the curriculum; and to transform the canon, ultimately developing a new paradigm for the curriculum (May 1999). Yet, over the years multicultural education has become a debated field and contentious battleground. Not only has there been little agreement on a precise conceptualization of multicultural education, but it has also been asserted that this type of education should have the potential to transform pedagogy for *all* learners, and not just minorities (May 1999).

Likewise, this paper proposes the introduction of multicultural content in the curriculum not to make it stand out as something different or new in relation to “canonical” literature, but to make it gradually become a natural and integral feature of every school curriculum – just like pluricultural, multi-ethnic societies should in the long run be viewed as something natural. The term “multicultural” is here used to refer to a type of literature which brings together authors of varied cultural origins, but does not intend to consider them as “outsiders.” On the contrary, the ultimate goal is to make them be part of an integrated intercultural curriculum which may realistically reflect the intercultural pluralism of today’s societies. Due to their new social and demographic features, current societies and educational institutions should not continue to treat a particular monocultural lens as normative. The traditional literary canon (stories of Caucasian American or European origins, as well as the Western thought underlying them) is de-centralized in favour of a wider intercultural vision, where what is typically considered as “marginal” literature acquires a more central space (Bhabha 1994), in an attempt to become a natural part of the school curriculum.

3 Italian Teenagers and Their Perception of Cultural Diversity

The phenomenon of cultural diversity is not a new one, here in Europe or anywhere else. The current delineation of the European continent has been affected by several factors over time, such as intra-continental migrations, the redrawing of borders, the impact of the phenomenon of colonialism and multinational empires. (*Libro bianco sul dialogo interculturale. “Vivere insieme in pari dignità”* 2008) Yet, culturally diversity has usually been limited and embedded within a policy of positive social inclusion without the emergence of any major risks of social cohesion. In recent decades, on the other hand, social migration across nations

has increased vigorously, favouring the spreading of cultural diversification. Europe has attracted migrants and asylum-seekers from various places around the world, in search of a better life or simply humane conditions of life, as well as the labour mobility brought by the EU and Schengen Treaty. Furthermore, the phenomenon of globalization – alongside the revolution in technologies and telecommunications – has contributed to facilitating people's movements in space and time, thus increasing the opportunities of face-to-face intercultural interactions. Under these historical circumstances, the adoption of a general intercultural approach based on openness, understanding and broadmindedness has become more crucial than ever.

The latest report on immigration registered 4,235,000 migrants residing in Italy at the beginning of 2010. The number of migrant children enrolled in schools has reached 673,592, with an incidence of 7.5% on the scholastic population (Caritas/Migrantes 2010).

In 2008, within the European year of Intercultural Dialogue, a significant research project, *L'Altro/a tra noi*, was carried out in Italy on the perception of cultural differences from the part of Italian secondary school learners (Aquario et al. 2009), and in particular students of 17 years of age attending the fourth grade of high schools. This project was conducted in four Italian regions (i.e., Veneto, Emilia Romagna, Tuscany, and Puglia) by a group of researchers from several universities (Padova, Milano Bicocca, Milano Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Parma, Verona, Siena, Bari, and the Accademia Europea di Firenze). The outcomes were compared to the data available for other European countries. The data was collected through an ethnographic interview and a focus group interview. The results relevant to the purposes of this paper can be summed up as follows (Aquario et al. 2009):

- according to the students' responses, the number of migrants residing in Italy and in their cities is overestimated, irrespective of their real presence.
- The learners' perception of the notion of culture is a static, deterministic one, where cultural traits are generalized and stereotyped, i.e., one ethnic group = one nation/culture/identity (e.g., all Spanish are considered friendly, so they are preferred to students of other origins).
- Migrants are viewed exclusively as individuals in search of a job, as workers deprived of a personal past and social roles, e.g., not as mothers, fathers, sons, or friends, etc.
- In their responses, learners express their wish to keep their culture, language, religion, and set of moral values separated from those of migrants.

– In general, the learners' responses are indicative of an ethnocentric attitude, still imbued with ethnocentric prejudices. Some responses also show the existence of discriminatory behaviours against migrants.

These results are of particular relevance as far as this educational proposal is concerned. They definitely show that the need for the educational system to act as an intercultural model, intercultural mediator and facilitator for today's learners faced with a multi-ethnic and fluid society is particularly urgent.

4 Rediscussing Words in Today's Societies and Schools

In the course of their project *L'Altro/a tra noi* (Aquario et al. 2009), the researchers remarked how some words - such as "ethnicity," "identity," or "culture" - tend to recur with frequency and rigidity in today's discourses on the social and symbolic construction of migrants' perception. The researchers proposed to "problematize" these words in relation to the changes that have been and are being experienced by societies. These words are here presented and reinterpreted, as they represent the benchmark and rationale of the present educational proposal. Following is a list of the key concepts which were discussed by researchers in their project and that this essay intends to bring to light by exposing secondary school learners to multicultural literature both in English and in Italian (Aquario et al. 2009):

Ethnocentrism: this term normally indicates the tendency to consider the practices and habits belonging to one's own cultural context as natural. The practices and habits of people raised in other cultural settings are judged in relation to those of one's own group, thus viewing one's own cultural group as superior and centrally important (Cantoni 1967). However, once our personal and cultural discourses start making a distinction between natural/universal truths and habits (of ours) and those of others and characterise the latter as "going against nature," are displaying and embodying more or less hidden forms of racism.

Today's racism seems to be defined differently from the term as used in the past. The "traditional" term was based on a world view which divided individuals into hierarchies according to one's race. Biologically, the term "race" is used to indicate a group of individuals who, because of their common origins, are physically alike. In the past, some morphological features were thought to be indicative of ethical and intellectual features (e.g., some morphological traits were

thought to be superior and others inferior). This rigid notion of “race” has been abandoned today, but is still strongly rooted in everyday’s language. Researchers have proposed to reinterpret this term in relation to today’s societies, and have suggested that we call it “debiologized racism” (Taguieff 1994) or “cultural racism” (Fabietti 1995). Nowadays, the stigma attached to some ethnic groups can be seen more as the outcome of a process of social and symbolic construction, rather than the result of objective, phenotypic differences (Rivera 2007). Thus old and new racist behaviours still exist in today’s societies and also emerge in people’s discourses (Aquario et al. 2009).

Ethnicity/Ethnic group/Ethnic boundaries: “ethnicity” normally refers to a process of symbolic construction, which is the outcome of specific historical, social and political events. As ethnic groups usually identify themselves as having common geographic origins (Cesareo 2000), a frontier is necessary to give continuity to ethnic divisions. Yet, some influential studies (e.g., Barth 1969) have proposed that ethnic boundaries should be viewed more as social constructions rather than “natural” delimitations. This means that ethnicity should be considered in its “situational and contingent, relational and procedural dimension” (Rivera 1999, 27). Contemporary discourses are imbued with correspondences between ethnic group = country = culture = identity. Yet, this correspondence is challenged by the features of today’s societies, where various ethnic groups live side by side to form a multi-ethnic and pluralistic society, and where various cultural and identity elements constantly intermingle within a given space and social organization. The term “ethnic group” is thus highly connoted. Is this proposal, the definition given by the researcher of the project *L’Altro tra Noi*, is preferable, that is, “groups of different cultural origins,” or “groups coming from different cultural settings.” (Aquario et al. 2009).

Identities/Belonging: today, cultural identities tend to be viewed as “natural,” to be “naturalized,” “essentialized,” and thus be seen as exclusive identities. However, the dynamic intermingling of peoples in contemporary Europe is challenging definitions of the continent’s identity based on ethnicity, indigeneity and myths of origin. Maalouf (1999), and other researchers have shown that identities are social and symbolic constructions, thus fluid and subject to change. As Maalouf explained when asked if he felt more Lebanese or more French, “Identity can’t be compartmentalized. You can’t divide it up into halves or thirds or any other separate segments. I haven’t got several identities: I’ve got just one, made up of many components combined together in a mixture that is unique to every individual” (Maalouf 1999, 8). Likewise, this paper will reconsider the notion of identity by deconstructing the “simplistic” correlation between ethnic origins

and national/cultural identity. This proposal will adopt the notion of identity with the meaning of “multiple components.”

Culture: according to the researchers in the project (Aquario et al. 2009), there is still confusion between the two meanings of “culture”: the classical sense of “learning,” and the anthropological sense of “habits and practices belonging to a group of people”. This paper focuses on the latter meaning, which is to be viewed not as something biological but as something acquired, in particular forms of human activities, such as practical or gestural abilities. The fact of sharing conventions and symbols allows for the acquisition of these forms. Today, the idea that a certain culture is the carrier of natural and universal values is no longer sustainable. Furthermore, recent theories on the topic have shown that culture is the outcome of a process of transmission/acquisition on the one hand, and of constant recreation and negotiation on the other (Aquario et al. 2009). Today, culture can be defined as a conceptual space which implies movement, openness, and fluidity, and not restraint, closure, or rigidity. Culture can be conceived as a contact zone, a series of relationships established by a multidirectional process of giving and taking back, borrowing and loaning, exchanging and translating varied cultural elements into one’s native cultural world (Clifford 2003). In the present paper the focus is on “cultures” rather than culture, in that in today’s societies people moving across countries contribute to creating an environment imbued with multiple cultures.

Multicultural/Intercultural: the term “multicultural” refers to the empirical fact that individuals coming from different linguistic, cultural, and religious traditions exist side by side within a given space and social organization. This is a simple recognition of a given situation. The term “intercultural” refers to a situation where individuals coming from different linguistic, cultural, and religious traditions not only exist side by side but also interact and have meaningful relationships. Within an educational context, by “multiculturalism” we mean an approach which simply recognizes cultural diversity. Similarly, “interculturalism” is an approach which goes beyond mere acknowledgment and promotes understanding, appreciation and celebration of different cultures existing in a single society, as well as intercultural solidarity, interaction and dialogue on the basis of equal dignity and shared universal values (e.g., the common humanity and common destiny of individuals, irrespective of their cultural origins) (Celentin and Serragiotto 2000).

In this paper the approach preferred is an intercultural one.

5 Multicultural Literature: General and Specific Goals

Vygotsky (1978) remarked that the environment which surrounds individuals is strongly responsible for the promotion of good interaction skills. Educational institutions play a fundamental role in guiding young adults to develop an intercultural approach and reinterpret the key concepts presented above. Educational institutions are among those agents which can contribute to forming learners' minds and opinions about the external world. Thus a main task of educational institutions is to assist learners in becoming able to think and discuss issues regarding today's societies in fluid and open terms, rather than in static and definitive terms. This can be achieved through literature, a "common" and universal tool well-known by learners, and in particular through multicultural literature. This paper proposes to introduce extracts from poetry, which, in a sense, may be less demanding in terms of time than a whole novel, and can thus allow for the presentation of a larger number of authors during the scholastic year. One additional reason is to introduce learners to a literary *genre* that is often underestimated if not neglected within today's school curricula and narrative trends in general, especially poetry written by women poets. This proposal is addressed to high schools, is meant to be implemented in the last years, and to introduce multicultural literature simultaneously in the curriculum of EFL and Italian as an L1. Naturally, this can be proposed for other languages. It is recommended that students already have a good knowledge of the English language (or other foreign languages). In general, the main goals of this project can be summed up as follows:

assist learners in developing:

- *an attitude of interculturalism, an intercultural mind/attitude*: an attitude of intercultural relativism open to and appreciative of groups of different cultural origins and of the notion of "multiple cultures/identities/belongings;" the ability to overcome the boundaries of one's individualism/cultural group to view oneself as a member of a wider intercultural community joint by an act of active sympathy. This can be facilitated by a process of "affective recoding" (Boylan 2003), where students gradually learn to "recode" their affective system (their personal range of emotions and feelings) towards others. This is what normally occurs in everyday communicative exchanges, for instance, when we interact with children and try to build a connection with them. The same can happen with people of different cultural origins. This affective recoding could be followed by a "spatial

recoding,” which is here defined as the ability to reinterpret the “traditional” notion of space and be able to distinguish between real/geographical places and metaphoric/epistemic spaces. This is done to help learners view one nation not only as a precise geographical place which is only inhabited by a group sharing the same cultural elements, but mainly as a fluid place which can include several groups of different cultural origins;

- *an attitude of empathy/sympathy* towards groups of different cultural origins;

- *an attitude of exotopy*: outsideness, or what in his early writings on ethics Bakhtin (1990) defined as a recognition of difference between positions. However, this recognition is followed by the necessary return to one’s position/place from which action is possible. In our case, exotopy can be conceived as the sense of cultural distancing which allows a cultural group to see itself as different from other cultural groups, and which is followed by the recognition of difference between cultures. From this should follow an action of acknowledgment of intercultural differences;

- *an attitude of humaneness*: helping learners come to grips with the humanness of others, see human interdependence, and encourage the idea that groups of different cultural origins are all interconnected and interrelated (Asante 1991);

- *the ability to rediscuss and reinterpret some key concepts on interculturalism*, such as “ethnocentrism,” “ethnicity,” “ethnic group,” “race,” “identity,” and “culture.”

In general, an intercultural approach can also contribute to creating a setting and an attitude of openness towards non-native-Italian learners, whose number is quickly growing in all Italian educational institutions (Caritas/Migrantes).

Specific linguistic/cultural/cognitive goals:

- improve knowledge of the L1 and the L2;
- improve knowledge of one’s native cultural elements (C1);
- improve knowledge of different cultural elements (C2s);
- improve awareness of the L1 and the L2;
- improve awareness of the C1 and other C2s;
- get accustomed to the *genre* of poetry, and learn its main features;
- develop critical thinking skills about intercultural topics.

6 Conclusions

This consideration on multicultural literature, as well as the proposal of introducing it steadily in the language curriculum of Italian high schools, principally acquires a pedagogical value. This includes assisting learners in developing an intercultural attitude and becoming intercultural citizens within a pluricultural society.

Intercultural dialogue is a primary necessity of our humanity, a need to know ourselves by discovering ourselves and finding ourselves in other individuals, those who existed before us in the past and those who exist with us in the present, although they may be spatially distant from us (Tentori 1960). Literature is a powerful tool to help learners realize all this. Literature is not only a remarkable carrier but also a conveyor of ideals, values and mores, thus giving learners the opportunity to become “literate in multiple ways of perceiving and speaking about reality” (Leistyna and Woodrum 1996, 9). From this perspective, literature acquires a potentially transformative power, with the potential “to change the world” (Sims 1982). Familiarity with groups of other cultural origins and their intercultural experiences can help learners not only become aware of their cultural origins, but also see new and different ways to handle challenges, obstacles and societal issues, thus expanding their own ways of thinking and understanding. The ultimate aim is not only to contribute to promoting a pluralism of *ideas*, but also a pluralism of *beings* (Meena 1996; Rasor 2010).

As mentioned, today’s globalized societies with their growing fluxes of people moving from one country to another are challenging the traditional notion of identity. Migrants often lose their socio-cultural benchmarks, shifting from a state of one identity/culture/language to a “liquid” state of plural identities/cultures/language (Bauman 2000). In a way, this pluralism is similar to the “identity chaos” experienced by a large number of students of any cultural origins during their teens. However, literature once again offers us tools to interpret the world. For instance, Anaïs Nin (1975), an author who was herself a plurality of beings - French, Hispanic and American - suggested that the transformative power of literature should not come straight from the outer world, but should be preceded by an internal change of attitude and consciousness. The author referred to this process as a “potential to change ourselves” (Nin 1975, 2), “a change in our consciousness” (Nin 1975, 2) which is not an “egocentric or turned-in activity,” (Nin 1975, 2) but “an activity that ultimately affects, influences, and transforms an entire community” (Nin 1975, 2). What the author was referring to in her times was the power for every human being (especially women) to find his/her

own truest self before devoting oneself to the community's well-being, a "center of gravity in your own soul, an axis in an unstable world" (Nin 1975, 3). This might seem a very demanding challenge in today's classrooms. Yet, putting it in simple terms within this educational proposal, it could mean that one of the most urgent educational goals today is to guide learners to "transform" their cultural consciousness (Boylan 2003). This implies becoming aware of the plural elements that contribute to defining not only their own identities but cultural identities in general, in view of a more global shift of perspective where the cultural consciousness of an entire community can ultimately be affected and transformed.

7 Appendix

HOW I GOT THAT NAME (MARILYN CHIN)

I am Marilyn Mei Ling Chin
 Oh, how I love the resoluteness
 of that first person singular
 followed by that stalwart indicative
 of "be," without the uncertain i-n-g
 of "becoming." Of course,
 the name had been changed
 somewhere between Angel Island and the sea,
 when my father the paperson
 in the late 1950s
 obsessed with a bombshell blond
 transliterated "Mei Ling" to "Marilyn."
 And nobody dared question
 his initial impulse—for we all know
 lust drove men to greatness,
 not goodness, not decency.
 And there I was, a wayward pink baby,
 named after some tragic white woman
 swollen with gin and Nembutal.
 My mother couldn't pronounce the "r."
 She dubbed me "Numba one female offshoot"
 for brevity: henceforth, she will live and die
 in sublime ignorance, flanked

by loving children and the “kitchen deity.”
[...]

READING LEOPARDI (MEENA ALEXANDER)

Late July, armpits of earth flung here and there,
Scent of shattered bark, clots of resin,
But this lime tree stands clear, shiny leaves bottling up heat.
I unwrap the scarf from my throat, I sit on a bench reading Leopardi.

Sempre caro mi fu quest'ermo colle
He begins and at the end
Longs to drown in dark infinity.
I'm three hundred miles from Recanati his hometown.
Last night in a round of rushing wind,
I heard the names I was given flee from me.
Those names rose out of childhood and lagoon dirt,
Out of Arabic and wet sand,

Out of Hindi and fresh pounded chilli
Which amma always mixed with lime juice
When she came in from the garden,
A pile of fruit cradled in her sari.

Out of Malayalam and the milk of dreams
Scented with crushed almonds, my dead grandmother's recipe.
Out of the language of love, sharp moans
And low warbles, sweet muffled cries.

Stripped of the names that were given me, I sit silent in the shade
Of a lime tree reading Leopardi.
In a lake so deep it could swallow a hill I see stumps of wood float,
Making an altar of ruin, and slow waves turn the color of infinity.

SENZA PAROLE (BARBARA SERDAKOWSKI)

Non sono da quella parte del ponte che si attraversa
Nella corrente d'aria di una Vistula sterrata
Sono chiazza
Informe
Verbo senza contorno
Disambientata.

Eri tu quell'ombra dietro alle mie spalle?
Ancora sento sulla schiena tracce di sconosciuto
Sui fianchi, sulle cosce, sulla nuca forse
Ampolle a ventosa
Risucchio che drena
Una perdita perpetua di parole acquisite
Il salasso dell'anima di volatile migratore
buchi ridotti a vocaboli incidentali

Words, mots, palabras, slowa

Non vorrei più usare parole di altri
Ma allora quali?
Se non ho le mie

ALCUNE RAGIONI MINIMI PER CUI MI SENTO EUROPEA (MELITA RICHTER)

Nei cortili della mia Agram amata
s'affacciano le finestre insignificanti delle cucine odoranti di frittelle
come quelle delle stanze snelle delle domestiche zitelle
negli stessi insignificanti palazzi della periferia dimenticata
di una Pest, di Vienna, di Praga.
Forse anche di Alma-Ata.
Giallastri edifici a tanti piani con porte d'uscio cadenti
che odorano di piscio di uomini e di cani.
"Da noi", come "da loro".
Mentre i nuovi ricchi di un'Europa fortezza,
gaudenti,

si chiudono con le porte di sicurezza
 blindata.
 Parola derivante dal remoto eco di radice sassone
 dove *blind* sta per cieco.
 Queste sono, ecco,
 alcune ragioni minime perché io mi sento europea.

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Abstracts

DAVID NEWBOLD

Across the Ditch and Into the Jungle: New Approaches to Bilingualism for Writers from Wales

This paper looks at a new phenomenon in writing from Wales. Until quite recently, there were two separate ‘Welsh literatures’ – one in Welsh, the other in English. The former, inevitably, was addressed to a small and diminishing readership; the second, known as ‘Anglo-Welsh’, spawned global giants such as the poets Dylan Thomas and R. S. Thomas. Both strands claimed to represent Wales and Welsh culture; but there was little contact between the two. Since devolution, however, things seem to have changed. A new generation of young bilingual writers, in the south as well as the traditional Welsh heartland of the north, has appeared, the fruits of a bilingual education policy which began in the 1980s, and which has been reinforced since the establishment of the Welsh Assembly in 1999. Many of them feel they do not have to limit themselves to one language, but increasingly are crossing the language divide, rewriting their work

in English. But in the rewriting, things happen, the details change, the stories grow in the telling. The result is, at the same time, an affirmation of bilingualism and the appearance of some of the most vibrant literature in English being published in the UK today. The 'ditch' in the title is Offa's Dyke, which was built in the 8th century to keep the Welsh out of England; the 'jungle' is the global lingua franca of English, the creative resources and potential of which seem to be as great as they ever were in the days when literature in English meant only 'English' literature.

Keywords: bilingualism, devolution, Wales, English

OLIVERA TERZIĆ

Cultural Diversity in Michel Tournier's *The Golden Droplet*

In the novels of Michel Tournier, one of the most appreciated and important contemporary French authors, the theme of cultural diversity and otherness is both present and persistent. In the example of his famous novel *The Golden Droplet*, we will try to demonstrate and point out some of the crucial aspects of the author's way of seeing and presenting the cultural difference as well as the problem of the possibility of accepting that difference. We will see, through the analysis of the author's narrative procedure in the novel, what the possible outcomes of the characters intention to integrate and find their place under the sun of a foreign society are. It arises the philosophical question of human (im)possibility to truly adapt or be adapted to the changed cultural and social environment, but also to the complex question of whether such expectations are psychologically and existentially founded and inherent to a human being as an individual. Idriss search for his place in the world, symbolised by the appearances of the golden drop, induces him to leave his home place in an isolated African desert village, and to start his long journey to Paris. In what way is Paris responding to his efforts and hopes? The analysis will show the evolution of this simple question to the much profound and higher level of one's finding life meanings and answers that are common for all humans although the ways of the quest for the answers and the results of the quest differ individually. This paper aims at explaining to which

extent such a quest is influenced and conditioned by one's cultural inheritance as an irrevocable fact.

Keywords: quest, liberty, otherness, image, consciousness, knowledge

JENAETH MARKAJ

Joseph Brodsky and the Cosmopolitan Ideal

Globalism is a problematic social trend. It inspires theoretical response highlighting the difficulty of undertaking fruitful intercultural communication. It engages remnants of a comprehensive nationalism that places the global citizen in a position of perpetual marginality. It inspires fear of both uniformity and alienation.

Yet the world presses on, undeterred by the prospect of rapidly diminishing national identity and the political and social consequences that may entail. Embodying this new cosmopolitanism is Joseph Brodsky, eminent Russian-American writer whose life and oeuvre provide substantive evidence for the success of cultural hybridization in the modern world.

Exiled from Russia under communism, Joseph Brodsky became an American citizen who appropriates and synthesizes elements of both languages to construct an identity that defies both convention and cultural critique. Brodsky undermines both Orientalist attempts to construct and dominate Eastern cultures through externally-imposed inaccessibility and post-Orientalist admonitions against simplification of the unfamiliar. He realizes the post-Orientalist aim of achieving unity within diversity by asserting the primacy of language as not merely an instrument of poetic expression, but a means of self-definition.

His engagement with language represents a departure from a defining cultural logic that ties one's vocabulary with nationhood. Brodsky's political exile to the United States places him a position of pure interaction with language, a relationship that is not polluted by the social or political pressures of his time.

My paper will elucidate the manner in which Joseph Brodsky's theories of literature, executed so eloquently in his poetry, provide a model for intercultural competence that invites emulation. I will examine this topic not only through his writing, but through the exploration of how this concept plays out through

a tri-cultural conversation involving Brodsky, prominent Dutch magic realist painter, Carel Willink, and sculptress, Sylvia Willink taking place in Amsterdam.

Keywords: intercultural competence, intercultural awareness

JAGTAR KAUR CHAWLA, NIDHI NEMA

Negotiating Cultures: A Comparative Study of First and Second Generation Indian Immigrants in USA with Reference to Jhumpa Lahiri's Works

The dynamics of displacement are governed by multiple overlapping, yet inevitable forces like socio-economic factors, culture, milieu etc. come into play at varying degrees between different generations and diasporas. Every diasporic study or displacement theory inadvertently leads through an analysis and understanding of these forces, so as to arrive at a recognizable pattern of any given diasporic consciousness.

Indian diasporic sensibilities are governed majorly by the strong undercurrents of culture and traditions, so much so, that sticking to the natal bonds and upholding one's cultural identity in foreign lands become the primary issues of concern, especially, for first generation Indian immigrants. These culture-preservation efforts are tested and challenged on several fronts externally. However, the irony of the situation is, that the biggest threat is posed by internal agents, their own progeny, the second generation, who being culturally hybridized, find themselves torn between two sensibilities. They clearly consider themselves as a part of the American mainstream, taking only peripheral interest in reinforcing the ties with their roots.

The novels of the internationally acclaimed writer of Indian origin, Jhumpa Lahiri, traverse through the psychological landscape of the first and second generation Indian immigrants in USA, mapping significantly the bonds and the boundaries between both. This study attempts to explore the unique Indian diasporic experience through Lahiri's works, and take a close look at the paradigm shift between the two generations, the first generation with its 'living within the walls' approach and the second generation with its unfixed values and efforts towards homogenization with the American reality. The paper also diagnoses

the case of ‘paradox of otherness,’ and analyzes the set of ‘C’s- conflicts, clashes, complexities and compromises, with a view to present the dialectics or the process of thesis, antithesis and synthesis involved in the Indian diasporic reality.

IGOR GRBIĆ

“Tagore Syndrome”: A case study of the west’s intercultural (mis)readings

The case of Rabindranath Tagore is taken as a representative example of the way the West approaches non-Western literatures and, secondly, of the way its critical decisions influence the critical stance in the latter ambiances. In India itself, Tagore was a well-established, but simultaneously a controversial author; when Yeats wrote his famous preface to Tagore’s own translation of *Gitanjali* and saw to its promotion, which eventually made Tagore the first non-European to become a Nobel laureate for literature. The most prestigious literary award in the world turned Tagore into a star overnight and, equally dubiously, secured him in the literary establishment in his homeland. The initial enthusiasm, however, much too soon slackened and gave way even to not infrequent denials of Tagore’s kind of poetry (at least outside India).

The short survey of Tagore’s rise and fall in the West is taken in the paper only as a starting point for examining the mechanisms backing such a trajectory. Attention is given to the repeating model of non-Western authors coming into favour only due to the mediation by a Western author; to the questionability of criteria involved in the process and its capriciousness; to the felt and still existing need of Western literature to renew itself, hence reaching out for an Other, but eventually recoiling onto itself; to some of the reasons for such a situation (like forced readings unsupported by genuine desire to learn and change); to harnessing and/or rejecting the Other; to the ways the West shapes non-Western literary (and not only literary) taste, etc. Essentially, the paper warns of the implicit dangers in the Western practice of either repudiating the Other or appropriating it as a matter of fashion/curiosity/cultural correctness.

Keywords: Tagore, Western, non-Western, literary criteria, intercultural, exotic

ASSUNTA DE CRESCENZO

New approaches to Literature, Globalized Narrative Strategies and Skills

What is the role of literature in our lives? This question is critical today if we consider how the Internet and the innumerable social networks are affecting the way we think and behave. Perhaps we should start by examining the importance of “narration” in our everyday experience in order to highlight the active part it plays in creating our individual perception of reality and, above all, of our evolving sense of Self. The present essay aims at analysing the relationships and interactions between narration and personal identity, between narrative and life, literature and globalization. The New Italian Epic movement is also taken into consideration as the latest example (originating on the Web) of a different kind of approach to literature, which aims at developing new meanings and the ethical implications of the literary processes and of phenomena such as “intertextuality” or “web narrative discourse”. The main aim of this theoretical and, at the same time, practical approach, with its positive experimentalism, is to define the nature of contemporary literature and, in so doing, to examine ways of overcoming the “stagnation” of Postmodernism from an openly intercultural point of view.

Keywords: literature, intercultural perspective, globalized narrative

ELENA FURLANETTO

Voices from anglophone Turkey. The reasons for English in contemporary Turkish literature

The reason why many “world literature” writers chose to publish in English is the necessity to export their works. Publishing in their national languages would imply an additional, intermediate passage – translation – between a book and its international success, between a book and the English and American publishing houses, which play a fundamental role in determining who is going to enter the “world literature” pantheon, and who is not.

Once these common motivations determining the choice of English as a literary *lingua franca* have been mentioned, it is necessary to acknowledge the existence of more specific motivations, different for each nation. Turkish authors provide a unique example of how the English language in a literary context reflects various aspects of the relationship between Turkey and the United States. Contemporary Turkish or Turkish American writers such as Maureen Freely, Elif Shafak, Alev Lytle Croutier and Güneli Gün use English as a means to expose American neo-imperialism, and to describe Turkey as the field of a restless conflict between Westernization and Islamic tradition.

My paper explores the reasons leading some of the most important contemporary Turkish authors to write in English. My investigation moves beyond the common dream of exporting one's work beyond the national borders and focuses on the contradictory relationship between Turkey and the Western world. Part of my research hopes to identify a common element motivating these authors to write in English rather than in Turkish. Two of my working hypotheses are the desire to spread the image of a hybrid, cosmopolitan Turkey abroad, and the attempt to use the English language to diffuse values that are radically opposed to those of American neo-imperialism.

Keywords: Turkey, Turkish literature, Turkish history, world literature, women authors, literatures in English

MAKA ELBAKIDZE

Medieval Georgian Romance by Shota Rustaveli in the Context of European Chivalry Romance

The Knight in the Panther's Skin, the most significant text of Georgian Literature, written by Shota Rustaveli in the late Middle Ages, belongs to a chivalry romance from the standpoint of genre. The structural and compositional organization of the text (a rather wide area of action, a polyphony of "narration", the artistic function of wandering/quest motive, etc), its political and ideological background (feudal court, social environment and the circle of characters), the concept of love (it's premier character, the principles of *servir*) and compositional elements display enough resemblance with the European authors of chivalry

romances Chrétien de Troyes, Wolfram Von Eschenbach, anonymous author of English *Gawain and the Green Knight*, etc. In spite of this, it should be mentioned that *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* is not a typical specimen of medieval chivalry (courtly) romance. A number of specific features are found in the composition which indicates a far higher level of genre development (the indivisible structure of Rustaveli's composition, change from the allegorical plane to the real plane - the minimalization of fantastic elements, concretization of literary abstraction, transformation of ideal schemes by means of the introduction of psychological accuracy and truth; innovation in the courtly model of the concept of love, individualization of characters, etc).

With an account of these factors we can conclude that from the viewpoint of genre *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* is a medieval romance of chivalry which in the so-called transitory time (the late Middle Ages/Renaissance) must be considered as a new stage of genre gradation, its highly-developed form of renewed construction, with more developed expressive forms, plasticity of narrative, and versatility.

Keywords: genre, chivalry romance, Rustaveli, late Middle Ages

IRMA RATIANI

Introducing New Georgian Literature: In and Out of World Literary Process

The presented paper is the methodological attempt to comprehend the New Georgian Literature (19th-20th centuries) in a broad cultural-literary perspective, within the context of world literary processes, intercultural dialogue, conceptual and methodological intersections and contradictions. The research is based on intercultural and comparative studies.

During the period which is under revision, in particular 19th-20th centuries, Georgian literature developed against the background of diverse historical stages and mentalities, alongside different ideological-political and religious-cultural trials. At the end of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th centuries, Georgian literature, Christian in its essence, due to the historical fate of Georgia, appeared at the intersection of eastern and western cultural realities, characterized by

different cultural trends and ideologies; correspondingly, during this period, Georgian consciousness regarded “World Literature” not as a “Western” system, as it was traditionally considered, but as a synthetically “Eastern-Western” one.

From the 19th century Georgia falls under the oppression of Russian imperialism, which is later turned into the Soviet regime, and simultaneously reflects contradictory cultural-literary processes of “New Colonialism”; as for literary context - the alternation of various tendencies and methods – romanticism, realism, modernism, symbolism, socialistic realism, post-modernism and others are observed; It is an almost two hundred years, marked by the constant cultural clash against the imperialistic ideology and soviet totalitarianism; During this period Georgian literature undergoes through hazardous phases and regularly gets in and out of World literary processes.

Since the 80s of the 20th century Georgian literature steps into the post-soviet and post-colonial era, and defines new models of correlation with World literary system.

The purpose of the paper is to display the diversity of relations between the World literature, as a system of literary interactions and interference that shape international literary processes, and New Georgian literature as the national “version” of World literature throughout the 19th-29th centuries.

Keywords: New Georgian literature, world literary process, correlation, national literary model

DARIO SAFTICH

Eastern Adriatic: intercultural laboratory

Since the fifteenth century the Eastern Adriatic has been under the rule of the Republic of Venice, which possessed certain features of a colonial force: initiating from a narrow civil territory, it managed to conquer and control all larger overseas enclaves. Venice’s presence in lands within its dominance has left visible traces. With the fall of Venice and the affirmation of national matrixes, speakers of “colonial Venetian” in the Eastern Adriatic found themselves a linguistic community and in the position of an “Italian colony”, at least in a linguistic sense. The writer (as well as Italian politician and journalist) Enzo Bettiza, who prefers to call himself a Dalmatian writer of the Italian language, analyzes this

situation. In a certain metaphorical sense, Bettiza journeys along the Adriatic coast, feeling the pulse of the coast's relationship with its hinterland. It regards a journey into the past of one's own memory, one's own prejudices and perhaps even misapprehensions, from whose depths arise cultural contradictions and problems tied to the identities typical of postcolonial situations. Through this Italian-Croatian Dalmatian's writer's work we will analyze the traces left behind by historical influences even within the souls of individuals, often creating hybrid identities in which pieces of the "other" are often present. Literary works can serve in assisting our understanding of these stereotypes' core better than tedious historical chronicles. We could also call this an intercultural laboratory, for bettering the mutual understanding between individuals and peoples united by a turbulent past and historical permeation, as well as conflict.

Keywords: intercultural laboratory, border, Adriatic sea, identity, literature

NIVES ZUDIČ ANTONIČ

Educazione letteraria in prospettiva interculturale: presentazione di una ricerca svolta nella zona bilingue del Litorale sloveno

Con questo intervento ci si propone di presentare una ricerca, nata dal desiderio di monitorare lo "stato attuale dei lavori" relativamente all'educazione letteraria, evidenziando in particolare l'importanza del ruolo della letteratura di queste terre di "frontiera" (Italia/Trieste, Istria/slovena e croata), le sue risorse e le sue aperture in funzione di un apprendimento della lingua in un contesto interculturale.

Con la ricerca si è voluto far riflettere sulle cause e le conseguenze della comunicazione influenzate dai fattori culturali e puntare sulla necessità di un modello di insegnamento delle L2 e della LS che integri fin dall'inizio elementi che permettano di acquisire una piena competenza socioculturale, che possa portare poi a delineare dei percorsi di educazione letteraria e linguistica per studenti sloveni in una prospettiva interculturale.

Dalle ricerche svolte in questi anni è scaturito che uno dei problemi principali incontrati dagli studenti risiede nell'incomprensione degli aspetti culturali

impliciti del messaggio, più che nella propria elaborazione e comprensione linguistica del messaggio in L2.

Nell'ambito della lingua italiana come lingua di contatto (L2) abbiamo così sviluppato un modulo di cinque unità didattiche con obiettivo di fare acquisire nuove conoscenze e sviluppare tutte le componenti della competenza comunicativa e per facilitare la comunicazione interculturale.

In questo articolo si cercherà pertanto di presentare le modalità per l'impostazione di un *curriculum* adeguato di lingua e cultura.

Parole chiave: sviluppo delle competenze interculturali, curriculum di intercultura e lingua, insegnare la cultura nella classe di lingua, lingua e cultura, unità didattiche di lingua e intercultura, apprendere e insegnare la comunicazione interculturale

KATARINA DALMATIN

Imaginary Dalmatia and Its Women in the Transadriatic Mirror of Italian Writers

"Semiorientalist" models of presenting Dalmatia and Dalmatian women in two autobiographical texts: "Dalmatian Dream" by Fulvio Tomizza and "Exile" by Enzo Bettiza are analysed in this paper. They present the identity of the eastern Adriatic coast within the intimate, autobiographical horizon in which the figure of the Dalmatian woman plays a crucial role. The main methodological basis is sought in the elaboration of N. Raspudić's "transadriatic semiorientalism" as the dominant Italian discourse about the eastern Adriatic coast whose progenitor was A. Fortis with his travelbook "Travels into Dalmatia" from 1774. "Dalmatian Dream" and "Exile" are particularly interesting for analysis, as they present on a common synchronous axis variants of definite traditional models of Dalmatia and its women in Italian literature since the 18th century. Fortis's figures of Morlak women from his book will be taken as the initial model of establishing native and ethnic Other in Italian literature. His culturologic and anthropologic models of Dalmatia and Dalmatian women are partly reproduced in Tomizza and Bettiza's imaginary constructions of Dalmatia which are a continuation of the problematics of divided identity and

where the key place is taken by feminine figures. Bettiza's figure of the Morlak nursing mother is similar to the Fortis's model of the good savage woman, while in Tomizza's projection of imaginary Dalmatia as the place of unusual erotic possibilities, we can see the line of development that has its roots still in Gozzi's "Futile memories" ("Memorie inutili").

Key words: "semi-orientalistic" models, autobiographical discourse, Bettiza, Tomizza

IVANIA PETRIN

Italian as a Language of Culture in Dalmatia in the First Half of 19th Century

In order to introduce this paper in which the author will analyse linguistic situation in Dalmatia in the first half of 19th century it is important to present both, linguistic and extralinguistic facts. Thus, after the Napoleon's defeat in 1814, Dalmatia again comes under the Austrian authority. As the French government did, the second Austrian government also promotes Italian as official language in Dalmatia. This is the period when Dalmatian intellectuals are completely being integrated in the Italian culture and when Italian prevails in their communication and correspondence. After all, it is the Italian language that gives them a possibility to become part of cultural circles of higher prestige, while those who finished schools in Italian language could easily find job in the state administration. Circles of educated people, who, in their *reading salons*, speak Italian and discuss the same problems as in other cities of northern Italy, are being formed in all larger centres. To conclude, the author of the paper also briefly presents the analysis of the language of famous 19th century Dalmatian writer Marko Kažotić (Marco de Casotti).

Keywords: Italian language, language of culture, Dalmatia, first half of 19th century

JADRANKA CERGOL

L'immagine dello sloveno nella letteratura triestina italiana e l'immagine dell'italiano nella letteratura slovena nel periodo fascista: confronto tra due stereotipi

The paper uses the imagological method to analyse the perceived image of Slovenes / Slavs in the Italian literature of Trieste, and compares it to the mirror image of Slovenes about their close neighbours Italians. The comparative imagological approach is particularly useful for research in those areas where one nation comes into contact with another, since an image occurs when the I becomes aware of his relationship to the Other, the image of the Other also reflecting one's own image (Pageaux 1989, 135). The contribution focuses on the creation and modification of images of two neighbouring nations, Slovenes and Italians. These images were formed already before the onset of fascism, as seen in the Italian literature of Trieste, where Slovenes were perceived as people who lived far away in the countryside, in the Karst and Carniola, mainly engaged in agriculture, and were therefore not active in the urban life of Trieste. The first author to clearly confront this issue was Angelo Vivante in his work *Irredentismo Adriatico* (published in Florence in 1912). Vivante presented the ethnically mixed structure of the population of Trieste and suggested possible solutions for a fruitful coexistence of several nationalities in this town (Pirjevec 2002, 166).

At major international conflicts, such as the onset of the fascist period, ethnic stereotypes usually change: people begin to attribute positive characteristics to members of the nations on their side, and negative characteristics to members of the nations on the other side (Moll 1996, 221). This is what happened precisely in the area of Primorska which passed under Italy by the Treaty of Rapallo: next to the already established stereotype of the rural Slovenes, Italians began to propagate the image of Slovenes as communists, whereas Slovenes perceived middle-class Italians as fascists. Using the imagological approach, literary studies can reveal the extent to which such ethnic stereotypes about Slovenes and Italians were present in major literary works, which reflect the emotion, feeling and thinking of the intellectuals.

Key words: imagology, Italian literature in Trieste, Slovene literature, border fascism

IRENA GRAOVAC

Women and History; Two Mothers' War Stories (Elsa Morante's *La Storia* and Ester Sardoz Barlessi's *Una famiglia istriana*)

The role of women in the creation of History has often been put aside. Men's perception of the major historical happenings dominates in almost all literary genres, while women are usually only silent witnesses in their works. But, can women's voices also be heard? If they can, do women write the same as men? Is their literature gendered, as Hélène Cixous suggests?

This paper tends to examine two novels: *La Storia* (1974) and *Una famiglia istriana* (1999). The first is written by the well known Italian writer Elsa Morante and the second by Ester Sardoz Barlessi, the Croatian author of the Italian speaking minority in Istria. The heroines of these two novels are mothers who try to survive the horrors of the war. Despite the differences in locus (the urban Rome of the Second World War and the rural Istria during both Great Wars), the social and cultural circumstances are the same. Therefore, the way they cope with the sexual aggression they suffered is equally reflected in the repression of their sexuality and negation of their bodies. The hypothesis is, that the authors' interference in the text gives the silent heroines the voices which they suppressed, constrained by the patriarchal society.

Keywords: gender, body, trauma, history, story, narrator

ANA BUKVIĆ, ANDRIJANA JUSUP MAGAZIN

An intertextual reading of Brumec's *Francesca da Rimini* and Dante's *Divine Comedy*

This paper proposes to set forth an intertextual reading of Mislav Brumec's tragicomedy *Francesca da Rimini* and Dante's 5th Canto of the *Hell* entitled *Paolo e Francesca*. Mislav Brumec (1969-), a contemporary Croatian dramatist, won the Croatian Ministry of Culture's annual Marin Držić Prize for the dramatic

production of *Francesca da Rimini* in 1991. The tragicomedy was first published in the collection *Young Croatian Drama*, edited by Miro Gavran, a contemporary Croatian author of short stories, fiction and drama, and published in Zagreb in 1991. The English version was published in *Croatian Radio Plays in the 1990s*, Zagreb, Croatian Radio Library, 1999.

The basis of the plot is a well known historical episode. The master of the castle, the mighty warrior Gianciotto, cares only for hunting and the glory he could win in the upcoming crusade. Feeling neglected, his wife Francesca manipulates his brother, the painter Paolo, in order to make Gianciotto jealous. Francesca's maid Angela, who is in love with Gianciotto, skillfully takes advantage of this situation and, defeating her rivals by her intrigues, leaves Gianciotto at the mercy of her cruel love. The present study attempts to present an objective intertextual network of relations between Brumec's tragicomedy with the famous *Canto*, which should lead to the identification of the typology of influence exerted by Dante; essentially a metonymic and metahistorical one. Furthermore, due to the different genres they represent, Dante's and Brumec's *modi operandi* manifest certain differences that must be taken into consideration in order to offer a systematic perspective on the topic and to eliminate the possible impression of the mere mechanical transfer of the plot structure.

Keywords: intertextuality, Francesca da Rimini, Mislav Brumec, Young Croatian Drama

BEATRICE NICKEL

Concrete Poetry as an Intercultural and a Medial Phenomenon

In the course of the 20th century processes of international exchange are more than ever communicated by similar media. Therefore, a media-reflected culture presents itself on an international level.

First examples of Concrete Poetry – in a historical sense – emerged in the 1950ies. All of these are marked by the fact that the material chosen by the poet (the *signifiant*) has a strong impact on the aesthetic message (the *signifié*). Undoubtedly, Concrete Poetry is a global phenomenon. My paper will first of

all focus on the international and intercultural character of this kind of poetry. Above all, Concrete Poetry is meant to be internationally understood. Therefore, the poets reduce the sign material to the utmost degree. Hence, there is no need to translate their poems, something anyway impossible.

Concrete Poetry is not only marked by the search for an international language but also by an extreme awareness of the important role the medial presentation of a poem plays. Its conception is intrinsically tied to Marshall McLuhan's well-known thesis: "The Medium is the Message". As the poet Pierre Garnier has put it in *Spatialisme et poésie concrète* (1968): "le moyen technique employé crée la poésie autant que le poète. Le magnétophone, le disque, la télévision doivent créer leur propre forme de poésie." Hence, my paper will secondly focus on the medial aspect of Concrete Poetry. Not surprisingly, the poets in question used to employ technical innovations (i.e. new printing and recording techniques, holography, computer programmes etc.) to produce their poems.

In summary, my paper aims at pointing out that Concrete Poetry has to be interpreted from an intercultural as well as an intermedial angle.

Keywords: intercultural universality, intermedial character of Concrete Poetry, media poetry

ALESSANDRA KORNER

Literature for a Social and Cultural Integration

Linguistic learning should achieve the aim of a respectable knowledge of the target language, having as a main goal a deeper understanding of the culture and of the world vision of the native speakers and the hope for a better social and cultural integration of the person in the host country.

Supporting Madame de Staël's (1800) thesis, who saw in the literary product the expression of a society, literary texts become essential to us in emphasizing the importance of a literary education that aims at a true social integration.

The literary power of narration is undeniable in its educational function; it arouses fantasy, develops the critical abilities and the personal opinions fully respecting the others' and, more over, encourages students to associate personal emotions and experiences lived in their native country with the ones experimented

on by the main characters of the novels. By doing this students may reflect on them and literature becomes a superb way to comprehend a culture in its entirety, vital for developing a series of links between the two cultures and for the achievement of a more complex cultural integration.

For a long time the insertion of texts from Italian literary tradition has been introduced in schools in the final stages of learning, when students had already obtained a strong linguistic knowledge; but as we mean to demonstrate in this research, with specific expedients and adaptations to the linguistic competence of the learners, they could be introduced even from an elementary stage, involving in this way students' whole personality and setting off an interaction with the culture of the language he is learning.

For these reasons it is essential to consider literary education as a vital component of linguistic education and reassess it from a point of view of a more mature and complete intercultural education.

Key words: Italian literature, cultural integration, interculture, literary education, linguistic education

VERUSCA COSTENARO

The Importance of Being Intercultural: Introducing Multicultural Literature in Italian Secondary Education

Within an educational context, the notion of "language" cannot be separated from the notion of "culture." Similarly, the notion of "linguistic awareness" cannot be separated from the notion of "cultural awareness." As a result, language teachers are increasingly called to assist their learners in the process of developing cultural sensitivity. Incorporating multicultural literature in the language curriculum of Italian secondary education is presented as a strategy to guide learners into a process of improved intercultural awareness and appreciation of cultural diversity.

In particular, this paper argues for the steady introduction of literature written by authors who come from a different nation from the one they are residing in, and write in the language of the new country. This paper proposes the parallel introduction of contemporary multicultural poetry in the curriculum of

English as a foreign language (EFL) and Italian as a first language (L1) in Italian high schools. The rationale for this approach is drawn on recent data on the perception of cultural diversity on the part of Italian secondary school learners (Aquario et al. 2009). After analysing and describing what multicultural literature and multicultural education intend to do, the meaning and use of key concepts such as “ethnicity,” “identity,” and “culture” are explored, in relation to changes experienced by current European societies. The appendix provides sample material referenced in the paper; poems by Chinese-born American poet Marilyn Chin, Indian-born American poet Alexandra Meena, Polish-born Italian poet Barbara Serdakowski, and Croatian-born Italian poet Melita Richter. The use of multicultural literature has several goals. It is not only aimed at developing learners’ language/cultural skills, but also at encouraging knowledge and awareness of their culture as well as the emergence of an attitude of cultural relativism, openness and appreciation, which is particularly urgent in today’s increasingly multi-ethnic schools and societies.

Keywords: cultural diversity, intercultural awareness, multicultural education, multicultural literature

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KATARINA DALMATIN

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His translations from English, Italian, German, French and Hindi include more than twenty books and copious shorter translations.

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